

Historic Context for Suffrage and Women's Rights in Nevada

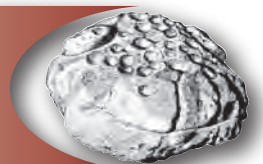
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Frontpiece illustration, in
lower right corner, is of a
pecked and grooved saurian effigy head
discovered in an Archaic site
in the South Truckee Meadows, Nevada.
Illustration by J.W. Oothoudt

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KEC Project 1180

November 2021

Final Draft

This material was produced with assistance from the Underrepresented Community Grant Program from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

This document is a statewide historic context for suffrage and women's rights in Nevada through 1980. The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (NSHPO) received federal funding through the National Park Service's Underrepresented Communities Grant Program to create a Historic Context for Women's History in Nevada. NSHPO selected Kautz Environmental Consultants Inc. (KEC) as the consultants for this project.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors to this document include the consultant team selected to produce the document, women's history experts, community members, and various stakeholders.

Consultant Team

Alicia Barber, Ph.D.

Dr. Alicia Barber, based in Reno, is a professional historian and author with expertise in Nevada and U.S. cultural history and the built environment. She meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR 61) for History. She researched and taught U.S., Nevada, and Public History as a faculty member in the History Department and Core Humanities Program at the University of Nevada, Reno from 2003 to 2013. From 2009 to 2013, she directed the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP). Dr. Barber's record of research and publication includes peer-reviewed books, chapters, and scholarly journal articles, HABS/HAER reports for the National Park Service, oral history interviews, and features and columns for trade publications and websites. She has researched and written historical content for exhibits, digital projects, and installations for organizations and institutions including the State of Nevada, City of Reno, Nevada Commission for Women, Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, Nevada Humanities, and Reno Public Radio. This range of experience has given her a broad familiarity with statewide historical resources, preservation and planning, research repositories, and scholarship.

ZoAnn Campana, M.P.S.

ZoAnn Campana, based in Las Vegas, is an architectural historian with experience in the public and private sector of historic preservation practice. Ms. Campana meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR 61) for Architectural History and History. Ms. Campana has worked as an architectural historian and historic preservation consultant for the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, the City of Reno, and a variety of private entities. As a consultant, she has conducted architectural surveys and drafted historic contexts, written National Register nominations, composed Section 106 reports, and provided treatment recommendations for historic resources. She has extensive experience conducting archival and secondary source research for various historic preservation projects. This diversity of experience reinforces Ms. Campana's knowledge of historic preservation in Nevada, from research and historic context development to resource identification, evaluation, and planning.

Project Contributors

The consultant team identified scholars, historians, and community members to act as project contributors. Contributors include relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to prospective users of the historic context; Certified Local Governments (CLGs); community and professional historians, architectural historians, and archivists; historical societies and historic preservation organizations; activists and representatives from women's and other community organizations; individuals and organizations with expertise and/or interest in women's history; government agencies involved with cultural resource management; and property owners of resources identified as being associated with women's history in Nevada.

Nevada is incredibly fortunate to have many organizations and individuals in that state who are dedicated to documenting and promoting the stories, biographies, and accomplishments of Nevada women. As a result, there is a wide array of stakeholders who contributed greatly to this project.

A small advisory group of historians, architectural historians, and community contributors was provided with various drafts of the context for review. They include historians with expertise in Nevada women's history, architectural historians with expertise in Nevada's historical architecture, and others with expertise in Nevada women's history, as listed below. We are enormously grateful for their contributions, suggestions, and corrections.

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- Denise Gerdes, Southern Nevada Women's History Project
- Mona Reno, Nevada Women's History Project
- Claytee White, Director, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Oral History Research Center

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a general narrative of women's history in Nevada, as it pertains to the suffrage and women's rights movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The context identifies important

patterns, events, and persons relevant to the subject matter. It does not provide an exhaustive account of the entire history of women in Nevada.

In addition to providing a thematic framework identifying themes and periods of development to assist with evaluating the significance of historic resources, this context identifies sub-themes that are sufficiently documented in the historical record (e.g., politics and government, education, gaming, business, social activism). It includes identification and definition of property types that best express the history of women's rights and the suffrage movement in Nevada, including a discussion of the kinds of properties expected in Nevada, categorizing them into those property types most useful in representing important historic trends relevant to these aspects of women's history. A general map of Nevada (Figure 1.1) is included in this document for reference.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, Nevada became the first state in the country with a female-majority state legislature, with women holding 33 of 63 legislative seats. The state retained that distinction in the 2021 session, when women held an even larger proportion of 38 out of 63 legislative seats. The groundbreaking achievement came at a time when Nevada's two U.S. Senate seats were also held by women, and the Nevada Supreme Court had a female majority for the first time in Nevada history.

The state was not always on the cutting edge of female representation in its political leadership, however, with that representation only accelerating rapidly in recent years. In fact, the number of Nevada's female state legislators more than doubled in the decade between 2011 and 2021 alone.¹

Whether the result of causation, correlation, or coincidence, the historical lack of female representation in the state's legislature through much of Nevada's history echoed the state's demographics. For half of the twentieth century, Nevada was the most male state in the country. A century ago, in 1920, Nevada had 148 male residents for every 100 women, when the U.S. average was 104 men to 100 women. Nevada's ratio of men to women remained the highest in the country until 1950 when it was surpassed by Wyoming, and in 1960 by Alaska and Hawaii.²

That longstanding gender imbalance was perhaps not surprising in Nevada's early years considering the state's origins in mining, long a male-dominated industry. Many of Nevada's communities through the early twentieth century were either directly associated with mining or supported the mining industry, and their evolution and development were subject to boom-and-bust cycles that were not particularly conducive to the formation of stable family-oriented communities. Yet throughout its boom period, Storey County, home to the Comstock boomtowns of Virginia City and Gold Hill, held the highest percentage of women in the state, indicating that the inhospitableness of mining camps to women was not necessarily true for established mining communities.

Any context addressing the entire state of Nevada must reckon with disparities in urban and rural regions, disparities that have manifested more noticeably in recent decades. The rapid growth of the Las Vegas and Reno metropolitan areas in the second half of the twentieth century spurred in-migration from other parts of the country that ultimately have brought those areas greater diversity in many areas, including culture, ethnic composition, and political leanings, and a large number of institutions, organizations, and resources impacting the lives of women.

¹ "Women in the Nevada Legislature." (Carson City, NV: Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, February 2021), 2.

² Frank Hobbs and Nicole Stoops, *Demographic Trends in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), A-1, 14, 25-28, qtd. in Dana R. Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man: Women Lawmakers and Tax Policy in Nevada, 1919-1956" (PhD dissertation, Arizona State University, 2011), 33.

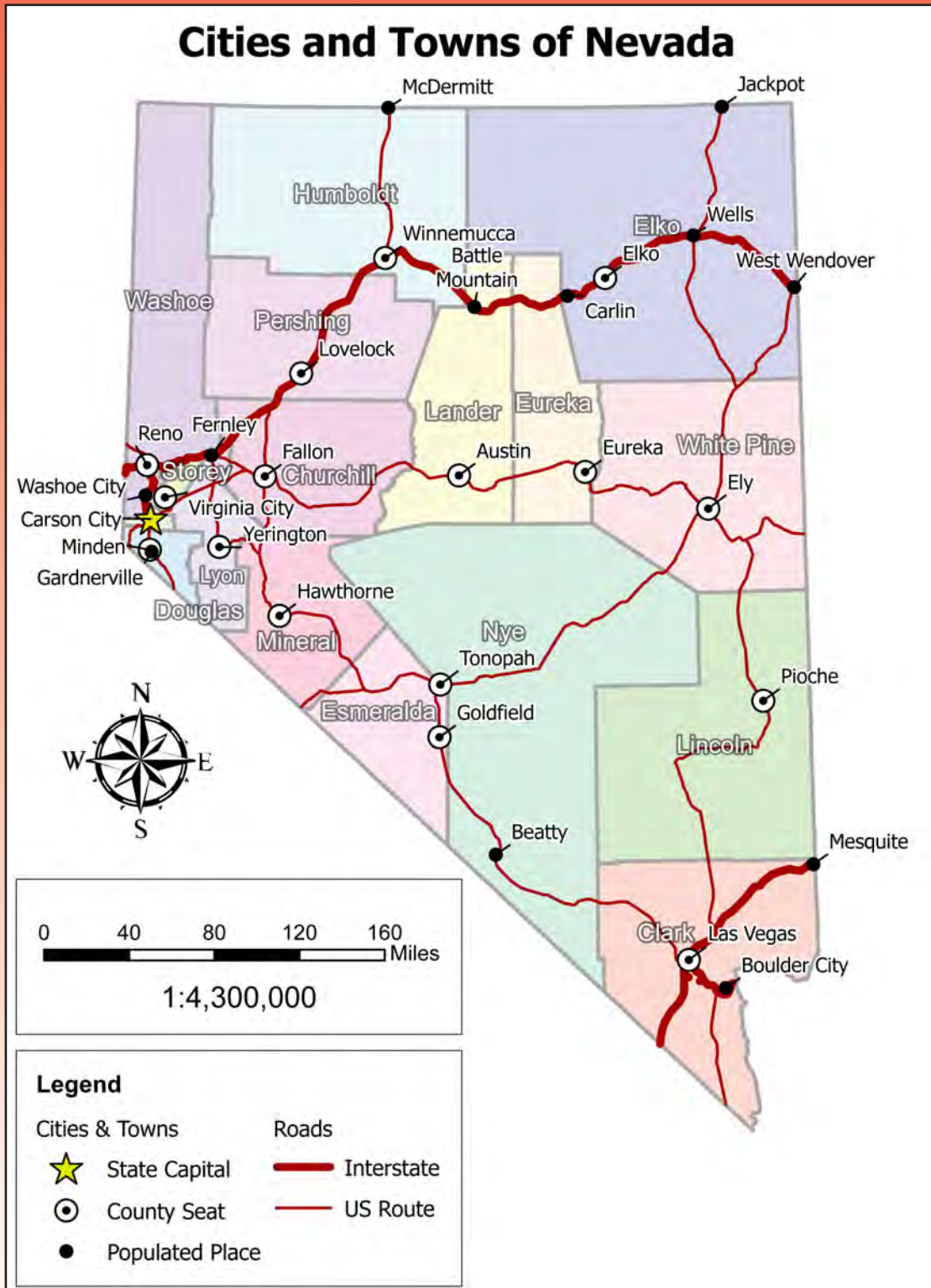


Figure 1.1 Cities and Towns of Nevada

However, through much of Nevada's history, the categories of "urban" and "rural" were relative, as no single town in the state surpassed a population of 50,000 until the 1950s, when the Las Vegas metropolitan area embarked upon a period of accelerated growth. Up to that point, some communities, like Reno, had experienced slow but steady expansion, while new developments and discoveries of resources in other parts of the state had created periodic swellings of population for short periods of time in places like Virginia City and Goldfield. Nevada experienced massive growth between 1950 and 1980, with the state's total population increasing from 160,083 to 800,493, but that growth was concentrated in the Reno and Las Vegas metropolitan areas--and increasingly in the south.

Not surprisingly, these vagaries of population density impacted the history of woman suffrage and women's rights in the state, although perhaps not in the ways one might expect. Initiatives in areas widely considered rural could be as dynamic and consequential as those in larger communities, and the campaigns for suffrage and other women's rights initiatives in communities throughout the state were deeply intertwined. As a result, with the temporal focus of this context ending in 1980, we have chosen not to divide this narrative geographically, but instead to address our subject through an examination of the state as a whole, progressing in a generally chronological fashion and making any necessary distinctions among geographical regions as we go.

It is important to note that this context does not attempt to relate or even to summarize the history of women in Nevada, which would be an insurmountable task for a project of this length. It also does not attempt to identify or discuss all organizations formed by or primarily composed of women, such as women's social clubs, religious groups, or the women's auxiliaries of male organizations. It does not attempt to identify and recognize all of the "firsts" accomplished by Nevada's women, such as pioneering achievements by women in traditionally male-dominated fields. Rather, the focus on woman suffrage and women's rights is intended to narrow this examination to efforts to pursue rights for Nevada's women and families within the time period ending in 1980. The sites identified here assist in telling that story and hopefully will inspire the identification of other sites that can do the same.³

We are deeply attuned to the concept of intersectionality as introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw when composing a historical narrative about the experiences of women.⁴ Those experiences differ greatly due to a constellation of factors impacting each individual, including race and ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity, and socioeconomic status. The identities of Nevada's women as women are inextricably linked to all other aspects of their identities and cannot be separated out from their gender. As elsewhere, Nevada's women have experienced stereotyping, oppression, sexism, and sexualization throughout history, impacts that differ markedly in form, content, duration, and extent when experienced by women of different backgrounds and identities.

In particular, we acknowledge that the experiences of Nevada's indigenous women in the period of this study have differed greatly from those of non-Native women. Not only did indigenous women not stand to benefit from most of the same campaigns for suffrage and other political and legal rights as did non-indigenous women, but Nevada's diverse tribal communities reflect a unique context of cultural traditions and practices in which women have long played a central and powerful role. The extent to which these traditional roles have intersected with or diverged from broader societal pursuits of "women's rights" is deserving of far more study.

At the same time, those varying dimensions of background, status, and identity, combined in different permutations, have meant that even women who share one or more traits in common have not necessarily had the same experiences, or constituted a monolithic culture, identity, or status. We note throughout this context the often vastly different

3 An important model in our consideration of scope was the *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: Women's Rights in Los Angeles*, prepared for the City of Los Angeles by SurveyLA in October 2018.

4 Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: 1989, Issue 1, Article 8.

experiences and agendas of women of different social classes, economic positions, cultural heritage, immigration status, or sexual orientation, even when sharing a common racial identification or ethnicity.

The demographic preponderance of Anglo women as a percentage of Nevada's female population through 1980 means that much of this historic context is about white women. Although the history of Nevada's women is increasingly being written by women, the actions, experiences, and firsthand recollections of women of color have not been documented as thoroughly, particularly before the mid-twentieth century. As a result, this context attempts to be as inclusive as possible in addressing the experiences of the broadest possible cross-section of Nevada's women, while noting the need for much more exploration and documentation of the experiences of its underrepresented populations.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUAL, TEMPORAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS

As mentioned in the Introduction, the purpose of this document is to provide a broad historical overview of women's history in Nevada with an emphasis on woman suffrage and women's rights, and to compile a preliminary list of significant historic resources associated with those historical developments. It is not a comprehensive history of all Nevada women or women-related issues in the state.

While this context provides a brief background of pre-Territorial (pre-1861) Nevada, it largely focuses on the time period spanning from 1861, when the Nevada Territory was established, until 1980, which roughly marks the end of second-wave feminism and the beginning of a conservative political shift that largely halted strides in women's rights within the state and the nation.

Geographically, the context encompasses the entire state of Nevada.

LITERATURE SEARCH

The team conducted a preliminary literature search to identify relevant primary and secondary sources related to Nevada's statewide, regional, and local women's history and the suffrage movement. The advisory group invited to consult on this project reviewed the preliminary list of sources and provided additional recommendations to guide the research.

Identified sources include books, articles, prior studies, inventories and surveys, oral histories, and other literature relevant to woman suffrage, the emergence of women into leadership roles outside the home, and regional history. Selected primary sources, if published, are also listed in the bibliography.

Efforts to research and document the history of Nevada women have expanded greatly over the past three decades. In the early 1990s, former Nevada state legislator Jean Ford spearheaded the establishment of the Nevada Women's Archives, a statewide initiative involving the Special Collections Departments of the Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno and University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as well as the Nevada Women's History Project (NWHP), which became an independent nonprofit organization in 2014. Thanks to the efforts of Ford and her many collaborators then and since, researchers can easily access credible information pertaining to women's history in Nevada.

A source of particular note, which is listed in Appendix A, is *Women in Nevada History: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Sources*.¹ A product of the Nevada Women's History Project, this bibliography lists 1362 published sources that include information on the roles and experiences of Nevada women. This reference document served as a critical resource for the research team. The NWHP website, with its extensive listing of biographies of significant Nevada women, is another indispensable reference for this context.² The Nevada Suffrage Centennial website, which includes a timeline of women's suffrage and biographical sketches of suffragists in Nevada, was also produced under the auspices of the NWHP.³

1 Betty J. Glass, *Women in Nevada History: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Sources, 2nd Edition*. (Reno, NV: Nevada Women's History Project, 2018).

2 <https://www.nevadawomen.org/>

3 <https://suffrage100nv.org/about/suffrage-timeline/>

There are very few published sources that provide comprehensive narratives connecting the actions of women across the state over a substantial period of time. Anita Watson's *Into Their Own: Nevada Women Emerging into Public Life* is one of the few sources that attempts to provide a synthesis of various statewide developments including the formation of women's clubs, the temperance and suffrage movements, and the entry of women into politics and the workforce.⁴ It was particularly helpful in the creation of this document.

Several other publications of the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office can be consulted for information relevant to this topic. They include the Multiple Property Documentation Forms on *Agriculture on the Carson River in Nevada's Douglas and Ormsby Counties* and *School Buildings in Nevada*, and Historic Contexts including *The African American Civil Rights Experience in Nevada, 1900-1979* and *Exploration and Early Settlement in Nevada*.

RESEARCH METHODS

Starting with preliminary research, the team reviewed sources for relevant information. A variety of written and graphic materials were consulted, and all source materials were analyzed for accuracy and biases. Due to the volume of prior research and work on women's history in Nevada, thorough and broad-based secondary research was conducted initially, beginning with the materials identified in the literature search, the copious amount of sources available online, and existing historical and architectural documentation accessed via the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Nevada Cultural Resource Information System (NVCRIS), and the National Register of Historic Places database.

After secondary source research was completed, the consultants conducted primary source research as needed, including searches of historical newspapers, to confirm facts and address information gaps. The team conducted limited research into archival records and personal papers, focusing on those of the most prominent individuals and organizations, and only on processed collections with finding aids.

The production of an accurate and thorough historical context relies upon access to reliable and relevant information. Nevada benefits from the existence of numerous statewide networks that have long been committed to researching, documenting, and promoting women's history. Statewide community efforts in combination with scholarly research have resulted in significant documentation of the work of suffrage activists and activities throughout Nevada and have generated timelines and biographies of hundreds of individual women from both rural and urban areas and across all time periods. The history of legislative actions related to women's suffrage in Nevada also has been well documented, as has the participation of women in elected positions in the state's legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

OUTREACH METHODS

As with any preservation planning endeavor, public outreach and participation was a critical component of this project. Outreach for this project integrated the views of various organizations and individuals, which in turn informed project goals and priorities, research activities, and associated property identification. The consultant team held a series of virtual meetings with project stakeholders, including historical experts, prospective users, and community contributors. Additionally, the team created and distributed an online survey, allowing all community members with interest in the project to stay informed, share their knowledge on the subject matter, and suggest relevant sources and properties to investigate.

⁴ Anita Ernst Watson, *Into Their Own: Nevada Women Emerging into Public Life*. (Reno, NV: Nevada Humanities, 2000).

SURVEY METHODS

The consultant team identified general property types, as well as specific historic resources, that best illustrate the narrative of the women's rights and suffrage movements in Nevada. The literature review and initial research process uncovered several dozen properties associated with the suffrage movement and other significant women's history in Nevada. A number of these were identified by the National Votes for Women Trail, a national effort instigated by the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites (NCWHS). Outreach and additional research were conducted to investigate these sites as well as to identify additional associated properties. Research was conducted to confirm these associations and determine the degree to which each property is significant within the themes and sub-themes of the historic context. After significance was confirmed, a desktop survey using aerial imagery and street view data from Google Maps determined the presence and integrity of these properties.

For properties that warranted field survey, reconnaissance, or "windshield," survey, was undertaken. Not all identified resources associated with the historic context were surveyed; rather, a preliminary and non-exhaustive sample of properties were surveyed in the field.

GLOSSARY (TERMS, DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS)

This document attempts to provide the full names of women associated with the early suffrage and women's rights movements. Because published documents often referred to women by their married names (e.g., Mrs. C.J. Squires), their first and maiden names are often lost to history. When possible, the authors searched census and other records to identify full names.

Terminology specific to suffrage and women's rights has changed over time. "Woman suffrage" was preferred over "women's suffrage" between 1870 and 1980. According to Survey LA (2018), the term "woman suffrage" is historically more common, evidencing "woman" as a singular inclusive as an equivalent to the term "man," referring to mankind. This context utilizes both terms.

For the purposes of this context, it is useful to define First, Second, and Third Wave Feminism. According to Survey LA, "First-wave feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought that occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries throughout the Western world focused on obtaining the right to vote. Second wave feminism began in the early 1960s in the United States and eventually spread throughout the Western world and beyond. Third-wave feminism encompasses several different strains of activity, beginning in the 1990s and continuing to today. Third-wave feminism attempts to expand feminism to include women of all ethnicities, nationalities, regions, and cultural backgrounds."⁵

This historic context statement utilizes a number of acronyms that are abbreviated after their initial usage within the document. Those used most often are as follows:

AAUW – American Association for University Women

CU - Congressional Union

EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

⁵ SurveyLA, Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: Women's Rights in Los Angeles (October 2018), 4-5.

ERA – Equal Rights Amendment

NERA - Nevadans for the Equal Rights Amendment

NEFS - Nevada Equal Franchise Society

NOW – National Organization for Women

NWP – National Woman’s Party

NAWSA – National American Woman Suffrage Association

NWSA – National Woman Suffrage Association

WCTU – Woman’s Christian Temperance Union

YWCA - Young Women’s Christian Association

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

PRE-NEVADA TERRITORY: TO 1861

The story of early Nevada has long been described and understood as male-dominated, shaped and defined by the activities of the men who explored the lands prior to its incorporation into the United States and especially of those who flocked to the early mining camps in the 1850s and 1860s to seek their fortune. Long before that, however, it was home to countless families. For thousands of years prior to Euroamerican occupation, and much longer according to native tradition, indigenous peoples have inhabited the lands that comprise modern-day Nevada. The Mohave (Mojave), Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute, Washoe, and Western Shoshone tribes trace their lineage to these early indigenous inhabitants.¹

Although the area that is now Nevada was subject to colonialist claims for centuries before statehood, such claims brought only sporadic exploration and no settlement, leaving the area's indigenous communities free to practice their cultural traditions and seasonal migrations undisturbed. In the sixteenth century, Spain claimed the area as part of its colony of New Spain, which included Mexico and the American Southwest. Claims of ownership shifted to Mexico with the advent of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821.

Despite these early colonial claims, it is widely held that Euroamericans did not physically set foot inside Nevada's current boundaries until 1827 or 1828. All male, the earliest non-indigenous individuals exploring the lands that would become Nevada included fur trappers like Jedediah Smith (1826-1827) and Peter Skene Ogden (in 1828-1829), Mexican scout Rafael Rivera (1829-1830), and guides and surveyors such as Joseph Walker (1833-1834) and John C. Frémont (1843-1845).²

In the 1840s, with the establishment of the overland trails mapped by explorers, emigrant families first began to pass through the region on their way to destinations further west. The Bartleson-Bidwell Party in 1841 is credited as the earliest emigrant train to cross the state, with the distinction of leading the first Euroamerican woman and child, Nancy Kelsey and her daughter Margaret, across the Great Basin. The most foreboding section of trail crossed the Forty-Mile Desert, a waterless expanse through the Lahontan Valley of north-central Nevada that stretched between the Humboldt Sink, where the Humboldt River ended, to the Truckee or Carson Rivers, depending on the route chosen. The unforgiving obstacle dogged and delayed travelers including the ill-fated Donner Party, who passed through the 40-mile desert and then through the verdant Truckee Meadows before ascending into the Sierra Nevada mountains in 1846.³

The migrations of individuals and families through the western Great Basin exponentially increased in 1848 due to two factors. First was the acquisition of the region by the United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, formalized on February 2, 1848, bringing the Mexican-American War to a close. In that agreement, the U.S. acquired more than 500,000 square miles, including all or part of present-day Wyoming, Nevada, California, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado.⁴

¹ Michael S. Green, *Nevada: A History of the Silver State*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015), 31.

² Green, *Nevada*, 46-54.

³ Green, *Nevada*, 54-56.

⁴ Green, *Nevada*, 60.

The second precipitating factor occurred just days before the treaty, on January 24th, with the discovery of gold at John Sutter's Mill near Coloma, spurring a rush to California that sent thousands through the lands that would later become Nevada. Approximately 15,000 to 25,000 travelers made their way overland to California in 1849 alone. Approximately 6,000 were believed to have passed through the lush Carson Valley westward over Carson Pass that year.⁵

The first non-indigenous culture to establish roots in Nevada was that of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Most of present-day Nevada became part of the newly-organized Utah Territory in 1850, on the same day that California was admitted to the Union as a state. The first Anglo settlements in western Utah Territory in the early 1850s included small trading posts established on overland routes along the Humboldt, Carson, and Truckee Rivers to provide supplies to travelers headed to California. In June 1850, so-called "Mormon battalion" members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including Abner Blackburn, Hampton Beatie, and Captain Joseph DeMont, established a temporary trading post on the west side of Carson Valley.⁶

Women were among the settlers of "Mormon Station," established nearby by church member John Reese in the summer of 1851, along with several other small settlements on the eastern front of the Sierra including Eagle Station, in Eagle Valley, just north of Carson Valley. By November 1851, approximately 100 residents of the area around Mormon Station, both church members and non-members, met to form a provisional settler's government to establish a sense of order due to their distance from Salt Lake City. By 1852 the area had assumed the contours of a Mormon farming community and in 1853, its residents petitioned to be annexed to California, which prompted Utah Territory to carve Carson County out of the westernmost reaches of four Utah counties in 1854 (Figure 3.1). In 1855, Orson Hyde arrived as the new county's appointed probate judge along with 38 Mormon settlers and renamed the community Genoa.⁷ Between 1855 and 1856 more than sixty Mormon families moved there.⁸

The LDS Church established a more short-lived outpost, the Las Vegas Mission, in the Las Vegas area in June of 1855, when it was still part of New Mexico Territory. Brigham Young selected 30 men led by William Bringham to serve as missionaries to the indigenous populations, raise crops, build a fort and settlement, and serve as a way station for travelers along the so-called "Mormon Corridor," the section of Spanish Trail extending from Salt Lake City to the Pacific Ocean. In 1856, additional members joined the missionary group, including 23 men, 14 women, and 15 children. The community built a school and welcomed its first child, Zilpha Fuller. An effort to mine lead at nearby Potosi Mountain failed, and conditions remained extremely difficult. In February 1857, Young indicated the settlers were free to close the mission and return home.⁹ Months later, amid escalating tensions with President Buchanan and an advancing federal army, Young summoned the church's settlers of all outlying areas back to Salt Lake City, prompting most of them to abandon their farms, sawmills, and other holdings, never to return.

The 1850s also brought the establishment of numerous farming and ranching centers further north of Genoa. These began as scattered trading posts and early settlements with some growing into sizable communities. Crossings of the Truckee River included Jamison's Station (1852), Stone & Gates Crossing (1857), and Fuller's Crossing (1858). Other agricultural communities emerged in the Truckee Meadows around the holdings of Peleg Brown and Granville W.

5 McBride, Terri. *Exploration and Early Settlement in Nevada*. (Historic Context, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, December 2002), 2.

6 McBride, 13.

7 McBride, 17-19, 21.

8 Jim Bertolini, *Agriculture on the Carson River in Douglas and Ormsby/Carson Counties*. (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, 2017), Section E, 21.

9 Linda Miller, "The Old Mormon Fort: Birthplace of Las Vegas, Nevada." (National Park Service, Teaching with Historic Places lesson, 2005), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-old-mormon-fort-birthplace-of-las-vegas-nevada-teaching-with-historic-places.htm>

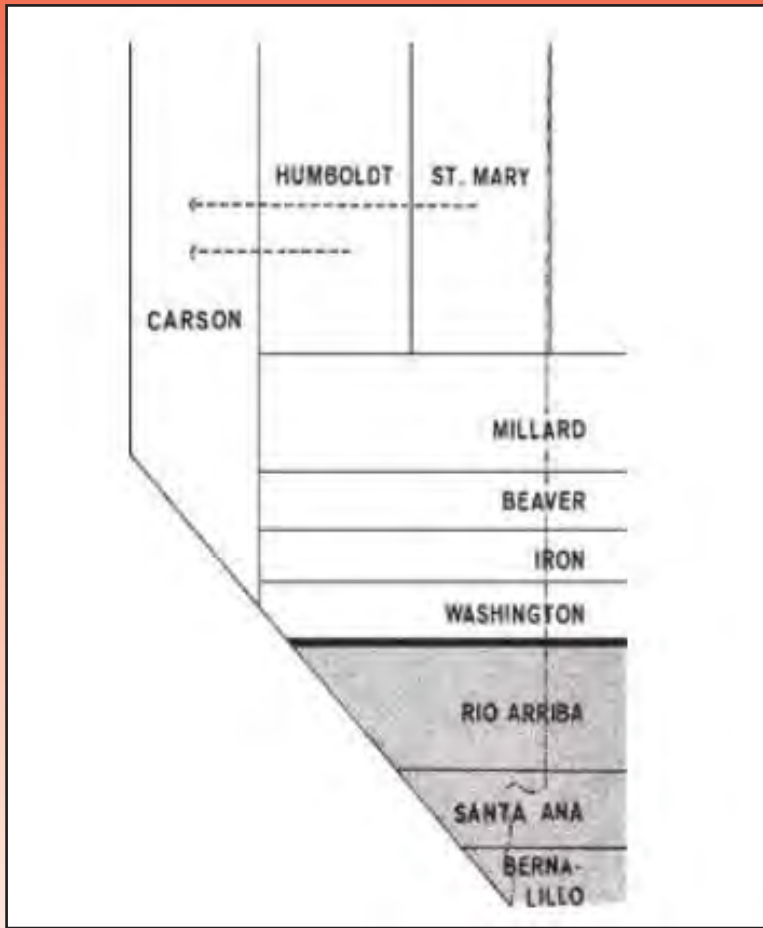


Figure 3.1 A map of the counties included in Utah Territory in 1859 that would later be part of Nevada. After Carson County was organized, Humboldt and St. Mary's Counties were attached to it for election, revenue, and judicial purposes. *State of Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau.*

Huffaker, who both purchased large amounts of land there in 1858. At the same time, the early settlement in Eagle Valley was purchased and surveyed in 1858 by Abraham Curry, who named it Carson City.¹⁰

The vast majority of those rushing to the California gold fields were men, and it wasn't long before the surge of mining activity spurred some of those men to turn their gaze to the westernmost edge of Utah territory. The year 1849 brought some early mining forays into Gold Canyon, located in the shadow of Mount Davidson, and isolated prospecting efforts continued through the 1850s. Although in the minority, at least four women were reported to be living in Gold Canyon in the summer of 1853.¹¹

The transformative moment precipitating the immigration of increasing numbers of men and women to the area occurred in the summer of 1859 with discoveries of gold and high-grade silver uphill from Gold Canyon and the Carson River, northeast of present-day Carson City. Two miners from the Six Mile Canyon community, Patrick McLaughlin and Peter O'Riley, had hit upon what would become known as the Comstock Lode. Assayers in Placerville confirmed the staggering value of the silver ore, prompting an avalanche of mining claims all around the camp that was dubbed Virginia City that September. Blocked off by snowfall, the area remained sparsely populated during that first winter of 1860, after which the rush

to the Comstock began in earnest. A thousand or more men arrived in the spring of 1860, many of them fresh from the goldfields of California. While many initially set up in canvas tents, they quickly erected wooden structures and within a few months began to assemble the rudimentary structure of a town.¹²

The 1860 federal census provided a snapshot of the non-indigenous habitation of western Utah Territory, which had a total population of 6,857 at the time, a number that included those categorized as "free colored," but not Native Americans. Of that number, 720 were women, making them 10.5 percent of the region's officially tabulated population (Table 3.1).¹³

¹⁰ McBride, 21-22.

¹¹ McBride, 20.

¹² Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 8, 11-13, 25.

¹³ *Population of the United States in 1860*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), 562-564.

Table 3.1 U.S Census: Nevada (western Utah Territory) by Sex, 1860

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Carson	6712	5992	89.3	720	10.7
Humboldt	40	40	100	0	0
St. Mary's	105	105	100	0	0
TOTAL	6857	6,137	89.5	720	10.5

In the 1860 census report, Humboldt was described as “stations on mail line” and St. Mary’s as “Ruby Valley.” *Population of the United States in 1860*.

However, the percentages of women differed widely by location. The population of Gold Hill and Virginia City, which totaled 3,017, was the most typical of a male-dominated mining camp. According to Ronald James, the community held just 111 women, making women less than 4 percent of the population. Of those, 83 were married, with a total of more than 100 children.¹⁴ In contrast, women made up approximately 23 percent of the population of Carson City, 28 percent of Carson Valley, and 35 percent of Washoe Valley, while no women at all were reported living in either Humboldt or St. Mary’s counties.¹⁵

As the calls from earlier settlers for self-determination intensified, the new surge in population had once again spurred talk of separation from Utah Territory. Male representatives of a provisional government met in Genoa in July 1859 and voted to secede from Utah Territory, sending an emissary to Washington to formally request such a separation. Nevada became a U.S. territory on March 2, 1861 through an Act of Congress signed by President James Buchanan.¹⁶

The territorial act provided for a territorial governor and secretary to be appointed by the President and a legislative assembly consisting of a Council and a House of Representatives to be elected by its qualifying residents. For the seat of state government, the legislators selected Carson City, which the Utah Territorial Legislature recently had designated the seat of Carson County.¹⁷ Territorial Governor James W. Nye, appointed by newly-inaugurated President Abraham Lincoln, initiated a census in July 1861 and determined that the territory’s population was 16,347—not counting members of the area’s indigenous tribes.¹⁸

NEVADA TERRITORY AND EARLY STATEHOOD: 1861-1889

Although the state’s mining camps remained disproportionately male, Nevada grew rapidly throughout the 1860s, and more women arrived after statehood in 1864, altering the composition of the population bit by bit. From 1860 to 1870, the percentage of Storey County residents who were male fell from roughly 95 percent to 70 percent. That gave Storey County the highest percentage of women in the state in 1870, followed closely by Washoe and Lincoln Counties (Table 3.2).¹⁹

Throughout its initial decades, Nevada consisted of isolated concentrations of population. The Comstock’s mineral wealth, centered in Virginia City, attracted many thousands of persons, most of whom were not miners. Towns, supply roads to connect them, and industries spawned by mining activities sprang up all over the region.

¹⁴ James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 31.

¹⁵ *Population of the United States in 1860*, 564.

¹⁶ Barbara K. Cegavske, *Political History of Nevada, Twelfth Edition*. (Carson City: Legislative Counsel Bureau, 2016), 117-118, 120.

¹⁷ Cegavske, 121.

¹⁸ Cegavske, 125.

¹⁹ Ronald M. James and Kenneth H. Fliess, “Women of the Mining West: Virginia City Revisited,” in Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond, eds., *Comstock Women: The Making of A Mining Community* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1997), 20.

Table 3.2 U.S. Census: Population of Nevada Counties by Sex, 1870

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Churchill	196	142	72.4	54	27.6
Douglas	1215	886	73	329	27
Elko	3447	2776	80.5	671	19.5
Esmeralda	1553	1253	80.7	300	19.3
Humboldt	1916	1548	80.8	368	19.2
Lander	2815	2204	78.3	611	21.7
Lincoln	2985	2119	71	866	29
Lyon	1837	1389	75.6	448	24.4
Nye	1087	887	81.6	200	18.4
Ormsby	3668	2798	76.3	870	23.7
Roop	133	115	86.5	18	13.5
Storey	11359	7864	69.2	3495	30.8
Washoe	3091	2173	70.3	918	29.7
White Pine	7189	6225	86.6	964	13.4
TOTAL	42491	32379	76.2	10112	23.8

Population of Nevada territory by county, 1870. *The Statistics of the Population of the United States, 1870.*

The establishment of the first transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, brought the formal establishment of many stations along its route, all in quick succession, as the Central Pacific Railroad constructed the line from west to east. Northern Nevada towns established by the Central Pacific Railroad included Reno, Lovelock, Winnemucca, Wells, and Elko. Battle Mountain, between Winnemucca and Elko, soon followed in 1869. Some of these towns had been small communities or junctions before the arrival of the railroad, which brought permanent settlement and a sense of stability. By 1880, women made up 32.5 percent of Nevada's population, an increase of 8.7 percent from ten years earlier (Table 3.3).²⁰

Women's Legal Status

Women occupied a distinctly inferior status to men in the territorial and early statehood years, as codified in the laws and legislation of newly-minted Nevada. As was the case throughout the United States, women living in the new territory were not eligible to vote or to hold offices such as the new legislative seats. As a result, women had no direct involvement in the formation of the governments of the Territory or State of Nevada or the framing of its original laws or statutes.

The territory's organizational act provided that "every free white male inhabitant of the United States above the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of said Territory at the time of the passage of this act, shall be entitled to vote at the first election, and shall be eligible to any office within the said Territory," with qualifications of voters and of holding office in future elections to be determined by the Legislative Assembly (although confined to U.S. citizens only).²¹

20 U.S. Department of the Interior Census Office, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 542.

21 United States Congress, "Act of Congress (1861) Organizing the Territory of Nevada," Nevada Legislature website, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Const/NVAdmActs.html>.

Table 3.3 U.S. Census: Population of Nevada by Sex, 1880

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Churchill	479	351	73.3	128	26.7
Douglas	1581	1125	71.2	456	28.8
Elko	5716	3911	68.4	1805	31.6
Esmeralda	3220	2469	76.7	751	23.3
Eureka	7086	5494	77.5	1592	22.5
Humboldt	3480	2509	72.1	971	27.9
Lander	3624	2564	70.8	1060	29.2
Lincoln	2637	1803	68.4	834	31.6
Lyon	2409	1779	73.8	630	26.2
Nye	1875	1380	73.6	495	26.4
Ormsby	5412	3501	64.7	1911	35.3
Roop	286	201	70.3	85	29.7
Storey	16115	9294	57.7	6821	42.3
Washoe	5664	3678	64.9	1986	35.1
White Pine	2682	1960	73.1	722	26.9
TOTAL	62,266	42,019	67.5	20,247	32.5

Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900

The U.S. Congress passed the enabling act for Nevada statehood on March 21, 1864, spurring months of discussion over the constitution to be submitted. A constitutional convention consisting of 39 elected male delegates, 34 of whom had come to Nevada from California, met in Carson City in July of 1864. The state's constitution was heavily based on the U.S. Constitution as well as the state constitutions of California and New York, the former homes of a large number of delegates and the Governor, respectively. Upon its acceptance by the federal government, Nevada became a state on October 31, 1864.²²

Statehood for Nevada was not accompanied by any particular gains for the territory's women. In its constitution, Nevada adhered to the model of the pre-Reconstruction Republican Party and did not recognize the right to vote for women upon statehood as would later happen in Washington (1889), Montana (1889), Wyoming (1890), and Utah (1896). Instead, Article II, Section 1, Right of Suffrage specifically limited the rights to suffrage and holding elected office to all qualified white male citizens of the United States who had resided in the state for at least six months.²³ The short residency requirement to establish state citizenship reflected a Jacksonian belief in the right to suffrage and an awareness of the need to promote that right for a relatively transient population, as mining tended to attract.²⁴

From a legal standpoint, women had little control over their own lives. In matters of the family, Nevada mothers had fewer rights than fathers. As Joanne Goodwin writes, "A wife was entitled to support from her husband, yet their children were considered his 'property.' A mother could have complete guardianship of her children only if

²² Green, *Nevada*, 91, 93.

²³ "Nevada State Constitution, Article II, Right of Suffrage, Section 1," Nevada Legislature website, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/Documents/HistDocs/1864Constitution.pdf>.

²⁴ Green, *Nevada*, 94.

her husband died.”²⁵ In general, married women were financially dependent on their husbands with little monetary independence or control, even over their own personal earnings. According to Goodwin, “A married woman in late nineteenth century Nevada did not have control over her wages unless she lived apart from her husband, had registered as a sole trader, or her husband gave her a ‘gift’ of her wages.”²⁶

Nevada women did have some control over their marital status. The statutes governing divorce in the region had been sympathetic to women since the period when it was governed by the laws of western Utah territory. From the early 1850s, Utah Territorial Law intended to make divorce accessible to wives, spelling out the right for women to petition for divorce on the basis of six specific causes, including impotence, adultery, desertion, habitual drunkenness, felony conviction, or “inhuman treatment so as to endanger the life of the defendant’s wife.” Judges could even award divorces based on an assessment that separation was required for the welfare of both parties. Nevada’s law replaced Utah’s to resemble California divorce but with more liberal provisions.²⁷

In her study of the 185 divorces granted in Carson County and Storey County between 1859 and 1882, Kathryn Totton found that women filed for 160 of them. As she writes, “A favorable legal climate, economic opportunities, and a tolerant community made divorce an option for the Comstock’s women. [...] Divorce offered women an alternative to remaining in an intolerable marriage or an opportunity to achieve independence.” Neither Utah Territory nor Nevada required extensive proof of charges, nor a jury. If a defendant failed to appear in court or did not respond to the suit, decrees could be permitted by default.²⁸

The state was more progressive than many others when it came to women’s rights to property. Under the system known as coverture, imported to the United States from English law, the legal status of women depended on their marital status. Women’s rights had gradually expanded since the colonial era, but there were still limits on their rights to their own earnings and property. By the 1860s, times were changing. Under the Homestead Act of 1862, women were eligible to purchase land, and some scholars suggest that this was one of the reasons that western states tended to support woman suffrage earlier than did eastern states.²⁹

Influenced by national reform movements, a woman living in the state of Nevada had the right not just to establish a homestead but to make a will and, as Goodwin explains, “to claim property separate from that of the community if she recorded it legally.”³⁰ In 1873, an “*Act defining the rights of husband and wife*” permitted married women to own, control, and register separate property and required community property to be split evenly in divorce. It also had a provision for prenuptial agreements to protect married women’s own property from becoming community property.³¹ As a contemporary newspaper account explained, “Now a wife has a separate estate, but her husband controls it. This bill gives her complete control. It also exempts the wife’s earnings as against the husband’s debts.”³²

In Nevada as throughout the country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women could be subject to involuntary committal, without a right of appeal, to psychiatric hospitals by their husbands and other family members. While committed women often did suffer from mental illness, some husbands reportedly committed their wives

25 Goodwin, “Mapping Nevada’s Suffrage Campaigns,” *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (Spring Summer 2020), 23-24.

26 Goodwin, “Mapping Nevada’s Suffrage Campaigns,” 23.

27 Kathryn Dunn Totton, “They are Doing So to a Liberal Extent Here Now,” in *Comstock Women*, 72, 94.

28 Totton, “They are Doing So,” 69.

29 Jonathan Fairchild, “Planted in the Soil: The Homestead Act, Women Homesteaders, and the 19th Amendment.” National Park Service website, <https://www.nps.gov/home/upload/Planted-in-the-Soil-The-Homestead-Act-Women-Homesteaders-and-the-19th-Amendment-2.pdf>.

30 Goodwin, “Mapping Nevada’s Suffrage Campaigns,” 23.

31 Totton, “They are Doing So,” 77.

32 “Nevada Legislature,” *The Daily Appeal* (Carson City), February 27, 1873, p. 2, column 3.

for violating accepted gender norms or out of a desire to be free of the marriage without the embarrassment or inconvenience of divorce.

The Nevada Insane Asylum, later renamed the Nevada State Hospital for Mental Diseases, and, even later, the Nevada State Hospital, opened in 1882 east of Reno. Among the reasons for commitment cited in the facility's Superintendent's reports over the years was "domestic trouble." Scattered accounts of husbands committing their wives to the facility exist, including that of Cora Wilcox Clark, whose husband committed her to the Nevada institution in 1917 because he could not get along with her. She remained at the Nevada State Hospital until her death in 1943.³³

As domestic violence was considered a private matter, few legal protections existed for women in abusive marriages or relationships. These matters were occasionally handled at the societal level, mostly through women's benevolent and temperance organizations. One unconventional and short-lived approach was modeled by the "Amazonian 601," an all-woman vigilante group on the Comstock that targeted male abusers.³⁴

One legal measure, albeit a rarely enforced one, came at the behest of state Senator W. Frank Stewart of Storey County, who in 1877 introduced Senate Bill No. 63 to punish cruelty to women to the Nevada legislature. Titled "An Act to Prevent Cruelty to Women in the State of Nevada," but better known as "Stewart's Wife Beating Bill," the statute directed each county to charge "Any male person in this State who is more than eighteen years of age, who shall willfully and violently strike, beat, or torture the body of any maiden or woman who is more than sixteen years of age" with a misdemeanor. If convicted, they were to be sentenced to be "firmly tied or lashed" to "a substantial wooden post or stone pillar" to be erected by each county in a public space, and remain there for two to ten hours, with a placard reading "'woman beater' or 'wife beater,' as the case may be." Conviction for a second offense carried a sentence of 30 days to six months in county jail. The act passed in February of 1877.³⁵

The statute came to a test in August 1879 when James McCarthy was found guilty of violating the act by abusing his wife. Sentenced to two hours of the prescribed public shaming, he was tied to a post near the Capitol fence in Carson City with a placard reading "wife beater" placed on his chest. Following a hasty legal challenge by McCarthy's attorney, Second District Court Judge Samuel D. King, Jr. deemed the law unconstitutional as a form of cruel and unusual punishment and had McCarthy set free, but only after the man had spent at least 25 minutes "in the broiling sun...subjected to the contempt and jeers of the passing crowd."³⁶ By 1912, the statute was repealed.³⁷

Women's Roles in Early Nevada

As was true across the country, Euro-American women in mid-nineteenth century America were subject to the dominant gender-based philosophies commonly known as the "cult of true womanhood," the "cult of domesticity," and "separate spheres," which framed women as inherently suited for domestic life and making the home a refuge from the materialism and competition of the world outside. Women were expected to remain in their sphere of domesticity, keeping house, raising children, and serving their husbands. Accepted activities outside the home centered on religion and charitable benevolence. Men, on the other hand, enjoyed their status as decision makers for the family and larger community. These expectations and assumptions applied to marital relationships as well as

33 ZoAnn Campana and Lauren Culleton, *For the Comfort of the Unfortunate: Historic and Architectural Contexts for the Nevada State Hospital, Sparks, Washoe County, Nevada*, 8-11; State of Nevada, *Report of Superintendent of the Nevada Hospital for Mental Diseases 1889-1900*, Nevada State Library and Archives, 16.

34 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 174.

35 *Statutes of the State of Nevada Passed at the Eighth Session of the Legislature* (Carson City, 1877), 82-83; "An Act to prevent Cruelty to Woman in the State of Nevada," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 19, 1877, 1.

36 "Wife Beating," *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 7, 1879, 3.

37 Revised Laws of Nevada, Volume II (Carson City, Nev.: Superintendent of State Printing, 1912), 1934.

to parents and children.³⁸ Gender roles were much different for members of Nevada's indigenous tribes, which were not governed by the same embedded societal expectations.

In the nineteenth century American west in particular, white women have often been stereotyped as primarily contributing to frontier communities by exerting a "civilizing impulse" on societies otherwise dominated by male aggression, violence, and competition. Without question, some women in early Nevada embraced that characterization, particularly when battling what they saw as misperceptions of the communities where they lived. Ms. Minerva Morris, an early resident of the Comstock, wrote a letter to the *Gold Hill News* in October 1863, challenging the narrative that the mining camp was a morally corrupt, lawless settlement. The letter congratulates the editors on their new printing press as an accomplishment of civilizing the Comstock, then scolds the editors to recognize additional civilizing forces, including the presence of women, children, and homes. Ms. Morris' stance echoes the prevailing belief of her time that the mere presence of women could improve the morality of a community.³⁹

On the whole, the societal roles of women throughout the late nineteenth century in Nevada remained restricted to those of dutiful wife and mother. As Anita Watson writes, "In the decades after the Civil War and on into the twentieth century, women in Nevada echoed the national pattern of working within traditional women's roles."⁴⁰ For many, that meant retaining a focus on their homes and families. As the 1870 census revealed, three-quarters of women on the Comstock claimed "keeping house" as their primary occupation.⁴¹

When it came to paid work, some of the most common pursuits undertaken by American women in the mid-nineteenth century included teaching, missionary work, writing, and prostitution. For many the work was a necessity. Undertaken both inside and outside the home, work provided women with many opportunities to earn money and, in some cases, to achieve a degree of independence.⁴²

On the Comstock and in other early Nevada communities, women's paid work primarily took the form of traditionally female occupations that were seen as professional extensions of some of their traditional domestic roles, including lodging, laundry, domestic help, teaching, sewing, and millinery. Most women living in what would become Nevada were listed in the 1860 census without reference to work, but even in the community's first year, a handful were identified with such occupations, including milliners, laundresses, seamstresses, schoolteachers, and boardinghouse operators.⁴³ Income-earning women on the Comstock between 1870 and 1890 primarily engaged in domestic work in one form or another, from lodging-house operators to housekeepers to domestic servants. There were also almost 100 female milliners, seamstresses, and dressmakers in 1880, and 66 Daughters of Charity, teachers, and nurses.⁴⁴

Some women also worked as prostitutes. But notably, despite lingering misperceptions, Ron James writes that their numbers in 1860 were very few.⁴⁵ As James points out, many Hispanic and Asian women may have been misidentified as prostitutes due to cultural misunderstandings or prejudice.⁴⁶ And those who did work as prostitutes on the

38 For some of the seminal literature on these philosophies, see Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968; Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39; and Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-74.

39 Cydnee R. McMullen, "Work Worth Doing": *Nevada Women's Clubs and the Creation of Community, 1860-1920* (PhD dissertation, University of Nevada, Reno, 2003), 48.

40 Anita Ernst Watson, *Into Their Own: Nevada Women Emerging into Public Life*. (Reno: Nevada Humanities Committee, 2000), 15.

41 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 94.

42 Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 57-58.

43 *Population of the United States in 1860*, 564-565. Ronald M. James compiled census data about occupations from original census records, which accounts for some minor discrepancies between his data and that published in the official census aggregate.

44 James and Fliess, "Women of the Mining West: Virginia City Revisited," 33-36.

45 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 31-32.

46 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 165.

Comstock occupied a full spectrum of places on the economic ladder. For instance, Rose Benjamin, a Jewish woman, ran an upscale brothel in Virginia City in the 1870s.⁴⁷

On the whole, women in early Nevada likely pursued even more types of work than have been formally documented. As Ron James notes, census records alone often do not accurately reflect the variety of activities and businesses women were engaged in at the time. Many took on numerous forms of employment to make ends meet, such as teaching, sewing, and laundering clothes. Women also tended to hold multiple jobs at a time, although this is not reflected in the census records, which, according to James, “forced simplification.”⁴⁸

There was little expectation of equality in pay between the sexes, as for the most part men and women pursued entirely different types of work. Women could experience limitations in how much they could charge for certain types of work that men also pursued. In the Comstock laundry business, for instance, competition from mechanized corporate and low-cost Chinese laundries limited the amount that individual women could charge for washing clothes, although Irish widows and single mothers could often find work within their own community. Many Irish women could make a living doing domestic work only because of the rampant discrimination against Chinese residents, who were mostly male and ran laundries or worked as domestic cooks or servants. According to James, half the female domestic workers on the Comstock, including almost all who did laundry, were Irish.⁴⁹

Affluent and educated white women had an advantage in choosing from a variety of options if they needed or wanted to work. Memoirist Mary McNair Mathews was an example of a woman on the Comstock who worked a variety of jobs. Widowed back east, where she ran a hoop skirt business, she moved to Virginia City with her son when her brother died there and remained in the area for almost nine years. There, she undertook a wide array of pursuits including opening a school, and later wrote a memoir about her experiences.⁵⁰

The best opportunity for women to acquire wealth on the Comstock was through marriage. However, it was not unheard of for women to run their own successful businesses, although those who did were limited in terms of economic mobility. Only two women on the Comstock in the 1870 census, Alice Baldwin and Anna Wiley, owned more than \$10,000 in personal or real property.⁵¹

Some of the most visible businesses operated by women were found in Virginia City, which was laid out as a grid superimposed on a hillside, with commerce strung along lettered streets. The earliest and most fashionable type of professional needleworkers to open businesses on the Comstock were milliners, and some of the most prominent, as John P. Marschall points out, were Jewish. Polish-born Sarah Loryea opened her own millinery store in Carson City in 1861. Moving to Virginia City that summer, she established her millinery operation on the second floor of her husband Joseph’s Almack Saloon on C Street, the primary thoroughfare. Her inventory was not limited to hats and included kid gloves, perfume, merino woolens, and bonnets. Loryea ran a mail-order business as well, advertising to “ladies in the interior,” which, as Marschall explains, likely referred to Nevada’s only other mining camp where women lived, the Reese River Mining District near Austin. In 1863, she opened the Loryea House Hotel in Virginia City before relocating to California, then Oregon, then back to Nevada.⁵²

47 John P. Marschall, *Jews in Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008), 99.

48 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 94.

49 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 145, 149, 219.

50 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 195; Anita Watson, “Mary McNair Mathews” (Nevada Humanities, 11 March 2011), <https://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/mary-mcnair-mathews>; Mary McNair Mathews, *Ten Years in Nevada: Or, Life on the Pacific Coast* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Baker, Jones & Co., 1880).

51 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 229.

52 Janet I. Loverin and Robert A. Nylen, “Creating a Fashionable Society: Comstock Needleworkers from 1860 to 1880” in *Comstock Women*, 122-123; Marschall, *Jews in Nevada*, 94-95.

Russian-born Louise E. Jackson arrived in Virginia City with her husband in 1861, and opened her own dressmaking shop on A Street, later combining it with her husband's clothing store in the Pipers Building, opposite the International Hotel. She later became an outspoken suffragist.⁵³ Prussian-born Fanny Mayer, one of the territory's earliest private entrepreneurs, operated a millinery above her husband's saloon on the opposite side of the International Hotel, at 6 North C Street, as early as 1863.⁵⁴

Another Jewish woman, Amelia Sheyer, became sole proprietor of Sheyer and Company Clothing Store in Virginia City after her husband's death in 1875. She ran the store for twenty years before retiring in 1895.⁵⁵ Women opened businesses such as shops and restaurants in other parts of Nevada as well. For instance, Regina Moch opened the Epicurean Restaurant under her own name in Eureka in the mid-1870s.⁵⁶

Some early Nevada women achieved economic success through ownership of real estate. As Ron James writes, "There can be little doubt that most women who acquired wealth on the Comstock did so by managing the place they lived in and owned so that its rooms produced profit," whether that management was for lodgers or prostitutes.⁵⁷ Running a boarding house was considered an acceptable, and potentially lucrative, occupation for women. Before her prosperous marriage to Sandy Bowers, Alison "Eilley" Orrum Cowan (later known as "Eilley" Orrum Bowers) ran one of the first boarding houses and restaurants in Gold Hill.⁵⁸ One African American woman, Amanda Payne, ran a boarding house in Virginia City, and eventually also a restaurant and saloon, and was quite successful.⁵⁹

Sentiments were divided over the propriety of women engaging in the mining industry. In addition to the better-known large mining corporations in Virginia City, there were also thousands of small mine operators, and in 1871, a group of women opened a mine in Virginia City, excavating an adit on B Street on their own.⁶⁰ However, according to Ronald James and Kenneth Fliess, women establishing and excavating a mine "was unusual, if not unprecedented." In an April 1871 article about the endeavor, the *Territorial Enterprise* editorialized: "We do not see any reason why women should not engage in mining as well as men. If they can rock a cradle, they can run a car; if they can wash and scrub, they can pick and shovel. Although some gentlemen friends of the ladies are attempting to persuade them from continuing work, they are determined, and we are pleased to see it."⁶¹

Not all were as encouraging of women in mining. Cornish miners reportedly upheld a strong tradition of not allowing women underground, adhering to the superstition that the presence of a woman in an underground mine would bring bad luck. As a result, according to Sally Zanjani, women miners were not allowed to work in any underground mines until the 1970s.⁶²

Investing in mines was a different matter, and many women were active in that practice. Eilley Bowers and Mary McNair Mathews represent two examples of women who traded in mining stocks and claims. It is likely that many more women did so, but as James and Fliess admit, the subject requires more research to ascertain how much trading was done by women acting independently, and how much of their trading was influenced by male family members.⁶³

⁵³ Marschall, 95; Loverin and Nylen, 123.

⁵⁴ Marschall, 95-96; Loverin and Nylen, 124.

⁵⁵ Marschall, 96.

⁵⁶ Marschall, 98.

⁵⁷ James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 222, 224.

⁵⁸ Julie Nicoletta, "Redefining Domesticity: Women and Lodging Houses on the Comstock," in *Comstock Women*, 46.

⁵⁹ James, *Roar and Silence*, 154.

⁶⁰ James and Fliess, 37.

⁶¹ James and Fliess, 37-38.

⁶² Sally Zanjani, *A Mine of Her Own: Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 103.

⁶³ James and Fliess, 38.

Another arena where a handful of Nevada women found some professional acceptance was writing. As Rebecca Mead writes, "Printing and publishing especially offered significant opportunities for women, despite the bias and hostility of male colleagues and labor unions. Many nineteenth century newspapers were small-town family businesses that provided training, income, and an intellectual outlet for women journalists."⁶⁴ In Carson City, Nellie Mighels became the owner of the *Daily Appeal* in 1879 upon the death of her husband, Harry Mighels. She also reported the news, and became the first woman to report on the Nevada State Legislature during its 1877 and 1879 sessions.⁶⁵ There she may have encountered another woman on the legislative floor, as Mary E. Wright of Storey County became the first woman to be employed by the state's legislative branch when she was hired as a copying clerk by the Nevada Assembly in 1877.⁶⁶

The indigenous women who lived in and around Nevada's newly-established communities were relegated to the lowest rungs of the social and economic ladder in these community hierarchies, with far fewer employment options than even the poorest white women. On the Comstock, Northern Paiute women lived with their families in segregated sites, often near mine dumps in dwellings constructed from discarded tin and wood. With their traditional cultural practices of food gathering disrupted by the influx of population, many of these women spent their days seeking handouts and discarded goods and occasionally working for pay as servants or laundresses.⁶⁷

White women finding themselves in economic distress after the loss or departure of a husband often found support among members of their own sub-communities. Many immigrant communities had safety nets for the widows of miners. Women who lost their husbands to the dangerous mining industry or divorce, or who were abandoned and without other means of support, might offer rooms to let. If childless, they might choose to pursue domestic work in another home.⁶⁸

Support for women and especially for children was provided on the Comstock primarily by the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, who provided a range of services to the community including a daycare, school, children's boarding, and orphanage before the State of Nevada put social service agencies into place. Their work began when Sisters Frederica McGrath, Elizabeth Russell, and Xavier Schauer arrived in Virginia City in 1864 and obtained a small house where they established an orphanage and boarding school for twelve children.⁶⁹ In 1867 the state funded the construction of a larger orphanage building for them to run, which expanded into a cluster of buildings that eventually housed hundreds of children whose parents had succumbed to illness and injury. Hundreds of girls depended on the Daughters of Charity for food and shelter; boys were generally allowed only if accompanying a sister; otherwise they were sent to Carson City as wards of the state.⁷⁰

As the only orphanage in Nevada, the orphan asylum received partial funding from the State until 1873, but otherwise, the group relied on community fundraising to keep going. Fundraising efforts for the Daughters were largely spearheaded by the women of the community, who held fairs and other entertainments to support the orphanage and schools. One fair raised \$16,000 over several days. The Daughters also relied on benefactors, such as John and

64 Rebecca J. Mead, *How the Vote Was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914*. (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 18.

65 Sally Wilkins, "Nellie Mighels Davis," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/nellie-mighels-davis/>.

66 Dana R. Bennett and Michelle L. Van Geel, "Women in Nevada Politics," *Political History of Nevada*, 12th Edition (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Secretary of State and Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, 2016), 210. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/PHoN/PHoN.pdf> Accessed September 20, 2021.

67 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 156-157.

68 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 218.

69 "Virginia City, 1864-1897," Daughters of Charity. Accessed November 12, 2021. <https://www.daughtersofcharity.com/who-we-are/heritage/virginia-city/>; Anne M. Butler, "Mission in the Mountains: The Daughters of Charity in Virginia City," in *Comstock Women*, 152-153.

70 James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 221-222.

Marie Louise Mackay, who donated the land for the four-story St. Mary Louise Hospital, which the Daughters opened in 1876.⁷¹ The Daughters of Charity remained on the Comstock until 1897, when the school and hospital closed. The building that housed the orphanage run by the Daughters of Charity has not survived, but the hospital building remains standing (Figure 3.2).⁷²

Women Shaping Education

Nevada followed national trends in the late nineteenth century as women gained a greater role in education as instructors, administrators, and students. Increasingly, the field of education provided women with opportunities to earn money as teachers and provided girls and young women with the knowledge and skills to expand their own future opportunities outside the home. Access to higher education, once available, opened up a range of additional employment opportunities for women in the late nineteenth century and beyond.

The earliest schools in Nevada, predating territorial designation, were located in the Carson Valley and run by women.⁷³ But organized educational offerings in the area were scarce until 1861, when the newly formed territorial legislature made provisions to organize and finance a public school system. Men recognized education as an appropriate occupation for women, at least until they married. Many of the women who moved to Nevada territory to teach came alone. Hannah Keziah Clapp, an experienced teacher who had accompanied a family in their move to Carson City in 1860, decided to organize a new private co-educational school with another local resident, Ellen Cutler. Clapp had an impressive background already, including service as a principal of the Female Seminary in Lansing, Michigan, and as one of the first teachers at the Michigan Female College. At her request and with the assistance of William Stewart, a prominent mining lawyer who had also just arrived, an act of incorporation for the Sierra Seminary was presented to the legislature in fall of 1861, along with a board of trustees that included some of the most prominent men in Carson City including Stewart himself and Governor James W. Nye.⁷⁴

Women also were moving to communities in other parts of the territory to teach. They included Canada-born Frances Slaven (later Williamson), who moved to the newly established community of Austin in 1863 to teach at its public school, becoming its principal in 1865.⁷⁵

Women exerted a great influence over education in the early years of statehood. Carson City had two public schools upon statehood.⁷⁶ Soon after that, Clapp successfully lobbied the legislature for funds to construct a new building for her Sierra Seminary, which opened in July of 1865, on ten acres of land she had donated herself (Figure 3.3). By then her former colleague Ellen Cutler had departed, and Clapp hired a new teacher, Eliza C. Babcock, as her assistant principal. A native of Maine, Babcock had migrated to California in the early 1860s, where she learned of the Carson City vacancy through a newspaper ad.⁷⁷ The two would run the Seminary together as well as other educational

71 Extant, 55 R Street.

72 See Anne M. Butler, "Mission in the Mountains" in *Comstock Women*; also, McMullen, 56. The hospital building is now owned by Storey County and houses a non-profit organization, St. Mary's Art Center.

73 Terri McBride and Michael 'Bert' Bedeau, *School Buildings in Nevada* (Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2008), Section E page 1, https://shpo.nv.gov/uploads/documents/64501001_-_Schools_in_Nevada.pdf

74 Kathryn Dunn Totton, "Hannah Keziah Clapp: The Life and Career of a Pioneer Nevada Educator, 1824-1908," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 20:3 (Fall 1977), 168-169.

75 Sally Wilkins, "Frances Slaven Williamson," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/frances-slaven-williamson/>.

76 Richard Moreno, *A Short History of Carson City*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2011), 46.

77 Susan H. Davis, "Elizabeth Cilicia Babcock," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/elizabeth-cilicia-babcock/>.



Figure 3.2 St. Mary Louise Hospital. *St. Mary's Art Center.*

ventures for years to come. Their school was extremely successful, and they had a house built for themselves around 1870 at 512 North Mountain Street, just south of the Governor's Mansion, which was built later.⁷⁸

Clapp's business acumen was as keen as her political instincts, and she and Babcock were two of the few women to be singled out in early Carson City histories. According to Anita Watson, Clapp wrote to Governor Nye in 1863 to request the appropriation for her school. As Watson writes, "Denied the right to be an active part of the political process as a voter or legislator, Hannah Clapp used the system to her advantage by cultivating powerful political connections with men who could use their influence on her behalf."⁷⁹ Clapp also invested in mining properties, giving her at one point a personal worth of \$100,000.⁸⁰

In Carson City in 1875, Clapp and Babcock won the bid to supply the materials for construction of a new fence to surround the Capitol complex as part of an extensive landscaping initiative. They acquired the wrought iron from a Philadelphia firm, had it shipped to Carson City, and pocketed a tidy profit.⁸¹ Despite some later claims that they won the contract without it being known they were women, their identities were obviously known in the small town (Figure 3.4).

⁷⁸ Their house remains extant; Totton, 168-170

⁷⁹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 95.

⁸⁰ Totton, 170

⁸¹ Totton, 171; Dubé Group Architecture, *Capitol Fence Historic Structure Report*, (February 2016), 10.

After a visit back east with Clapp where she took note of new kindergarten programs, Eliza Babcock opened the first kindergarten in Nevada in Carson City in 1877 and operated it for the next ten years as an extension of the Sierra Seminary.⁸²

Formal educational opportunities for Nevada's indigenous children included a school established by Sarah Winnemucca for Paiute children in Lovelock in the mid-1880s.⁸³ A Northern Paiute, Winnemucca had lived and worked briefly with her sister in William Ormsby's house in Carson City in the 1860s. Her fluency in English granted her access to powerful figures in state government, and in the years to come, she worked as an official translator and liaison between tribal members and government and military officials. She began to lecture and advocate for her people in the late 1870s and published her book *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* in 1883 (Figure 3.5).⁸⁴

By 1887, three Indian schools had been founded on Nevada reservations: the Walker River Day School (1882), McDermitt Day School (1886), and Pyramid Lake Boarding School (1887). The state legislature approved the establishment of an off-reservation "Indian school for the purpose of training and educating Indian children" in 1887, and opened what was then known as the Clear Creek Indian Training School on the southern outskirts of Carson City in 1890. The school was also known as Carson Indian School, Carson Industrial School, and later the Stewart Indian School.⁸⁵ In addition to stripping them of their traditional culture, clothing, and languages, the school provided indigenous girls and boys with vocational instruction and training that corresponded to traditional Euroamerican gender roles: dressmaking and cooking for girls, and for boys, instruction in farming, ranching, blacksmithing, carpentry, shoemaking, and printing.⁸⁶ The policy of assimilation was further promoted by the federal "Field Matron Program" instituted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1891, which sent non-native "Field Matrons" into tribal communities to teach native girls housekeeping and other household duties in addition to providing instruction in hygiene and basic medical care and nursing services. A Field Matron's Cottage was constructed at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony in Reno ca. 1926.⁸⁷

Many of the state's new educational opportunities for girls and women occurred in Reno, which became an early center of education along with a population center, benefiting from its proximity to California and its location on the transcontinental railroad line. Its status as an educational center brought increasing numbers of girls and women there for educational and professional reasons in the late nineteenth century.

Bishop Whitaker's School for Girls was established on a hill in northwest Reno in 1876 thanks to a ten-thousand-dollar gift from Katherine Lorillard Wolf of New York and property granted from the Central Pacific Railroad. It was founded by Ozi W. Whitaker, who had been the Episcopal bishop of Nevada from territorial days. This was a school for the affluent, functioning as a day school and boarding school with a dormitory for 40 students, and offering traditional education for girls as well as "finishing school" classes such as drawing, music, foreign languages, and domestic science. The principal was a Vassar graduate named Kate A. Sill and the teachers were all female with a male chaplain. It closed in 1894, and the building served a number of educational and medical related functions for many years until it was demolished (Figure 3.6).⁸⁸

⁸² Totton, 172.

⁸³ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 133.

⁸⁴ Green, *Nevada*, 151-153; Watson, *Into Their Own*, 95-96.

⁸⁵ Sarah E. Cowie, Diane L. Teeman, and Christopher C. LeBlanc, eds. *Collaborative Archaeology at Stewart Indian School* (Reno: University of Nevada, 2019), 72-74.

⁸⁶ Moreno, 86-87.

⁸⁷ Extant; Mella Rothwell Harmon, "Field Matron's Cottage," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2003), Section 8.

⁸⁸ "Bishop Whitaker's 'School for Girls,'" *Weekly Nevada State Journal*, May 19, 1877, 1; *Reno Weekly Gazette and Stockman*, June 28, 1894, 4.



Figure 3.3 Photograph of Hannah Clapp (at far right) likely with a group of students. *Nevada State Museum.*



Figure 3.4 The fence at the Nevada State Capitol. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*



Figure 3.5 Sarah Winnemucca. Nevada Historical Society.

In 1877, three Dominican sisters from St. Catherine's Convent in Springfield, Kentucky established Mount St. Mary's Academy, a boarding school for girls, also in Reno.⁸⁹ Initially housed in a small brick building at the corner of Peavine (later renamed Evans) and Fifth streets, the school had numerous locations through the years.⁹⁰ The boarding school shut down in 1892 with the exodus of Nevada's population following the decline of the Comstock, but a day school continued, and in 1898 a brick building known as St. Mary's Convent opened at the corner of Walnut and Chestnut (later renamed Arlington) streets as a non-sectarian boarding school, with an aim "to give young girls a solid Christian foundation to fit them for higher education at the State University." The boarding school had 30 pupils in December of 1901.⁹¹

Access to higher education for women was key to the women's rights movement from the outset. The *Declaration of Sentiments* presented at the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848 had pointed out among the examples of man's tyranny over woman that, "He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her."⁹² Women could attend a handful of female-only academies and teaching seminaries beginning in the mid-1700s, but institutions offering a complete college education equivalent to what was offered to

men only began to appear in the mid-1830s, and there were no coeducational institutions of higher education in the United States before 1835. The educational landscape for American women changed significantly in the 1860s with the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which enabled the establishment of land grant colleges throughout the west. Most of the public institutions founded as a result of the act were open to women; in fact, of the 34 public institutions of higher learning founded between 1861 and 1880, 24 (71 percent) were either founded as coeducational institutions or became so within a decade.⁹³

⁸⁹ William D. Rowley, *Reno, Hub of the Washoe Country*. (Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984), 25.

⁹⁰ "Mt. St. Mary's Academy," *Reno Weekly Gazette*, February 20, 1879, 5.

⁹¹ "Dominican Sisters' School," *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 21, 1901, 4. The school, which is no longer extant, was said to be built in 1897 at 243 W. 6th Street (now part of the St. Mary's Hospital complex).

⁹² *Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19th and 20th, 1848. Proceedings and Declaration of Sentiments*. Available at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbcmil.scrp4006702/?sp=10>.

⁹³ Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, "Putting the 'Co' in Education: Timing, Reasons, and Consequences of College Coeducation from 1835 to the Present," *Journal of Human Capital*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 2011), 377, 389-391.



Figure 3.6 Members of Bishop Whitaker's School for Girls, circa 1883-1893. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

The Nevada Constitution used the language of the Morrill Act to require the Legislature to “provide for the establishment of a State University, which shall embrace departments for Agriculture, Mechanic Arts, and Mining.” It was formally founded in 1874 in Elko, a location selected mainly for political reasons, as the incumbent Governor in 1873 was from Elko County. There, the institution served solely as a University Preparatory School, and throughout its eleven years in Elko, the principals and instructors were all male.⁹⁴

In 1885 the university moved to Reno, where there was a larger population, initiating its association with a series of accomplished and educated women who played central roles in Nevada’s woman suffrage movement and other social and cultural initiatives. The first college-level courses were offered there in 1887.⁹⁵ Although it was at first controversial, a Normal School to train teachers was founded at the university in 1888.⁹⁶ One reason that the privately-run Whitaker’s School had closed was that the university moved to Reno and started to offer preparatory instruction at no charge.

Colleges located in the western United States were more likely to admit and hire women out of necessity. By 1890, there was a surge of female students at schools including the University of Chicago and Stanford University.⁹⁷ The pattern also held true for Nevada’s only institution of higher learning. After suffering some financial setbacks after the Comstock’s decline, Hannah K. Clapp had secured some political appointments in the 1880s including positions as Assembly Committee Clerk in 1883 and Senate Copy Clerk in 1885.⁹⁸ The Nevada Board of Regents appointed Clapp

⁹⁴ James W. Hulse, *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), 16, 19.

⁹⁵ Hulse, *The University of Nevada*, 9.

⁹⁶ Hulse, *The University of Nevada*, 113.

⁹⁷ Rosalind Rosenburg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: The Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 44.

⁹⁸ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 93-94.



Figure 3.7 Hannah Clapp. *Nevada Historical Society.*

as the first assistant and faculty member to Dr. LeRoy D. Brown, who became the University's president in 1887. She served as both instructor for English and History and remained on as the librarian.⁹⁹ According to James Hulse, she also served as a preceptor and advisor to young women enrolled there (Figure 3.7).¹⁰⁰

In addition to working as instructors and staff at all levels, women finally could serve in other decision-making capacities for local education by the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1889 the Nevada state constitution was amended to allow women to run for election as school superintendents and school trustees. Right away, women were elected to those positions throughout the state. New school superintendents included Mrs. Josephine Taylor in Elko County and Mrs. Susan Miller in Humboldt County. Female trustees were elected in Hamilton district in White Pine County and to every trustee post in the Galena and Lewis districts in Lander County.¹⁰¹

Women Moving into Civic Life

The entrance of women into the public sphere in pursuit of shared civic and political goals, in Nevada as elsewhere in the United States, had its roots in earlier collective social and religious activities. Many women sought first to educate themselves by attending public talks and

lectures before moving on to civic projects focused on community improvement and, eventually, political action that culminated in the passage of women's suffrage and other goals.¹⁰²

The earliest women's social organizations in the United States have been traced to church-sponsored auxiliaries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which by the mid-nineteenth century had shifted away from ministerial control to become independent entities.¹⁰³ Many groups on the Comstock followed this pattern. In 1863, Father Patrick Manogue founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society as a charitable arm of the Catholic Church. Composed of both men and women, the group provided community relief on the Comstock. The Ladies' Mite Society of Gold Hill, affiliated with St John's Episcopal Church, hosted entertainments to raise money for charitable purposes.¹⁰⁴ Two

⁹⁹ Hulse, *The University of Nevada*, 29, 105.

¹⁰⁰ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 160

¹⁰¹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 97

¹⁰² McMullen, 42-43.

¹⁰³ McMullen, 28-33.

¹⁰⁴ McMullen, 57-58.

Jewish benevolent groups had been founded on the Comstock by 1865, and elsewhere in Nevada, women belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints engaged in benevolent work through LDS Relief Societies.¹⁰⁵

Women who engaged in this kind of work under the auspices of churches, ethnic groups, or locales did so with a primary mission of benevolence, fundraising for charity and relief efforts in concert with men's fraternal organizations. Many of the earliest community relief efforts of women on the Comstock benefitted the Civil War-era Sanitary Commission. Both men and women were eager to demonstrate their patriotism and support for the Union cause, and Comstock women hosted a series of fundraising balls and fairs between 1862 and 1864. The women belonging to these clubs operated in the upper and middle classes of Comstock society, and a secondary purpose of these clubs was to provide a social outlet for the affluent. Their ladies' societies hosted fairs, balls, and other social events in addition to garnering funds and gathering goods for the poor.¹⁰⁶

Women's fundraising efforts were generally anonymous as opposed to those of men; instead of crediting female individuals or even organizations, the papers tended to cite the "ladies of Gold Hill" or the "ladies of Silver City." On the other hand, men involved with fundraising for the Sanitary Fund were commended by name in press accounts. This relative anonymity conformed to contemporary gender roles discouraging women from having public identities.¹⁰⁷

According to Cydnee McMullen, the antebellum phase of women's clubs was characterized by a transition from participation by women in male-directed organizations to forming auxiliaries to those organizations, in which women could attain a degree of leadership. Only after the Civil War did women begin to create and lead independent clubs of their own, beginning with the founding of the first women's club in Boston in 1868 by Caroline Seymore Severance. Even after statehood, women's clubs on the Comstock fit into the antebellum phase of development, whereas other women's organizations in Nevada represent the second, or postbellum, phase of development. The women of Virginia City and Gold Hill frequently joined auxiliaries to fraternal organizations, church-affiliated ladies' aid societies, and temperance groups.¹⁰⁸

The Temperance Movement

One of the first reform movements to garner the participation of large numbers of Nevada women was temperance. The movement brought attention to the familial and social repercussions of alcohol use among men and targeted many social ills that were often associated with excessive use of alcohol, including domestic violence. As Ruth Bordin explains, "Women did not see participation in the temperance cause as a challenge to prevailing gender roles because they were only performing their accepted duties as wives and mothers."¹⁰⁹

Some temperance organizations had been in Nevada since the territorial years. The earliest was the Sons of Temperance, reportedly organized on the Comstock in 1860. By 1864, the 180 members of Virginia City Division No. 2 of the Sons of Temperance were meeting in the Odd Fellows Hall.¹¹⁰ Another division, Pioneer Division No. 1 of the Sons of Temperance, active by 1866, seems to have broadened into the Sons and Daughters of Temperance by 1868.¹¹¹ By the late 1860s, there were two temperance organizations in Virginia City: the Sons and Daughters

¹⁰⁵ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ McMullen, 48-49.

¹⁰⁷ McMullen, 50-52.

¹⁰⁸ McMullen, 43-44.

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Bordin, *Frances Willard: A Biography*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 67.

¹¹⁰ Charles Collins, *Mercantile Guide and Directory for Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, and American City, 1864-65* (San Francisco: Agnew & Deffebach, 1864), 31.

¹¹¹ *Gold Hill Daily News*, May 28, 1866, 3; *Gold Hill Daily News*, October 1, 1868, 2. Accounts of the founding dates for these organizations vary. See James, *The Roar and the Silence*, 311 n. 33.

of Temperance, Pioneer Division No. 1, which had a room on South C Street; and the International Order of Good Templars, Champion Lodge No. 6, which met at the Odd Fellows Hall.¹¹² Mary McNair Matthews was active in the movement in Virginia City, where she recounted participating in entertainments as well as fundraisers for the cause, and personally solicited signatures on petitions to support temperance bills at the state legislature.¹¹³ Temperance groups demonstrated interest in other issues, as well. In 1870, the Sons and Daughters of Temperance sponsored a debate on women's rights in Virginia City.¹¹⁴

The temperance movement gained a new national structure led by women when the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was founded in 1874 in Cleveland, Ohio. Experienced college educator and administrator and suffrage advocate Frances Willard became its second president in 1879 and presided over an expansion of the organization's goals to embrace a number of social reforms beyond temperance. Her philosophy of "Do Everything," although initially conceived as a description of tactics rather than goals, expanded over the next eight or nine years to include support for woman suffrage, free kindergarten, social purity, the labor movement, scientific temperance education in public schools, prison reform, and other causes.¹¹⁵

A branch of the WCTU was formed in Reno in 1882 out of a previously existing temperance group, the Reno Reform Club, which had been organized in 1879.¹¹⁶ The organizational meeting for the Nevada WCTU was held at the Reno Methodist Church in 1883 at a meeting led by national leaders Frances Willard and Anna Gordon. The first state convention was held in Reno in 1885 and by 1888 Nevada had fifteen active unions.¹¹⁷

The temperance movement channeled the energies of increasing numbers of women into social and political reform, gradually expanding their roles in public life. As Cydnee McMullen writes, "Some [women], like Susan B. Anthony, moved from 'socially accepted' causes like temperance and moral reform into the struggle for women's rights. While a minority adopted this more radical political stance, women in general began to stretch the ideology of a woman's place to include a public role--a role that later nineteenth century women's groups referred to as 'municipal housekeeping.'"¹¹⁸

Suffrage Activities in Early Statehood, 1864-1880s

National efforts to attain woman suffrage were well underway by the time Nevada became a state in 1864. The Seneca Falls Convention in New York state in July of 1848, considered the first women's rights convention in the United States, had brought national attention to calls for expanding women's rights. There, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had read aloud the "Declaration of Sentiments," which was modeled after the *Declaration of Independence* and demanded that women be given all the rights and freedoms that the 1776 document had guaranteed to men.¹¹⁹

Despite the proliferation of women's rights advocates on the Eastern seaboard, women gained the legal right of suffrage out West much earlier than in other parts of the country. Rebecca Mead attributes this to a number of interrelated factors including "the unsettled state of regional politics, the complex nature of western race relations, broad alliances between suffragists and farmer-labor-progressive reformers, and sophisticated activism by western

¹¹² McMullen, 68.

¹¹³ Anita Ernst Watson, Jean E. Ford, and Linda White, "'The Advantage of Ladies' Society': The Public Sphere of Women on the Comstock," in *Comstock Women*, 193.

¹¹⁴ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 45.

¹¹⁵ Bordin, 130-145, passim; Watson, *Into Their Own*, 43.

¹¹⁶ "Jottings," *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 2, 1879, 3; "Christian Union," *Weekly Nevada State Journal*, April 29, 1882, 3.

¹¹⁷ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 45.

¹¹⁸ McMullen, 32.

¹¹⁹ "The Seneca Falls Convention," U.S. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/july-19>. Accessed September 12, 2021.

women.”¹²⁰ Legalization of woman suffrage in the American west sometimes accompanied territorial designation, a fact some have attributed to the range of constitutional questions many were grappling with at the time.¹²¹

Although that did not occur in Nevada as it later would in Wyoming (the first state or territory to grant woman suffrage in 1869) and by the territories of Utah (1870), Washington (1883), Montana (1887), and Alaska (1913), suffrage was an active topic of debate and discussion in the early years of Nevada statehood. Early Nevadans came to the state from a variety of geographical locations and had been exposed to many influences elsewhere. Suffrage efforts began very early in Nevada and were undertaken by both women and men, including some male state legislators.

Touring speakers spurred some of the first public discussions of woman suffrage in Nevada. One of the earliest to publicly lecture in the state was Laura DeForce Gordon, who had moved west with her husband, first to a short-lived mining and milling community in Churchill County, Nevada called White Plains, and then to Lodi, California. She began to tour Nevada towns in 1867, speaking at first primarily about Spiritualism, which attracted many early suffragists as “an individualistic form of transcendentalism with a radical feminist critique of organized religion.”¹²² In August 1867 and 1868, DeForce Gordon spoke in several Nevada communities including Carson City, Dayton, Virginia City (at the M.E. Church), Gold Hill (at the Gold Hill Theater), and Austin (at Bradford’s Hall).¹²³ By 1868 she had made her speaking debut in San Francisco with an electrifying public speech called “The Elective Franchise--Who Shall Vote?” and her topics began to include suffrage, including a speech in Austin in June 1868 (Figure 3.8).¹²⁴

It took less than five years after statehood for woman suffrage to be introduced at the Nevada legislature. In early 1869, Assemblyman Curtis J. Hillyer, an attorney from Virginia City, proposed legislation to remove the word “male” from the state’s suffrage clause.¹²⁵ Then as now, the Nevada legislature only convened for regular sessions every other year, and in order to be enacted, a bill required passage in two subsequent legislative sessions, spaced two years apart, followed by a vote by the people, making this only an initial, but a crucial step.

In a speech delivered in the Assembly on February 16, 1869, Hillyer argued that being subject to the same laws, obligations of citizenship, and burdens as men entitled women to the right to vote. He likened women’s disenfranchisement to tyranny, pointing out the hypocrisy of imposing taxation without representation, and suggesting that women, possessing superior morality, would assuage corruption in politics with their vote. Hillyer also listed the contributions of women to the state, and accused men of being cowards for trying to keep women out of the political system.¹²⁶

Hillyer presented the bill to both houses of the legislature, and after some initial struggles and some apparent last-minute lobbying to convince a few reluctant legislators, it passed both the Assembly and Senate.¹²⁷ In the same session, on March 1, 1869, Nevada became the first state to ratify the 15th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting the vote to African American males, a law that was ratified nationally in 1870. Legislators also passed a bill to amend the state’s constitution by eliminating the word “white” from the suffrage section in order to conform to the 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. From the 1870 election onward, Nevada’s small population

120 Rebecca J. Mead, *How The Vote Was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914*. (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 1.

121 Mead, 2.

122 Mead, 19.

123 Jean Ford and James W. Hulse, “The First Battle for Woman Suffrage in Nevada: 1869-1871--Correcting and Expanding the Record,” *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 177; Watson 63; *Gold Hill Daily News*, December 14, 1867, 3; *Gold Hill Daily News*, November 30, 1867, 3; *Gold Hill Daily News*, December 7, 1867, 3.

124 Ford and Hulse, 177; *Gold Hill Daily News*, June 30, 1868, 2.

125 Ford and Hulse, 178.

126 Hulse, *The Silver State*, 158-159.

127 Ford and Hulse, 9.



Figure 3.8 Laura De Force Gordon in 1887. *U.S. Library of Congress.*

of black men could vote, while those of indigenous or Asian heritage were still excluded from the franchise along with all women.¹²⁸

Nevada's woman suffrage bill of 1869 had many supporters, both male and female. But its detractors also included both sexes, including Mrs. Anna Fitch, wife of U.S. Congressman Thomas Fitch, who argued against Hillyer's points in a front-page letter to the *Territorial Enterprise* in April 1869 that argued, among other things, "woman's nature is wholly emotional" making her best suited to the domestic sphere.¹²⁹

Still, it seemed an auspicious time for suffrage efforts. In addition to the news about Wyoming passing woman suffrage in December of 1869, a Woman's Rights Ball was held at Bowers Mansion on New Year's Eve of that year.¹³⁰ Nationally, the woman suffrage movement was thriving, although it had undergone a split in 1869, when the more radical National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, diverged from the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) led by Henry Ward Beecher and Lucy Stone.¹³¹

Rural northern Nevada became a somewhat unlikely hub of suffrage activity in the period between the 1869 and 1871 legislative sessions, with efforts supported by both sexes. Winnemucca's newspaper, the *Humboldt Register*, was a key vehicle; one of its publishers was state Senator McKaskia S. Bonnifield, who along with the *Elko Independent's* John I. Ginn and Len Wines of Elko, organized the state's first suffrage convention, originally to be held in Winnemucca on July 4, 1870.¹³² They planned this event with "the purpose of adopting measures to organize the friends of the enfranchisement of woman in this state," according to Joanne Goodwin, and as Dana Bennett writes, "sought to extend the momentum" begun with the passage of the amendment in 1869.¹³³

Shortly after planning began, the venue was changed to Battle Mountain, a nearby community just established in 1868 with the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. The switch reportedly occurred solely because Senator

¹²⁸ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 23.

¹²⁹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 65-66

¹³⁰ Ford and Hulse, 180.

¹³¹ Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 3-4.

¹³² Ford and Hulse, 180-181.

¹³³ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 25; Dana R. Bennett, *All Roads Lead to Battle Mountain: A Small Town in the Heart of Nevada, 1869-1969* (Battle Mountain: Lander County Historical Society, 2014), 50.

Bonnifield happened to move his law practice there from Winnemucca in 1870.¹³⁴ Bonnifield's acknowledged role as the primary driver of the convention and subsequent praise for his support of woman suffrage is complicated by his apparent motive of diluting the African American vote. He voted against ratification of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution when the Nevada legislature met in March of 1869.¹³⁵ And in a letter sent to the *Humboldt Register* in November of that year, Bonnifield wrote, "We have been, and are now opposed to the extension of the elective franchise. But if the Fifteenth Amendment becomes a part of the Constitution of the United States, the columns of the Register will not only be open for the discussion of female suffrage, as it is now, but we will advocate it, got for it, and vote for it, and encourage it by every possible means in our power, in the State of Nevada."¹³⁶ Such statements demonstrate the need to complicate representations of male support for woman suffrage, as that support could well have been prompted by motivating factors other than the pursuit of or belief in equity or rights for women.

Although small, Battle Mountain proved just as convenient for the 1870 convention as Winnemucca would have been. The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 had revolutionized travel, both within the state and into the state from elsewhere. As a result, small communities like Battle Mountain could play a major role in state events. The convention was held at the Capitol Hotel, adjacent to the railroad tracks, on July 4, 1870, with Senator Bonnifield serving as chair. The hotel burned down in 1918 and a historical marker was installed at the site in the summer of 2020 (Figure 3.9).¹³⁷

According to Rebecca Mead, the convention was coordinated (not just attended) by California suffragist Emily A. Pitts-Stevens and Laura DeForce Gordon. Both had participated in California's first state suffrage convention in San Francisco in January of 1870 and were delivering speeches throughout Nevada that summer.¹³⁸

Pitts-Stevens was the publisher of the first women's rights journal in the American West, the *Pioneer*, which she published in San Francisco from 1869 to 1873.¹³⁹ DeForce Gordon, like many other western suffragists, had affiliated with the NWSA and Susan B. Anthony when the NWSA split from the AWSA. She had by the time of the convention become a well-known speaker throughout the state, and was elected president by the attendees, whose names were not recorded.

DeForce Gordon followed the convention with a lecture tour, traveling throughout Nevada in the summer of 1870 to campaign for suffrage, including an appearance at Piper's Opera House in Virginia City on July 22.¹⁴⁰ Attendance at the talk on the Comstock was "poorly attended" according to the *Territorial Enterprise*.¹⁴¹ In August she spoke in Carson City, Dayton, and the Virginia City's M.E. Church. She additionally spoke in Galena, Battle Mountain, and Elko, accompanied for at least some of the tour by Pitts-Stevens.¹⁴² She reportedly formed a women's suffrage society on the Comstock in a meeting at the Gould and Curry mine offices, but it appears that this was their only meeting.¹⁴³

These advocacy efforts did not prove successful, at least in the short run. All amendments to the Nevada Constitution must be passed at two successive meetings of the legislature, but Assemblyman Hillyer did not return to the legislature in 1871; in fact, only seven members who had served in the Assembly in the previous session had returned. John Bowman of Nye County moved to indefinitely postpone discussion of the Hillyer amendment, an effort that failed

134 Bennett, *All Roads Lead to Battle Mountain*, 50.

135 "The Passage of the Constitutional Amendments," *The Daily Appeal* (Carson, Nev.), March 3, 1869, 2.

136 "Bonnifield on the Possibilities," *The Daily Appeal* (Carson, Nev.), November 9, 1869, 2.

137 Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's," 25.

138 Mead, 159; "Woman. State Convention of Female Suffragists," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 28, 1870, 4.

139 Mead, 18, 159.

140 An advertisement for the lecture appears in Watson, *Into Their Own*, 64.

141 Ford and Hulse, 183.

142 *Gold Hill Daily News*, August 2, 1870, 3; *Gold Hill Daily News*, August 9, 1870, 3.

143 Watson et al, "The Advantage of Ladies' Society," in *Comstock Women*, 197.



Figure 3.9 The Capitol Hotel in Battle Mountain, visible behind the trees on the right, across from the railroad depot. *Battle Mountain Cookhouse Museum.*

when it was explained that by law the Assembly must vote it up or down at the session. Two Assemblymen from White Pine County arranged for Laura DeForce Gordon to speak in the Assembly chamber of the Capitol building one evening, which she did for two hours in support of suffrage. Nevertheless, the amendment was voted down by the Assembly by a margin of 19-25. A motion to reconsider the next day failed by one vote.¹⁴⁴ Some clearly resented the involvement of women they perceived as outsiders in state affairs, or perhaps simply the tone of the suffragists' demands. After the measure's failure, the editor of the *Territorial Enterprise* wrote, "We think the resolution should have been adopted, and would have been, doubtless, but for the over-officiousness of the strong-minded women of the coast."¹⁴⁵

The suffrage debate did not simply disappear after that. With DeForce Gordon's assistance, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony both spoke in Nevada later in 1871. Stanton spoke at the opera house in Virginia City in August, while Anthony spoke in Carson City and at the National Guard Hall in Virginia City in December on the tail end of a western speaking tour, as she and DeForce Gordon were traveling to attend a national suffrage meeting back East.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Ford and Hulse, 184; Watson et al, "The Advantage of Ladies' Society," in *Comstock Women*, 198.

¹⁴⁵ Mead, 159.

¹⁴⁶ Ford and Hulse, 186; Watson, *Into Their Own*, 69-71; *Gold Hill Daily News*, December 23, 1871, 4.

Legislators did introduce some suffrage legislation in the 1870s and 1880s, but none was successful. Hannah Clapp was among those who worked on Nevada Legislature equal franchise resolutions in 1883, 1885, 1887, and 1889.¹⁴⁷ In 1883 a bill passed the Senate but not the Assembly. In 1887, both the Senate and Assembly passed their own legislation but “could not come to a workable compromise.” In 1889 another measure failed in the Assembly.¹⁴⁸ Although the number of women living in Nevada continued to climb, just surpassing 36.1 percent of the state’s population by 1890 (Table 3.4), it would be some time before Nevada allowed its women to vote.

PROGRESSIVE ERA: 1890 THROUGH 1914

Nevada’s population decreased on the whole between 1880 and 1890 due to the decline of mining on the Comstock and reduced migration, and dropped even further by 1900. And yet by the end of the nineteenth century, the percentage of women in the state increased to nearly 40% of the population, as average ages also rose (Table 3.5).¹⁴⁹

The Progressive Era, generally understood as spanning the last decade of the nineteenth century through the first two decades of the twentieth century, was characterized by a range of enthusiastic efforts to reshape various aspects of American society, including causes pertaining to women’s rights and citizenship.¹⁵⁰ In Nevada as elsewhere, many women entered the public sphere for the first time in this period to advocate for issues related to civic betterment and public morality, including but not limited to temperance, which had already garnered many female supporters.

Women’s Clubs in the Progressive Era

Women’s entry into public advocacy related to civic betterment was often described in terms of “municipal housekeeping,” using domestic imagery to describe the expansion of women’s roles and to deflect criticism of that expansion into the public spheres traditionally claimed and dominated by men. The idea that women possessed a distinctive morality that should be applied to the world outside of the home was a central tenet of many women’s clubs from the 1890s into the 1950s.¹⁵¹

These clubs provided women with the structures to organize collective efforts for change. More than mere social networks, women’s clubs allowed their members to claim citizenship and transition into the public sphere, essentially “professionalizing” them.¹⁵² Women engaged in club work as a method to influence politics and shape policy.¹⁵³ Many women’s clubs engaged in political activities including lobbying legislators, which familiarized their members with the legislature and the law-making process. Exposure to the workings of Parliamentary procedure (Robert’s Rules) by which meetings were conducted also helped women to “increase their familiarity with the literate practices of legislative activity.” Plus, club participation imbued its members with skills of negotiation, public speaking, and networking.¹⁵⁴ It essentially prepared women for political and civic participation pending their right to engage in the process as voters and legislators. As Rebecca Mead writes, “In the 1890s, suffrage gained respectability as more moderate temperance and clubwomen became involved, frequently radicalized by their experiences in social reform.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 160.

¹⁴⁸ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 71

¹⁴⁹ Green, *Nevada*, 154.

¹⁵⁰ McMullen, 20-21.

¹⁵¹ McMullen, 36

¹⁵² McMullen, 28.

¹⁵³ Cynthia Cicero, *Claiming Citizenship: Las Vegas’ Conventional Women’s Organizations Establishing Citizenship Through Civic Engagement*, (Master’s Thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 2013), 18-19.

¹⁵⁴ Bennett, “Smokin’ in the Boys Room: A Case Study of Women State Legislators in Nevada, 1919-1931,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 31, no. 1 (2010), 103.

¹⁵⁵ Mead, 2.

Table 3.4 U.S. Census: Population of Nevada Counties by Sex, 1890

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Churchill	703	444	63.2	259	36.8
Douglas	1551	1055	68	496	32
Elko	4794	3072	64.1	1722	35.9
Esmeralda	2148	1544	71.9	604	28.1
Eureka	3275	2200	67.2	1075	32.8
Humboldt	3434	2324	71.8	1110	28.2
Lander	2266	1379	60.9	887	39.1
Lincoln	2466	1609	65.2	857	34.8
Lyon	1987	1293	65.1	694	34.9
Nye	1290	846	65.6	444	34.4
Ormsby	4883	3238	66.3	1645	33.7
Roop*	0	0	0	0	0
Storey	8806	5144	58.4	3662	41.6
Washoe	6437	3931	61.1	2506	38.9
White Pine	1721	1135	66	586	34
TOTAL	45,761**	29,714	64.9	16,547	36.1

* Roop County was officially annexed to Washoe County in 1883.

** The 1890 U.S. Census added 1,594 on top of this total to Nevada's population for "persons specially enumerated" on Indian reservations.

Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900

Table 3.5 U.S. Census: Population of Nevada Counties by Sex, 1900

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Churchill	830	506	61	324	39
Douglas	1534	922	60	612	40
Elko	5688	3575	62.9	2113	37.1
Esmeralda	1972	1218	61.8	754	38.2
Eureka	1954	1209	61.9	745	38.1
Humboldt	4463	2971	66.6	1492	33.4
Lander	1534	962	62.7	572	37.3
Lincoln	3284	2086	63.5	1198	36.5
Lyon	2268	1361	60	907	40
Nye	1140	688	60.4	452	39.6
Ormsby	2893	1587	54.9	1306	45.1
Storey	3673	1933	52.6	1740	47.4
Washoe	9141	5333	58.3	3808	41.7
White Pine	1961	1252	63.8	709	36.2
TOTAL	42,335	25,603	60.5	16,732	39.5

Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) was formed in New York City in 1890 to bring local, independent clubs into a national association. Jane Cunningham Croly helped organize the Federation with the belief that a national coalition of women's groups would amplify the influence of local clubs and provide a network for ideas and strategies.¹⁵⁶ By 1923, the network boasted more than 13,000 chapters throughout the U.S. GFWC's core themes included beautification, sanitation, and civic service.¹⁵⁷

The movement spread throughout the American West, too. As Rebecca Mead writes, "the western women's club movement expanded rapidly in the 1880s and 1890s, and many clubwomen began to argue that the externalization of many decisions affecting family welfare required female civic participation."¹⁵⁸ By the late nineteenth century, the culture of women's clubs was woven into the fabric of middle-class American society. According to Cynthia Cicero, women "carried their club culture with them wherever they lived, organizing clubs in communities where there were none."¹⁵⁹

Indeed, in the 1890s and after 1900, women's clubs rapidly formed throughout Nevada, spurred by the notion of "federation at the state and national levels."¹⁶⁰ Most settlements with a substantial female population had a GFWC-affiliated club. Their members addressed a wide variety of issues and eventually played a major role in Nevada suffrage, but that happened gradually over time. Cydnee McMullen asserts that "suffrage was too controversial--and divisive--an idea for most Federation clubs until about 1906, when a GFWC committee urged its support at the biennial convention." Suffrage received gradual support from women's clubs over the years until a resolution passed overwhelmingly at the GFWC's Chicago convention in 1914.¹⁶¹

Reno's Twentieth Century Club was the first significant and successful women's club in Nevada and became the model for subsequent clubs in the state.¹⁶² The club exemplified what Cydnee McMullen describes as the postbellum model of women's clubs, which emphasized community action, expanding beyond the antebellum club work of temperance, church, and charity.¹⁶³ Local women had previously attempted to form a club called the Women's Congress Auxiliary to the California Congress with no success.¹⁶⁴

The Twentieth Century Club was founded on June 4, 1894 by a group of 50-60 women meeting at Reno's Odd Fellows Hall. Its founding intent was to provide "a broader cultivation of women and promotion of public welfare." The club joined the GFWC in 1897.¹⁶⁵ Although many local women were involved in its formation, the effort's leader was a newcomer. Mila Tupper Maynard was a graduate of Cornell University who was ordained as a Unitarian minister the year she graduated. After serving as a pastor in Indiana and Michigan and working at Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, she moved with her husband, Rezin, to Reno in 1892. Within a year, she and Rezin were co-pastors of the Reno Unitarian Church. Identified with Christian socialism, she taught courses at the University of Nevada, befriended Anne Martin, and lectured frequently on many social reform issues including the labor question.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶ McMullen, 38.

¹⁵⁷ Cicero, 20.

¹⁵⁸ Mead, 3

¹⁵⁹ Cicero, 19

¹⁶⁰ McMullen, 44.

¹⁶¹ McMullen, 41.

¹⁶² McMullen, 44.

¹⁶³ McMullen, 75.

¹⁶⁴ McMullen, 78.

¹⁶⁵ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Nancy Oakley, "Mila Tupper Maynard," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/mila-tupper-maynard/>.

One of the club's important early campaigns was for kindergartens. Hannah Clapp and Eliza Babcock were by this point central to the educational community in Reno. They were founding members of the Reno Kindergarten Association, which was formed in 1895 to open a free public kindergarten in Reno. With the support of the Twentieth Century Club, the school opened in March of 1895, with instruction from a trained teacher, Abby Nichols, sent from the Golden Gate Kindergartens of San Francisco. The kindergarten met at Bishop Whitaker's School and was later moved to the Riverside School and then the Old Congregational Church.¹⁶⁷

The Twentieth Century Club worked with the Reno Kindergarten Association in 1901 to secure enough money to purchase a lot at the corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets and construct a kindergarten building there. A former student of the Sierra Seminary who had become an architect in San Francisco, Mr. Bliss, donated the architectural plans. Named the Babcock Memorial Kindergarten (a condition imposed by Clapp on her \$1,000 donation), the building served as a kindergarten from December 1901 until 1932. It was converted into an administrative building for several decades and eventually demolished.¹⁶⁸

The Twentieth Century Club met for many years at Eagle Hall, at the corner of Second and Virginia Streets, yet they hoped to construct a new building. Many prominent local businessmen and politicians contributed to the group's building fund, including Senators Francis G. Newlands and George Nixon.¹⁶⁹ In 1906, the group purchased the clubhouse that served as headquarters for the Nevada Club, a gentleman's club that had been established in Reno in 1893. The spacious building, which contained a hall with separate reading and reception rooms, was located on Chestnut Street (the original name for Arlington Avenue), just north of its intersection with West First Street (Figure 3.10).¹⁷⁰

The state's extended economic depression came to a welcome end in the first decade of the twentieth century amid a flurry of mining discoveries in south-central and eastern Nevada that nearly doubled the population within a single decade (Table 3.6).¹⁷¹ Earlier settlement had clustered around the Comstock, Reno, and Carson City, with some isolated activities along railroad lines and around mining sites. Between 1900 and 1910, new mining discoveries and railroad networks prompted the founding of Tonopah, Goldfield, Ely, and Las Vegas. Sparks was founded when the railroad shops in Wadsworth moved to a site just east of Reno. The establishment of these new towns led fairly quickly to the founding of more women's clubs throughout the state.¹⁷²

The mining discoveries at Tonopah in 1900 and Goldfield in 1902 in particular brought a significant surge of population to central Nevada. Within a few years, Goldfield became the largest town in the state. The Goldfield Women's Club was founded in September of 1906 "to stimulate intellectual development, advance philanthropic and reformatory efforts and aid in civic betterment of the community." In its first year, the club boasted 70 members, even more than Reno recorded in the same period.¹⁷³ One of the founders and first president was Blanche Sprague, who became a charter member of the Mesquite Club after moving with her husband to Las Vegas.¹⁷⁴

The Goldfield Women's Club first met at the Ladies Aid Hall, moving to the Episcopal Guild Hall. The club purchased a lot and building at 613 East Crook Street in September 1908.¹⁷⁵ Most of the club's early work was dedicated to

167 Susan H. Davis, "Elizabeth Cilicia Babcock," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/elizabeth-cilicia-babcock/>

168 Davis, "Elizabeth Cilicia Babcock"; McMullen, 80-81.

169 *Nevada State Journal*, November 4, 1906, 6.

170 Not extant; *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 29, 1893, 3; *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 24, 1906, 5.

171 Green, *Nevada*, 161.

172 Green, *Nevada*, 169-171.

173 McMullen, 107.

174 Cicero, 21

175 Not extant.

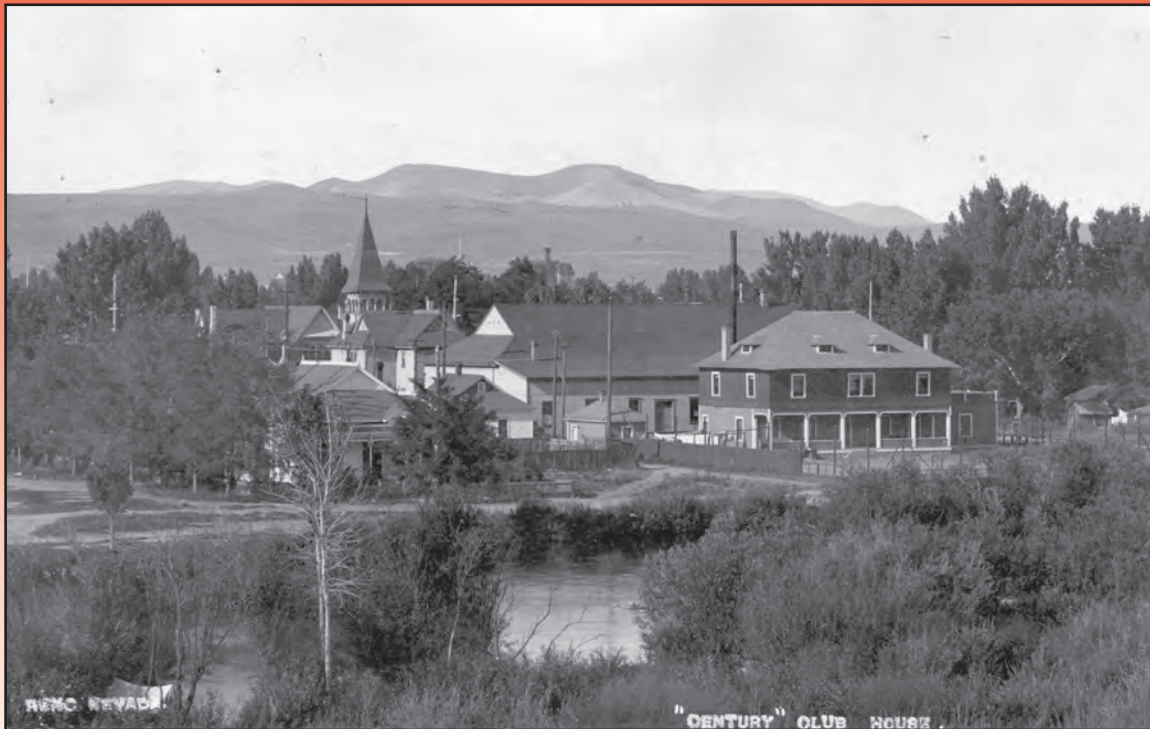


Figure 3.10 The clubhouse purchased by Reno's Twentieth Century Club in 1906 (far right, with white pillars) as viewed from the south bank of the Truckee River. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

Table 3.6 U.S. Census: Population of Nevada Counties by Sex, 1910

County	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Churchill	2,811	1,694	60.3	1,117	39.7
Clark	3,321	2,078	62.6	1,243	37.4
Douglas	1,895	1,167	61.6	728	38.4
Elko	8,133	5,546	68.2	2,587	31.8
Esmeralda	9,369	5,992	64	3,377	36
Eureka	1,830	1,183	64.6	647	35.4
Humboldt	6,825	4,677	68.5	2,148	31.5
Lander	1,786	1,198	67.1	588	32.9
Lincoln	3,489	2,516	72.1	973	27.9
Lyon	3,568	2,339	65.6	1,229	34.4
Nye	7,513	4,959	66	2,554	34
Ormsby	3,415	1,944	56.9	1,471	43.1
Storey	3,045	1,781	58.5	1,264	41.5
Washoe	17,434	10,307	59.1	7,127	40.9
White Pine	7,441	5,170	69.5	2,271	30.5
TOTAL	81,875	52,551	64.2	29,324	35.8

Thirteenth Census of the United States taken in the Year 1910

relief activities. They also lobbied for the Esmeralda County Commission to install public water fountains throughout town to ensure citizens access to fresh water without having to enter a saloon, as well as to provide water to the community's stray cats and dogs. By 1910, the GWC began to test promotion of women's issues. That year, the club supported a bill allowing women to become notary publics. By 1914, the club openly supported women's suffrage.¹⁷⁶

Reno's Twentieth Century Club invited the women's clubs throughout the state to send delegates to a state convention on October 30, 1908 to celebrate the state's 44th birthday and to form a state federation of women's clubs. Organized by Mrs. Sarah Emeline "Emma" Mack, the gathering was held at the Twentieth Century Club House. Attending the first meeting were delegates from the Twentieth Century Club of Reno, the Leisure Hour Club of Carson City, Toiyada Club of Manhattan, and Women's Club of Yerington, with clubs from Tonopah, Goldfield, Winnemucca, and other communities expected to join soon after. On the same day they elected their first officers, they endorsed the efforts of the Anti-Gambling League of Reno.¹⁷⁷ Although the Carson City, Yerington, and Manhattan clubs were more explicitly literary and culturally-oriented in nature, they did not shy away from causes, lobbying for a state law to grant equal child custody laws for both of a child's parents, supporting a bill to create a delinquent children's home in Elko, and offering educational loans for both boys and girls.¹⁷⁸

In its earliest years, the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs (NFWC) included two branches: District 1 (Reno, Goldfield, and Yerington) and District 2 (Lincoln County and Clark County). By 1919, it had expanded to three branches: District 1 (Elko, White Pine, Eureka, Lander, and Humboldt counties), District 2 (Lincoln, Clark, and eastern Nye counties), and District 3 (Western Nevada, Pershing, and Churchill counties). The state federation sought state funding for libraries, oversight of adoption regulations, financial assistance for children, and property rights and individual citizenship for women.¹⁷⁹

Southern Nevada joined the state's growing network of women's clubs after the founding of Las Vegas in 1905. Delphine Squires, Frances Dunlap Farnsworth, Blanche Sprague, and Esther Kelsey Givens organized the Mesquite Club in Las Vegas in 1911 at the home of Katherine Enking.¹⁸⁰ The club's name was suggested by Helen J. Stewart, a charter member who had moved to the area with her husband in the 1870s, and by 1890 had become the largest landowner in the county (Figure 3.11).¹⁸¹ One of the primary goals of the club, according to the first meeting, was "advancing women." The club additionally focused on civic improvement projects, most notably the planting of trees throughout Las Vegas. The Mesquite Club affiliated with the NFWC and the GFWC within a year (Figure 3.12).¹⁸²

The Mesquite Club met at first in a grammar school, and then at the high school between 1912 and 1914 in rooms set aside for high school students. Neither school remains standing.¹⁸³ By 1915, the club met in a room in "the old courthouse." They then built a small clubhouse building of 20' x 30' in 1933 at 607 S. Fifth Street.¹⁸⁴ In 1937, in advance of hosting the state federation, they expanded it and landscaped the grounds.¹⁸⁵

176 McMullen, 113, 116, 117, 125.

177 "Women Plan to Fittingly Observe Birthday of State of Nevada," *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 11, 1908, 5; "Officers are named for new federation of women's clubs," *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 2, 1908, 5.

178 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 31.

179 Cicero, 21.

180 Not extant.

181 Cicero, 22; Carrie Townley Porter, "Helen J. Stewart," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/helen-j-stewart/>

182 Cicero, 24.

183 Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 34-35.

184 Not extant.

185 Mrs. Charles P. Squires, "History of the Mesquite Club is Related," *Nevada State Journal*, March 27, 1938, sec. 2, 1.

In partnership with the NFWC, the Mesquite Club created a student loan fund in 1917 for young girls to gain enough education to be self-supporting and less dependent on men; it eventually opened up to qualifying male students as well.¹⁸⁶

Elko's Twentieth Century Club was founded by 14 women in 1912. For its first several decades, members were dedicated to civic betterment projects including the establishment of a Public Library, a municipal swimming pool, and the Legion Hall Park.¹⁸⁷

Suffrage in the 1890s

Despite the convening of a state convention in Battle Mountain in 1870, advocates of suffrage had not established any enduring suffrage-specific organizations in Nevada. That changed in the mid-1890s as the centers of the suffrage movement shifted to Reno and Austin, 89 miles south of Battle Mountain in Lander County.

It was from Austin that educator and author Frances A. Williamson emerged to lead the suffrage charge in Nevada in the 1890s. Born in Canada, she had moved to Austin to teach in 1863, soon became the principal, and married John R. Williamson, a mercantile operator and superintendent of schools. A Republican, he served as an Assemblyman for Lander County from 1884 to 1888 and then a state senator from 1890 to 1894. The couple's family story was a

tragic one; four of their six children died from disease in the 1870s, and their eldest son died in 1891. After suffering what was described as "a mild form of insanity," Frances' husband died by suicide in April 1894.¹⁸⁸

With one surviving child, Frances Williamson became an ardent advocate for Nevada woman suffrage, penning persuasive articles for various newspapers and gathering the forces. On November 30, 1894, she and two other suffragists organized a suffrage meeting at the Lander County Courthouse in Austin (Figure 3.13). There, the 125 attendees formed the Lucy Stone Non-Partisan Equal Suffrage League, which its constitution described as "auxiliary to the National American Woman Suffrage Association."¹⁸⁹ The name reflected its inspiration as well as its aspiration. Stone, who had died in 1893, was a co-founder of the AWSA. The two organizations that had split before, the AWSA



Figure 3.11 Helen J. Stewart, ca. late 1800s. UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.

¹⁸⁶ Cicero, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Bartlett, Ruth T., "History of Elko Unit is Told," *Nevada State Journal*, March 27, 1938, sec. 2, 1.

¹⁸⁸ Sally Wilkins, "Frances Slaven Williamson," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/frances-slaven-williamson/>

¹⁸⁹ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaign," 27.



Figure 3.12 Members of the Mesquite Club pose on an unidentified porch at a Colonial Tea event in 1912. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

and NWSA, merged by 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Organization (NAWSA).¹⁹⁰ The non-partisan approach reflected a keen understanding of the need to cross party lines to move legislation forward.

Contributing to the revival of interest in woman suffrage in Nevada in the mid-1890s was the rise of Populism, the agrarian-oriented political movement that rose out of the Farmers' Alliances of the 1880s and embraced various reform efforts. Several members of the People's Party serving in the state Assembly helped orchestrate robust discussion of suffrage and the introduction of legislation during the 1895 legislative session. Suffrage supporters and opponents rallied at the State Capitol for the Assembly's afternoon session on February 11, 1895. Crowding into the chamber were "numerous ladies," including Mrs. Adeline Hardesty of Elko, Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, Mrs. Emma Adams, Mrs. Mary Frances Colcord, Mrs. Alice Rickey, Mrs. Felice Grimmon, who served as matron of the Orphans' Home, Mrs. Lucy Williamson of Austin, Mrs. Mila Tupper Maynard of Reno, Mrs. Anna Coryell, Mrs. Mary Hinman, and Mrs. Hannah Flannigan.¹⁹¹

It is important to note that not all the women appearing in the chamber that day were likely to have been suffrage supporters, a distinction that contemporary accounts did not specify. Many like Mila Tupper Maynard clearly were there in support of the measure, but others like Emma Adams, the wife of former Governor Jewett W. Adams, who would later become President of Nevada's anti-suffrage society, may have been present to voice their opposition.

¹⁹⁰ Corinne McConaughy, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in America: A Reassessment*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.

¹⁹¹ "The State Legislature," *Nevada State Journal*, February 12, 1895, 3.



Figure 3.13 The Lander County Courthouse, pictured in 1951. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

With H.H. Hogan, a People's Party assemblyman from Reno serving as chair, the Assembly took up the resolution "to strike out the word 'male' from the qualifications for voters in the State Constitution."¹⁹² Assemblyman Henry Hudson (H.H.) Beck, another member of the People's Party from Reno, briefly introduced petitions in favor of the resolution from the *Reno Gazette* office (with 640 signatures), one "from the men of Douglas County very unanimously signed, and a similar one from the eastern part of the state." At the request of Assemblyman Beck, Mila Tupper Maynard had the rare honor of speaking directly to the Assembly on the topic of suffrage for nearly an hour.¹⁹³ The newspapers described her speech as "eloquent," writing that it "elicited a number of rounds of merited and appreciative applause." The Assembly voted down a suffrage amendment immediately afterward, but the resolution was revived later by the Senate, passing both there and at the Assembly.¹⁹⁴

That May, Williamson worked with Hannah Clapp and Mary Stoddard Doten of Reno and Dr. Eliza Cook of Carson Valley to organize an event at McKissick's Opera House in Reno (Figure 3.14).¹⁹⁵ President and Vice President respectively

¹⁹² "The State Legislature," *Nevada State Journal*, February 12, 1895, 3.

¹⁹³ "The State Legislature," *Nevada State Journal*, February 12, 1895, 3.

¹⁹⁴ Nancy Oakley, "Mila Tupper Maynard"; Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 27.

¹⁹⁵ Not extant.

of the NAWSA, Susan B. Anthony and Anna Howard Shaw, both attended and spoke at the event on their way to California, committing to supporting Nevada's efforts on the national level.¹⁹⁶

The National American Woman Suffrage Association called for a mass meeting in Reno that October, specifically to form a Nevada State Suffrage Association.¹⁹⁷ In advance of that meeting, a group of Reno's suffrage supporters founded a local suffrage club at the Congregational Church.¹⁹⁸ At the state convention on October 30 and 31, again held at the Opera House, attendees renamed their league the Nevada State Equal Suffrage Association, adopted a Constitution, and elected Williamson president, Clapp first vice president, and Cook the second vice president.¹⁹⁹ NAWSA organizer Emma Smith DeVoe, who had played a major role in organizing the event, delivered an address about the purpose and aim of organizing the Woman Suffrage Organization.²⁰⁰ University of Nevada president Joseph E. Stubbs, a committed advocate of woman suffrage, was also in attendance, opening the meeting with a devotional.²⁰¹

Efforts continued throughout the next year, with Williamson traveling the state by stagecoach and rail, helping found local suffrage groups, testifying about suffrage before a U.S. Senate committee, and representing Nevada at the national meeting of the NAWSA.²⁰²

The organization held its second state convention in Reno in September 1896 with Williamson named state organizer and lecturer. Both Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt spoke at McKissick's Opera House in Reno in November 1896. In 1897, Williamson moved with her daughter, Mary Laura, to Reno, where they founded *The Nevada Citizen*, which was adopted by the Nevada State Equal Suffrage Association as its official voice at their third state convention.²⁰³ Before that, however, the focus shifted back to Carson City for the 1897 legislative session, where the suffrage amendment was up for its second required vote. Unfortunately, the legislation followed the same pattern in 1895 and 1897 that had happened in 1869 and 1871, failing to pass during its second round through the legislature.²⁰⁴

Suffrage supporters remained undaunted, holding a third annual convention of the Nevada State Equal Suffrage Association in October 1897. Mrs. Elda Orr delivered an address to the annual convention of the Nevada Equal Suffrage Association where she proclaimed, "Men are not *the* people....They cannot be *a* people without us."²⁰⁵

The final attempt of the century to enable suffrage for the female citizens of Nevada came in 1899, when Nye County Senator George Ernst introduced a suffrage amendment that passed the Senate but secured no Assembly support.²⁰⁶ After that, Nevada's suffrage movement came to a virtual standstill until 1910. Worth noting, however, is that in their 1899 session, the state legislature did approve a \$300 allocation for "constructing and furnishing a ladies' toilet in the Capitol Building," an apparent acknowledgment that women had a regular presence in the building.²⁰⁷

196 Goodwin, "Nevada's Campaigns for Woman Suffrage," 117

197 Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 27.

198 Not extant.

199 Goodwin, "Nevada's Campaigns for Woman Suffrage," 117.

200 Mead, 159.

201 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 75.

202 Goodwin, "Nevada's Campaigns for Woman Suffrage," 118.

203 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 75

204 Goodwin, "Nevada's Campaigns for Woman Suffrage," 118.

205 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 11

206 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 75, 77.

207 Dana R. Bennett and Michelle L. Van Geel, "Women in Nevada Politics," 211.



Figure 3.14 The McKissick Opera House was constructed in 1887 at the northeast corner of Plaza and Sierra Streets in Reno. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

Women's Rights and Social Reform in the Progressive Era

Thanks in large part to the knowledge and organizational skills many women had gleaned through participation in women's clubs, suffrage, and other activities, Nevada's women became more active in lobbying for and pursuing various reforms and legislative actions intended to benefit women and families throughout the Progressive Era.

The WCTU continued to engage in active political lobbying beyond opposition to the liquor lobby. Together Nevada's fifteen active temperance unions helped to defeat a lottery bill in 1888. In 1890, the Reno WCTU purchased a lot on the corner of Second and West Streets, and designated it as the site for a state headquarters.²⁰⁸ The Nevada WCTU supported suffrage at the state legislature in 1891.²⁰⁹

Several Nevada women assumed leadership roles in both the WCTU and the suffrage movement, seeing enfranchisement as the key to enacting desired prohibition laws. Among them was Dr. Eliza Cook, who served as president of the Nevada WCTU from 1896 to 1901. The first female physician to be licensed (although not the first to practice medicine) in Nevada, Cook had moved to the Carson Valley with her family in 1870, eventually attended the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia, and established a practice in Carson Valley by the early 1890s.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Not extant.

²⁰⁹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 43, 45.

²¹⁰ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 125, 127.

The efforts of the Nevada WCTU to ensure greater protections for women and girls in particular continued in the new century. In 1909, WCTU members petitioned the state legislature to raise the age of consent to 18 for girls, after it had been lowered to 14 in the previous session. Political pressure succeeded in raising it to 16.²¹¹ In 1910, a member of the Reno WCTU, Beulah Hershiser Leonard--identified by historian William Rowley as "a Nevada historian" and supporter of suffrage--wrote to Senator Francis G. Newlands urging him to support the Mann Bill, a federal law, passed in 1910, that made it illegal to transport women across state lines for purposes of prostitution.²¹²

Also during the 1909 legislative session, the Twentieth Century Club advocated for the establishment of a juvenile court system in Nevada. The club adopted a resolution to support the Juvenile Court Bill, which passed at the state level. The club then shifted its focus to the county level, appealing to the Washoe County Commission to establish a juvenile court, as newly allowed by state law, in order "to make provision for the better care of dependent, neglected, and incorrigible children."²¹³

Nevada's female reformers applied their energies to confronting an especially wide range of issues, some unique to the state, that many perceived as threats to the well-being of women, children and families, either due to their inherent immorality or a more indirect impact, including gambling, prizefighting, and the migratory divorce trade.

Nevada's legalization of prizefighting in 1897 made it a target of Nevada's "purity Crusade," which promptly labeled it the "Nevada disgrace." Taking a less judgmental approach was writer and publisher Nellie Mighels Davis, who covered the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight in Carson City on March 17, 1897. In doing so, she became the first female to report on a prize fight, and used her maiden name while reporting for a Chicago paper out of concerns for propriety. According to Richard Moreno, "She later recalled that she was one of only a handful of women at the fight and nearly all the rest were prostitutes."²¹⁴

In the spring of 1908, Reno women, including members of the Twentieth Century Club, formed the Women's Civic Reform League to lobby for an anti-gambling measure on the city ballot. Gambling had been legal in Nevada since 1869 and had remained a fixture in the state even as other states methodically began to prohibit the practice. In January of 1908, the Twentieth Century Club adopted resolutions denouncing gambling and encouraging its banishment from the city of Reno. The initiative was defeated, in part because most who supported it were women and therefore unable to vote. Undeterred, the Women's Civic Reform League and Twentieth Century Club lobbied at the State level in 1909, speaking out in support of a bill that would ban gambling throughout Nevada.²¹⁵ This measure passed, going into effect in October 1910, although some forms of gambling would be re-authorized through legislation introduced in subsequent sessions.²¹⁶

Another cause uniting many Nevada women was lobbying against the state's incipient migratory divorce trade. Existing divorce laws discovered by out-of-staters capitalized on the convergence of two facets of Nevada law: the ability to become a state resident in six months, and a wide array of available grounds by which state residents could sue for divorce. The option of traveling to Nevada to quickly establish residency and take advantage of those laws started to gain national coverage in 1905, and by 1910, migratory divorce was a serious business that had made Reno a household name. In 1910 the divorce trade put Reno on the front page of *The New York Times* and the term "the Reno cure" was in full usage.²¹⁷

211 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 101.

212 Rowley, *Reno, Hub of the Washoe Country*, 38.

213 McMullen, 92

214 Moreno, 77.

215 McMullen, 87-88.

216 Green, *Nevada*, 192

217 Alicia Barber, *Reno's Big Gamble: Image and Reputation in the Biggest Little City* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 56-60.

To many club and church groups, the state's lax requirements for divorce made Nevada complicit in weakening the stability of families, leading many reformers to try to prevent migratory divorce from becoming a fixture of Nevada culture. A lobbying effort to extend the residency requirement from six months to a year in 1913 (the Barnes bill) was highly organized. With the encouragement of the Twentieth Century Club, women wrote and petitioned state legislators to support the change. The V&T Railroad transported a delegation of reformers from Reno to Carson City, where they packed the legislative chambers. One of the leaders was Pearl Bartlett, whose husband, George Bartlett, would later become Reno's most famous divorce judge. The 1913 campaign to extend the residency period to one year was a success, but a short-lived one. Business interests doubled their efforts, lobbying the state legislature in 1915 to restore the six-month residency period, which they did.²¹⁸

The Nevada Suffrage Movement Intensifies

As female activists and women's groups became more involved with politics during the reform era, the disenfranchisement of women presented a substantial obstacle to achieving meaningful change. As Corinne McConaughy writes:

Making headway with the partisan politicians that controlled state and federal governments was an incredibly difficult task for disfranchised women. It was, in fact, the nearly paradoxical reason for many suffragists' insistence on voting rights in the first place: frustrated in their endeavors to influence legislation on issues ranging from prohibition, to protection for women and children in the labor force, to provision of public parks and playgrounds, women with reform interests increasingly saw a need for electoral leverage. Yet, if unable to influence reform legislation without the vote, how would women influence legislators to adopt legislation for new voting rights? The challenge, suffrage movement leaders realized, was to find a way to give woman suffrage political meaning that entailed consequences for party success.²¹⁹

As Frances Williamson had recognized in the 1890s, it was critical that suffrage transcend party politics in Nevada, as elsewhere. For their part, the political parties acknowledged that women's political inclinations and affiliations were as heterogeneous as those of men. Often, they were connected to geography: Northern women tended to be Republican; Southern women tended to be Democrat; Populists were more common in the South and West. Because there was no clear "suffrage party," women formed alliances with already enfranchised groups (farmers, laborers, prohibitionists, progressives), across political lines, and those groups pressured legislators to heed an organized demand for women's voting rights.²²⁰

Success of the woman suffrage movement depended on savvy coalition-building. Once activists realized the benefit of investing their scarce resources in coalitional politics, they harnessed leverage to make politicians "accountable to a new group of voters in response to pressure from their current electorate."²²¹ McConaughy calls this strategy "programmatic enfranchisement," a tactic with a steep learning curve as suffragists gradually adopted a coalitional approach.

The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), led by Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, was the largest national suffrage organization. Considered the moderate branch of the national woman suffrage movement, the organization formed as a coalition of Progressive Era reformist groups. NAWSA supplied state suffrage campaigns, including Nevada's, with funding, paid organizers, and speakers, and Dr. Shaw herself traveled throughout

²¹⁸ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 101-102.

²¹⁹ McConaughy, 50.

²²⁰ McConaughy, 52.

²²¹ McConaughy, 91.

Nevada to advocate for suffrage.²²² The group's organizational strategy was to mirror political parties, with district committees and precinct captains. Its goal was to generate and demonstrate a district-based demand for suffrage.²²³

Educated and relatively affluent white women led the campaign for suffrage in Nevada. They were both married and unmarried, and many, although not all, were employed outside the home. In this way, they echoed national trends, as in the late nineteenth century, increasing numbers of women across the country joined the labor force, in roles largely dictated by their socioeconomic class and, in some cases, ethnic background. Improved technologies not only decreased the amount of energy and time demanded by routine household work, but also created new employment opportunities for women. In a major shift, many married women began to take jobs outside the home after 1890. Daughters of well-off families enrolled in colleges and some sought advanced professional training in fields including law, social work, and medicine.²²⁴ As Sally Zanjani points out, by 1900 one-fifth of the 25 million women in the United States had entered the workforce, but the majority of those women were young and single, and left after seven or eight years when they married.²²⁵

Efforts to promote suffrage and women's rights in Nevada were bolstered by the infusion into civic life increasing numbers of a type of educated, professional woman commonly described as the "New Woman." First emerging in the 1880s and 1890s, these were confident and independent women who began to demand equality in education, employment, and wages, and who began to work in earnest to secure the vote. Many of them were college-educated and pursuing many new and different types of jobs, for which they had higher expectations.²²⁶

The slow but steady growth of the University of Nevada in Reno attracted and nurtured a number of such women, who came to serve key roles there and in the suffrage movement. Two of the most prominent and influential were Anne Martin and Jeanne Wier. Martin had moved to Reno with her family in 1883, attended Bishop Whitaker's School for Girls, and then received an A.B. from the University of Nevada in Reno (1894), followed by an A.B. (1896) and M.A. (1897) at Stanford University. She returned to Reno in 1897 to teach History at the University of Nevada (then known as Nevada State) and serve as the department's first head.²²⁷

Nevada State not only enrolled women but had hired a number of female instructors since hiring Hannah Clapp in 1887.²²⁸ Most of them had attended either the University of California, which opened to women in 1870, or Stanford, which admitted both men and women when it opened in 1891. The two co-educational institutions offered the primary university opportunities in the U.S. West for women at this time.²²⁹ Both were quite convenient for northern Nevadans to attend.

When Martin requested a leave from teaching at the university in 1899, she recommended that Jeanne Elizabeth Wier be appointed to teach history in her place. Wier was working on her degree at Stanford at the time. After moving to Reno, she remained at the university for four decades.²³⁰ Martin returned from her leave in 1901 but taught just a few classes after that, while Wier remained a full-time instructor of History and Political Science, and also became one of

222 Jo Freeman, *We Will Be Heard: Women's Struggles for Political Power in the United States* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 134; McConaughy, 219.

223 Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 134; McConaughy, 238.

224 Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 109-116.

225 Sally Zanjani, *A Mine of Her Own: Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 7.

226 Carol Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 177; Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 28.

227 Kathryn Louise Anderson, "Practical Political Equality for Women: Anne Martin's Campaigns for the U.S. Senate in Nevada, 1918 and 1920" (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1978), 27-31.

228 *Artemisia* (University of Nevada yearbook, 1899), 10-17, <https://archive.org/details/artemisiayearboo1899stat/page/10/mode/2up>.

229 Su Kim Chung, "We Seek to Be Patient": Jeanne Wier and the Nevada Historical Society, 1904-1950," (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2015), 65.

230 Hulse, *The University of Nevada*, 108.

the founders of the Nevada Historical Society in 1904, for which she served as executive secretary. On November 1, 1909, Katherine Mackay, daughter-in-law of Comstock King John W. Mackay, wrote Wier from New York City, asking her whether a branch of the Equal Franchise Society could be started in Nevada. (Figure 3.15).²³¹

Wier responded positively, and the effort to found a state branch of the Equal Franchise Society began. Central to its establishment was Felice Cohn, one of a few female attorneys who lent their professional expertise to Nevada's suffrage movement in the 1910s. Women had been eligible to practice law in Nevada since 1893, when Laura M. Tilden persuaded the Nevada legislature to pass an act giving women the right, and herself became the first woman to pass the state's bar exam on July 23, 1893. Although a number of women followed Tilden's lead in the 1890s, just a few, including Cohn, went on to practice law in the state.²³² A native of Carson City, Cohn, like Anne Martin, had attended Nevada State and then Stanford University. She was admitted to the bar in 1902 at age 18, and by 1906 had become the first female assistant district attorney.²³³

The Nevada Equal Franchise Society (NEFS) was formally founded during a well-attended meeting at the Odd Fellows Hall in Reno in January 1911. Its 47 members elected Margaret Stanislawsky president. Assisted by Emma Mack, Cohn drafted a resolution that formed the basis of the legislation they introduced in February into the legislative session, stating simply, "There shall be no denial of the elective franchise at any election on account of sex."²³⁴

Although Wier had helped found the NEFS, she did not remain closely involved due to her extensive responsibilities at the university and historical society. Still, according to Jill M. Winter, Wier played a critical role, assuring prospective members of the new NEFS that the militant tactics used by the English suffragettes "would not be condoned in Nevada."²³⁵

On February 20, 1911, "about a dozen" suffrage supporters including Stanislawsky took a special train of the V&T Railroad, the "State House Limited," from Reno to Carson City for the introduction of the resolution, Assembly Joint and Concurrent Resolution No. 6. Several women addressed the legislature directly, including Stanislawsky and Cohn, who spoke on the legal status of women in Nevada.²³⁶

²³¹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 77.

²³² Guy Rocha, "Myth #72: Stepping Up to the Bar: Female Attorneys in Nevada," <http://renodivorcehistory.org/wp-content/uploads/imported-library/myth-072-nsla.pdf>, accessed September 22, 2021

²³³ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 77. It is unclear whether this means the first one anywhere, or just in Nevada.

²³⁴ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 79; Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 30.

²³⁵ Jill M. Winter, "From Women's Suffrage to ERA and Beyond: Women's Rights in Nevada," in *Beyond ERA: A Women's Agenda for Nevada* (Nevada Public Affairs Institute, University of Nevada, Reno, 1983), 5.

²³⁶ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 30; Watson, *Into Their Own*, 77; "Women storming the Assembly today," *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 20, 1911, 2.



Figure 3.15 Jeanne Wier in 1913. *Nevada Historical Society.*

As the head of the NEFS legislative committee, Cohn was responsible not just for the basis of the legislation's language, but also for the strategy of conciliatory legislation that the group adopted to gain support for it. Winter credits the bill's success to the fact that Jeannie Wier was successful and well-respected, that Nevada's clubwomen supported it, and that a number of prominent men worked for it.²³⁷ The resolution was voted on in the Assembly on March 6 and by the Senate a week later, and was adopted just days before the legislative session ended.²³⁸

Advocates of suffrage soon began to organize to secure a second favorable vote at the next session of the legislature in 1913, after which the measure would go before state voters. Leaders of many local and state organizations worked to urge their membership to promote suffrage and took leadership roles in the movement. Exemplifying these convergences was Florence Humphrey Church (Figure 3.16). From 1912 to 1914, Church labored to inspire the Twentieth Century Club to be more political and active in the suffrage movement, despite the club's "no-politics" provision and active anti-suffrage members who vehemently opposed those efforts. She was elected vice president of the local WCTU in 1911. At some point she was the president of the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs and president of the Twentieth Century Club.²³⁹

At the time, the NEFS predominated in the urban areas of Reno and Carson City, and its membership consisted primarily of clubwomen. To win the second vote in the legislature, suffragists would need to expand their reach outside of Nevada's urban centers and galvanize the rural population to support the enfranchisement of women. Anne Martin spearheaded the rural Nevada campaign.²⁴⁰

After she resigned from her teaching position at UNR in the early 1900s, Martin had traveled to the United Kingdom, where she studied at the London School of Economics. During her time overseas, she worked on English women's suffrage, joining Emmeline Parkhurst's Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), a militant feminist organization that staged marches and demonstrations. Her time with WSPU enabled her to formulate ideas and strategies for suffrage back in the United States upon her return in 1911. After the state legislature passed suffrage the same year, Martin was eager to apply her experience in England to the suffrage movement in Nevada.²⁴¹

Martin's return to Nevada allowed her to acquire experience in organizing a political movement and developing persuasive strategies for women. She developed a strong network of Nevada supporters to keep the issue alive in local communities. She also generated contacts with the national suffrage movement, which raised her political profile, and fostered connections with suffragists from other states who would eventually assist her future campaigns for the U.S. Senate.²⁴²

Martin immediately joined the NEFS, becoming its president in February 1912 when Margaret Stanislawsky resigned and moved to California. Serving as vice president of the NEFS during Martin's period of leadership was Florence Humphrey Church. As NEFS president, Martin was extremely organized and expanded the organization in some new directions. At her behest, the Reno headquarters relocated from the Cheney Building²⁴³ to larger offices at the Washoe County Bank Building²⁴⁴ at Second and Virginia Streets, from which she orchestrated the formation of county leagues (Figures 3.17 and 3.18). As Goodwin writes, "County and local leagues provided the link between

²³⁷ Winter, 5.

²³⁸ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 79.

²³⁹ Kitty Falcone, "Florence Humphrey Church," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/florence-humphrey-church/>

²⁴⁰ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 27-31; Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 31; Winter, 5.

²⁴¹ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 27-31; Anne Howard, "Anne Martin: Western and National Politics," in *Beyond ERA: A Women's Agenda for Nevada*, 10.

²⁴² Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 31.

²⁴³ Not extant.

²⁴⁴ Extant.



Figure 3.16 Florence Humphrey Church in 1900. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

the state office and the local population, which led to the campaign's success and passage of the suffrage amendment in 1914."²⁴⁵

County suffrage leagues were critical to Nevada's suffrage movement at this time. According to Joanne Goodwin, "County-level suffrage leagues provided a structure for local education as well as a statewide network that fostered a better-organized campaign."²⁴⁶ By early 1913, there were eleven county societies with a total of 500 paid members."²⁴⁷ Many of these members included men who were prominent in their respective counties.²⁴⁸ These local suffrage groups operated with autonomy and little centralized direction until the final push in the campaign in 1914.²⁴⁹ The movement found a lot of support in Nevada's rural communities. As Rebecca Mead writes, "The strong support for woman suffrage in agrarian areas reflected the reciprocal dependence of men and women on homesteads, farms, and small businesses."²⁵⁰

The Ormsby County Equal Franchise Society organized in 1912 with Minnie L. Bray as vice-president.²⁵¹ Churchill County organizations included the Churchill County Equal Suffrage League and the Churchill County Equal Franchise Society. Nancy A. Taylor served as president of the former and vice-president of the latter. Nellie B. Hascall was also vice-president of the Churchill County NEFS. Both women also served as vice-president of the Churchill County Civic League.²⁵² Adelaide Holmes McCarthy served as president of the Hawthorne Chapter

of the NEFS and vice-president of the Nevada Women's Civic League. The Nye County League of the NEFS was organized in 1912 with Marjorie Brown as press secretary.²⁵³

The Esmeralda County Equal Suffrage League organized and elected Bird May Wilson as president in 1912. An attorney, Wilson was admitted to the Bar in 1906; the same year, she practiced law in Manhattan, Nevada. According to James Hulse, Wilson was also one of Nevada's first stockbrokers.²⁵⁴ Relocating to Goldfield in 1909, Wilson wrote a pamphlet

²⁴⁵ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 33; Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 31.

²⁴⁶ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 21.

²⁴⁷ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 79.

²⁴⁸ Winter, 4.

²⁴⁹ Anderson, "Practical Political Equity," 36.

²⁵⁰ Mead, 18.

²⁵¹ Mona Reno, "Minnie Leslie Bray" (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.) <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/minnie-leslie-bray/>

²⁵² Mona Reno, "Nancy Courtney Taylor" (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.) <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/nancy-courtney-taylor/>; Mona Reno, "Nellie B. Shafter Hascall" (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.), <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/nellie-b-shafter-hascall/>.

²⁵³ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 32.

²⁵⁴ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 299.



Figure 3.17 The Washoe County Bank in Reno, headquarters for the NEFS. *Dick Dreiling Postcard Collection.*

Women Voters' Campaign Alliance

<p>Honorary Chairman: MISS JANE ADDAMS, Hull House, Chicago, Ill.</p>	<p>Chairman: MISS ANNE MARTIN, Reno, Nevada.</p>
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OBJECT: To assist in winning new Suffrage States.

HEADQUARTERS: Nevada Equal Franchise Society and Nevada Women's Civic League, 153 North Virginia Street, Reno, Nevada.

DUES: Initiation fee of \$1.00, payable on signing this Membership Card.

Name

Address

Please return with dues to Miss Anne Martin, 153 North Virginia Street, Reno, Nevada.




Figure 3.18 Women Voters' Campaign Alliance Form. *Nevada Historical Society.*

in 1912 called “Women Under Nevada Law” that outlined what rights women did and did not have in the state at the time, revising it in 1913.²⁵⁵ Wilson also helped to organize additional county leagues in Pioche, Panaca, and Las Vegas.

After meeting with Mabel Vernon, the women of Battle Mountain organized a local chapter of the NEFS in August 1912. Local businesswoman Edith Williams Jenkins Southward was elected as chapter president, and Rosalie Hassock Holcomb Hash served as vice-president.²⁵⁶ Kate Lemaire was elected as corresponding secretary of the chapter, an office she continued to hold when the chapter was reorganized in 1913 (Figure 3.19). Olive Nevada Wise Catlin was elected secretary-treasurer, and Sophia Wise served as honorary president.²⁵⁷ Charged with persuading local male voters to support women’s suffrage, the Battle Mountain chapter organized dances, speeches, and other events. Lemaire Hall, the second-floor meeting space above the Lemaire Store, served as the venue for most of the events (Figure 3.20).²⁵⁸ The Battle Mountain chapter would reorganize in the fall of 1913 for the last leg of the state suffrage campaign, electing Ella Horton as president and Mary Theresa Miller Clark as vice-president.²⁵⁹

Las Vegas, which was still a very small but growing railroad town with a population under 1,000 in 1910, did not develop a functional local suffrage league, but the local Mesquite Club brought speakers to town who promoted suffrage, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Anne Martin, and Bird Wilson.

Delphine Squires, who had been among the co-founders of the Mesquite Club in 1911, became an influential suffrage organizer in Las Vegas. Her husband, Charles P. Squires was central to many ventures in early Las Vegas including his newspaper, the *Las Vegas Age*, and had interests in a bank, a hotel, and an electric company. After Anne Martin assumed the leadership of the NEFS, he accepted an invitation to serve on the NEFS advisory committee. Delphine, who also wrote for the paper, was elected president of the Nevada Federation of Women’s Clubs and it was under her tenure that the NFWC endorsed suffrage in 1914.²⁶⁰

In May 1912, with the assistance of university President Joseph E. Stubbs and despite the opposition of Regent Charles B. Henderson, a chapter of the National College Equal Suffrage League was established at the University of Nevada in Reno upon a visit to campus from Charlotte Whitney, a delegate from its national organization. Led by Miss Clara Smith (later Mrs. J.O. Beatty), the group had monthly meetings, was provided assistance from Anne Martin, and sent delegates to the county session.²⁶¹

Men formed their own pro-suffrage organizations, including the Men’s League for Women’s Suffrage in Nevada. Anne Martin formed a men’s advisory board in 1912, which included men from all over the state. When James Laidlaw, a New York banker who served as national chairman for the Men’s League for Women’s Suffrage, visited Nevada in

255 A transcript of the second edition, published in 1913, can be found under 1912 on the Nevada Suffrage Timeline at <https://suffrage100nv.org/about/suffrage-timeline/>.

256 Dana R. Bennett, “Edith Williams Jenkins Southward” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.), <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/edith-williams-jenkins-southward/>; Dana R. Bennett, “Rosalie Hassock Holcomb Hash” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.), <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/rosalie-hassock-holcomb-hash/>.

257 Dana R. Bennett, “Olive Nevada Wise Catlin” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.). <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/olive-ollie-nevada-wise-catlin/>; Dana R. Bennett, “Sophia E. Harkamp Wise” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.). <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/sophia-e-harkamp-wise/>

258 Dana R. Bennett, “Kate Estelle Heflin Lemaire” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.), <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/kate-estelle-heflin-lemaire/>

259 Dana R. Bennett, “Ella Horton” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.). <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/ella-horton/>; Dana R. Bennett, “Mary Theresa Miller Clark,” (Nevada Suffrage Centennial, n.d.), <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/mary-theresa-miller-clark/>

260 Goodwin, “Mapping Nevada’s Suffrage Campaigns,” 34-35.

261 “Recognition for Nevada. Eastern Press Taking Cognizance of Suffrage Movement in This State,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 23, 1912, 2; Hutcheson, Austin E., editor. “The Story of the Nevada Equal Suffrage Campaign: Memoirs of Anne Martin.” *University of Nevada Bulletin* Vol. XLII: No. 7 (August 1948), p. 11; *Artemesia* (University of Nevada, Reno yearbook, 1914) 102, <https://archive.org/details/artemesiayearboo1914univ/page/102/mode/1up?view=theater>.



Figure 3.19 Undated photo of Louis and Kate Lemaire. *Dana Bennett Private Collection.*

1914, he worked with Judge William P. Seeds to form a state league. George H. Taylor hosted the league's inaugural meeting at his home in Reno.²⁶² Officers were elected at this meeting, including Seeds as president, the Reverend Harry Sheldon as secretary, George H. Taylor as treasurer, and Robert M. Price and S.W. Belford as executive committee members.²⁶³

Throughout the United States, women were far more involved in the 1912 elections than they had been in years prior. Women were energized by the core issues of the newly established Progressive Party and its presidential candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke in favor of woman suffrage. This brought the issue of suffrage into the national arena, legitimizing it beyond the state level.²⁶⁴

Suffragists in Nevada shared the enthusiasm leading up to the 1912 elections, in part because of the impending vote by the 1913 state legislature to pass the state suffrage amendment a second time so that it could go before voters in 1914. National suffrage speakers descended on Nevada in 1912, and local suffrage leagues hosted them at events throughout the state. On September 2, 1912, the Nevada Equal Franchise Society gave a dance in Eureka that included a lecture by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.²⁶⁵ The next month, the Pioche branch of NEFS hosted Charlotte Gilman to speak on suffrage.²⁶⁶ Gilman also spoke in Tonopah and Las Vegas that October.²⁶⁷

That fall, the NEFS sent a letter to every candidate running for the legislature, clearly laying out the stakes for the 1913 session. It read, "That legislature must vote upon the amendment to Nevada's

constitution enfranchising women. The favorable vote of that body will not give women the vote, the passage of the amendment by the legislature will simply invoke the referendum, will pass the measure on to the voters of Nevada for adoption or rejection at the general election," and asked "WILL YOU GIVE OUR BILL THIS CHANCE IF YOU ARE ELECTED?"²⁶⁸

²⁶² Not extant, 235 S. Virginia Street.

²⁶³ Austin E. Hutcheson, editor, "The Story of the Nevada Equal Suffrage Campaign: Memoirs of Anne Martin" University of Nevada Bulletin Vol. XLII: No. 7 (August 1948), 11; "Nevada Men to Help Suffrage Campaign," *Pioche Record*, October 10, 1914, 1.

²⁶⁴ Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 49.

²⁶⁵ *Eureka Sentinel*, August 24, 1912, 6. The location of this dance is unknown, although it likely was held at the Eureka Theater.

²⁶⁶ *Ely Record*, October 19, 1912, 3.

²⁶⁷ Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 35.

²⁶⁸ Letter from the Nevada Equal Suffrage Society, unsigned, n.d., Nevada Historical Society.



Figure 3.20 Lemaire's Store in Battle Mountain, still extant, was a frequent venue for suffrage speeches and dances during the 1912-1914 Nevada campaign. *Battle Mountain Cookhouse Museum.*

The group then published and distributed a list of pro-suffrage candidates in the 1912 election, in addition to a list of those supported by the Democratic, Socialist, Progressive, and Prohibition parties.²⁶⁹

On the national level, the Progressives' success in the 1912 election cycle proved a turning point for woman suffrage and the rise of women in politics.²⁷⁰ The Progressives endorsed the movement and integrated with the suffrage organizations. Because the party harnessed enough power to influence the outcome of the presidential election and partisan composition of Congress, it forced the major parties to seriously respond to the issue for the first time. As McConaughy writes, "The issue of woman suffrage was poised for a programmatic response only in the wake of the Progressive experience [...] and yet this response only came once suffragists had converted that Progressive leverage into a string of new suffrage states between 1915 and 1919."²⁷¹

Jo Freeman notes that the efforts to guarantee women's suffrage and to get women involved in politics operated on parallel tracks in the 1890s and early 1900s, occasionally collaborating or borrowing from each other. However, it was not until 1912, when both issues emerged on the national agenda, that activists recognized the need to work for both suffrage and women's political campaigns.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Winter, 5.

²⁷⁰ Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 48-49; McConaughy, 250.

²⁷¹ McConaughy, 250.

²⁷² Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 49.

In the 1913 legislative session, Nevada Governor Tasker Oddie supported the suffrage amendment, observing that Nevada was “entirely surrounded by states which have marked their advance by giving women the same right to vote [...] as men,” a fact that led many to refer to Nevada as “the black spot on the map” (Figure 3.21). The amendment was passed overwhelmingly by the Senate and Assembly and scheduled for the ballot in November 1914.²⁷³

The 1913 legislature also passed other measures for women’s rights, including joint parental custody of children, an increase in the age of sexual consent to 16 years, and the eight-hour labor law, although that law, according to Bird Wilson, “did not cover the work most women did.” Wilson pointed out that women still did not have the vote, that married women still lacked control over their earnings, and the community property laws still did not give women equal power.²⁷⁴

Anti-Suffrage, Internal Divisions, and the Final Road to Passage

The final road to woman suffrage in Nevada was not without its challenges. Of course, not all women supported the suffrage cause. Nevada’s anti-suffrage movement organized after the legislature passed suffrage in 1913, in order to discourage voters from approving it. On May 21, 1914, the Nevada Association of Women Opposed to Equal Suffrage was founded in Reno at the grand home of Ada Finlayson Lee, on Reno’s fashionable Court Street (Figure 3.22).²⁷⁵ In attendance was Minnie Bronson, the general secretary of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS), which was founded in 1911, headquartered in New York City, and had recently organized chapters in North Dakota and Montana.²⁷⁶

Nevada’s branch was centered in Reno among members of the social elite, a group that in addition to Lee included Jane Isabel French Fletcher, Clara Mabel Field Stadtmuller, and Emma Lee Adams, the wife of former Nevada Governor Jewett Adams. Lee’s lavish house, demolished in 1964, was a frequent meeting place.²⁷⁷ The Nevada Anti-Suffrage Society was also active in Carson City, where Adams lived, as did member Louise A. Ellis.²⁷⁸

Because many suffragists believed that women’s vote would usher in social reform, particularly in the arena of prohibition, Nevada’s liquor and gambling interests funded anti-suffrage groups in the state’s populous areas, especially in Reno. Among them was George Wingfield, one of Nevada’s richest and most powerful residents, who had earned a fortune partnering with George Nixon to operate the Goldfield Consolidated Mining Company. In 1906, he and Nixon established the Nixon National Bank of Reno, and within a few years both had moved into large mansions on Reno’s affluent south side.²⁷⁹

Staunchly opposed to the women’s vote, Wingfield frequently flexed his considerable financial and political power to promote legislation that he felt would benefit his business interests and economic development in general. In a March 1914 interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he told a reporter that “if women are allowed to vote in Nevada by the adoption of the suffrage amendment in the coming election, he will close up his interests, including farming, banking and mining and leave Nevada.”²⁸⁰ Wingfield lent financial support to national anti-suffrage leaders who toured the state, including Minnie Bronson of New York and Mrs. Claire Oliphant of New Jersey.²⁸¹ Although

273 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 87; Winter, 5.

274 Goodwin, “Mapping Nevada’s Suffrage Campaigns,” 24. Consult Wilson’s 1912 pamphlet, “Women Under Nevada Law,” revised in 1913.

275 Not extant.

276 Dana R. Bennett, “‘They Are Fully Alive to Their Own Interests’: Anti-Suffragists in Nevada, 1914,” *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 63, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2020), 53; “Reno Women are Opposed to Suffrage,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 22, 1914, 1-2.

277 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 87.

278 Bennett, “‘They Are Fully Alive to Their Own Interests,’” 65-67; “Women Will Oppose Vote,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 27, 1914, 8.

279 Barber, *Reno’s Big Gamble*, 106.

280 C. Elizabeth Raymond, *George Wingfield: Owner and Operator of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 102.

281 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 87; Winter, 5.

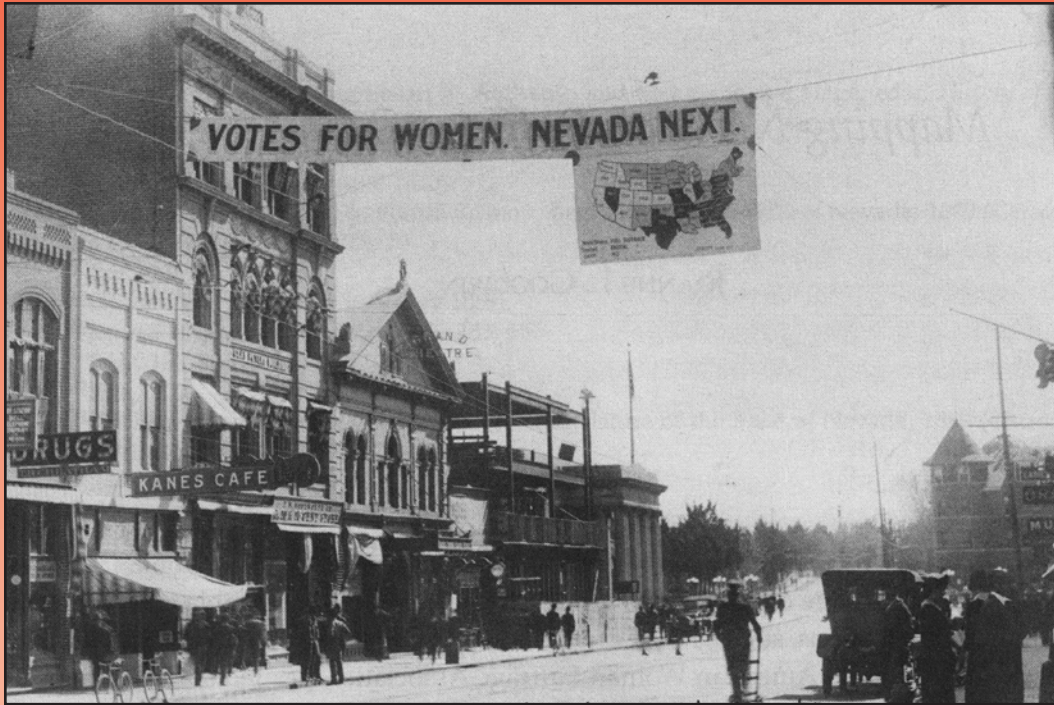


Figure 3.21 A banner with a map showing the “black spot” of Nevada was suspended across Virginia Street, near the headquarters of the NEFS in Reno. *Bryn Mawr College Special Collections, Carrie Chapman Catt Collection.*



Figure 3.22 The Nevada Association of Women Opposed to Equal Suffrage was founded in May 1914 at the home of Frank M. and Ada F. Lee at 543 Court Street in Reno. The house was demolished in 1964 to make way for a condominium project that was never constructed. *Nevada Historical Society.*

women formed the backbone of Nevada's anti-suffrage movement, Dana Bennett calls Wingfield "the state's best known suffrage opponent."²⁸²

Divisions also emerged within the suffrage movement based on levels of perceived militancy, personal ambitions, and the importance of pursuing a federal amendment versus working separately in each state. Anne Martin's leadership was divisive as some considered her too militant. There was also a clash of personalities between Jeanne Wier and Felice Cohn.²⁸³

Concerned that Martin's leadership was turning the NEFS into a militant feminist organization, Cohn attempted to regain "control" of the suffrage movement in March 1913 when she formed the Nevada Non-Militant Equal Suffrage Society in Carson City. The two organizations reflected the philosophical differences between the suffragists of Carson City and Reno. The press loved the drama of the split, although it did not undermine the overall suffrage movement in Nevada.²⁸⁴

These divisions were reflected on the national stage. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, who disagreed with the measured approach of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, formed the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (CU) in 1913. Considered the militant branch of the American women's suffrage movement, a more radical generation of suffragists comprised the CU, viewing suffrage as a first step to gaining full equality. It utilized tactics borrowed from the aggressive British suffrage movement, including civil disobedience, raucous demonstrations and pageants, and tireless lobbying to move the 19th Amendment from the House to the Senate.²⁸⁵

More local suffrage leagues formed in the final run-up to the 1914 election. On January 30, 1914, the White Pine branch of the Nevada Equal Suffrage Society formed in Ely at St. Lawrence Hall. Members of the committee on constitution and bylaws included Minnie Marie Comins McDonald, President; Mrs. Martha Whitmore, VP; Mrs. F.D. Parker, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Cora Newman, recording secretary; Mrs. Fannie Cupid, treasurer; Mrs. Benjamin W. Coleman, Mrs. L.R. Zadow, and Mrs. J. Callahan. The same day, Anne Martin, who was in town on her way back from a national convention in New York City, spoke at Ely's Knights of Pythias Hall in support of equal franchise.²⁸⁶

Throughout 1914, Nevada suffragists and their allies presented a well-coordinated campaign. Representatives and volunteers from the CU and NAWSA poured into Nevada up until the election to organize and speak. In April 1914, Mabel Vernon, organizer for the CU, came to Nevada to assist with central planning. Vernon's tactics would later inform Martin's campaigns for Senate. Other speakers included nationally renowned Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sara Bard Field, Jane Addams, and Elizabeth Thacker Kent.²⁸⁷ Addams spoke for suffrage at Reno's Majestic Theater on October 18, 1914, and also in Elko and Winnemucca.²⁸⁸ Margaret Foley spoke on the street in Virginia City and also visited Gardnerville, Dayton, Silver City, Mason, Yerington, and Carson City, with a week in Reno.²⁸⁹

Suffrage supporters constructed a striking float that won second prize at a "carnival parade" in Reno on July 12, 1914. Drawn by four white horses that were draped in flowers and banners reading "Don't Keep Your Women Out," the float was adorned with more than 500 yellow chrysanthemums. Riding on top were more than a dozen young women in

²⁸² Bennett, "They Are Fully Alive to Their Own Interests," 53.

²⁸³ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 31.

²⁸⁴ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 33.

²⁸⁵ Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 136; "Historical Overview of the National Woman's Party" (Library of Congress, n.d.), <https://www.loc.gov/collections/women-of-protest/articles-and-essays/historical-overview-of-the-national-womans-party/>; Mead, 151 and onward.

²⁸⁶ *White Pine News*, February 1, 1914, 1. Biographies of some of these women can be found on the Nevada Suffrage Centennial website at <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/>.

²⁸⁷ Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 37.

²⁸⁸ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 88.

²⁸⁹ *Nevada State Journal*, September 17, 1914, 8.

Grecian-inspired costumes, with several wearing banners to represent states where women already had the right to vote. At the reins was F.O. Norton, husband of Reno suffragist Lena Norton (Figure 3.23).²⁹⁰

Anne Martin is largely credited with the organized and effective campaigning in Nevada's rural counties. At the time, there were 23,000 voters in Nevada, and more than half of those resided in the rural counties. Anticipating that there would be more resistance to suffrage in the cities, which had powerful gambling and liquor interests, Anne Martin, as Dana Bennett explains, directed suffragists to "deliberately [apply] a personal touch to the successful campaign of 1914 and [visit] every far-flung ranch and isolated mining camp in the vast state."²⁹¹ Martin and her colleagues rented Model Ts to campaign throughout the state, braving unimproved and unmaintained trails and roads (Figure 3.24). When possible, they would arrive at a settlement or residence by the end of the day. However, when this was not possible, they would sleep under the stars.²⁹² On August 9, 1914, Anne Martin and Mabel Vernon spoke in front of the Eureka Courthouse during their state tour for equal franchise. Sophia Zadow, president of the Eureka Equal Franchise Society, invited the public to attend.²⁹³

An important national endorsement of suffrage from the country's organization of women's clubs occurred when the General Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed the suffrage movement in June of 1914 after an invitation from NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt.²⁹⁴ A somewhat confusing and controversial endorsement of suffrage emerged from the annual meeting of the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs in Reno on September 26. Anne Martin had urged the members to bring the endorsement of suffrage to a vote, meeting protests from members who did not wish the organization to enter into the divisive issue. The endorsement ultimately passed with a vote of 37 to 25.²⁹⁵ On October 31, 1914, the last rally for suffrage was held in Winnemucca, at the Nixon Opera House,²⁹⁶ where poet and suffragist Sara Bard Field delivered a speech.²⁹⁷ For their part, anti-suffrage advocates gathered at the Majestic Theater in Reno²⁹⁸ on November 1 to hear Minnie Bronson, secretary of the Women Opposed to Equal Suffrage, deliver her final arguments against woman suffrage, including her position that "women should purify politics, not by seeking to vote themselves, but by training the voters of the future."²⁹⁹

The exhaustive efforts of the Nevada suffrage movement proved successful (Figure 3.25). On November 3, 1914 the all-male electorate approved the Nevada constitutional amendment to allow Nevada women to vote. Statewide, the amendment passed by a twenty percent margin, with 10,936 votes in favor and 7,258 opposing votes. The measure passed in 12 of the 16 counties. As Anne Martin predicted, the most populous counties--Eureka, Ormsby, Storey, and Washoe--voted against it. According to Watson, "The vote was won in the dusty, isolated mining camps and small towns scattered across sparsely settled Nevada."³⁰⁰ Despite the fact that Reno citizens voted against the amendment, 1,587 to 938, a crowd of more than 200 gathered on Virginia Street in Reno near the headquarters of the Nevada Equal Franchise Society to celebrate.³⁰¹

Finally, exactly 50 years after Nevada became a state, most of its female adult citizens, although not all females living in the state, had the right to vote, thanks to the newly adopted language:

290 *Nevada State Journal*, July 12, 1914, 5.

291 Bennett, "Smokin' in the Boys' Room," 105.

292 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 87.

293 *Eureka Sentinel*, August 8, 1914, 4.

294 "WHRC News," (General Federation of Women's Clubs, Summer 2019). <https://www.gfwc.org/summer-2019/>.

295 "Women's Suffrage Delegates Win Point," *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 26, 1914, 1, 6.

296 Not extant.

297 *Winnemucca Silver State*, October 27, 1914, 1.

298 Not extant.

299 "Much to lose and nothing to gain by vote," *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 2, 1914, 1.

300 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 91.

301 Goodwin, "Mapping Nevada's Suffrage Campaigns," 21.



Figure 3.23 A float advocating for Equal Suffrage passes in front of the Washoe County Courthouse in Reno as part of a “carnival parade” on July 12, 1914. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*



Figure 3.24 Anne Martin, Mabel Vernon, and an unidentified man during their 1914 suffrage campaign through Nevada. Martin is at the far right. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

All citizens of the United States (not laboring under the disabilities named in this constitution) of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, who shall have actually, and not constructively, resided in the state six months, and in the district or county thirty days next preceding any election, shall be entitled to vote for all officers that now or hereafter may be elected by the people, and upon all questions submitted to the electors at such election; provided, that no person who has been or may be convicted of treason or felony in any state or territory of the United States, unless restored to civil rights, and no idiot or insane person shall be entitled to the privilege of an elector. There shall be no denial of the elective franchise at any election on account of sex.³⁰²

The amendment also entitled qualified women to hold any elected office in the state. Excluded from both the vote and elected office were members of the state's indigenous tribes, who were not considered American citizens until the passage of the Snyder Act in 1924, which admitted American Indians born in the United States to full citizenship.

CIVIC AND GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT: 1915 TO 1945

National Suffrage and the Woman's Party in Nevada

The 1914 popular vote guaranteeing the right of suffrage to female citizens of Nevada was a galvanizing event, intensifying women's participation in political activity. But it did not erase the divisions within the state's woman suffrage movement. Anne Martin was accused of taking an authoritarian approach to mobilizing suffrage advocates.

In 1915 the Nevada Equal Franchise Society transformed into the Nevada Women's Civic League with Anne Martin as president. She focused her energy on working toward a federal suffrage amendment and aligning with the Congressional Union (and decidedly not with the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which had severed ties with the CU by expelling the Congressional Committee, the members of which also comprised the CU). These choices reflected her roots in the effective militant campaign of the English suffrage movement. In 1916, Martin campaigned against the Democratic party (regardless of positions on suffrage), following the CU's lead, a strategy adapted from English suffrage tactics, which held the party in power responsible for the failure of suffrage. Martin remained highly active in the national suffrage movement leading to her campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1918.³⁰³

When the Nevada Women's Civic League was founded in Reno in February 1915, officers included: Anne Martin, President; Bird M. Wilson (Esmeralda), 1st VP; Kate Nixon, 2nd VP (Washoe); Helen Bonnifield, 3rd VP (Humboldt); Caroline Orr, 4th VP (Lincoln); Margaret Kaeding, 5th VP (Lander); Louise Langan, 6th VP (Storey); Minnie Bray, 7th VP (Carson City); Sophia Zadow, 8th VP (Eureka); Mae Caine, 9th VP (Elko); Annie Collins, 10th VP (White Pine); Mae G. Hunt, 11th VP (Nye); Adelaide McCarthy, 12th VP (Mineral); Nancy Taylor, 13th VP (Churchill); Julia P. Mundy, 14th VP (Las Vegas); Gertrude Webster, 15th VP (Lyon); Jennie Werner, 16th VP (Douglas).³⁰⁴

The Las Vegas Civic League was also organized in 1915 with 34 founding members and a stated purpose to "study civic, social, political, city, county and state government affairs for their general education and with the especial [sic] purpose in view of learning to vote as intelligently as possible when their opportunity arrives."³⁰⁵

³⁰² *Statutes of the State of Nevada - Twenty-Sixth Session, 1913*, 581. Available at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Statutes/26th1913/Stats1913R01.html>.

³⁰³ Beachley, "Treading the Path to Liberty: Anne Martin in the National Woman Suffrage Fight," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 63, no. 1-2 (Spring Summer 2020), 37; Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 35, 38.

³⁰⁴ *Eureka Sentinel*, February 27, 1915, 5.

³⁰⁵ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 35.

Ask Mother

How to Vote

YES

ON

WOMAN

SUFFRAGE

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Shall, Substitute for Assembly Joint and Concurrent Resolution No. 6 (by Committee on Elections), relative to amending Section one of Article two, of the Constitution of the State of Nevada, pertaining to the right of elective franchise (granting suffrage to women), be approved?	YES	X
	NO	
Shall, Assembly Joint Concurrent Resolution, relative to amending Section 2 of Article XV of the Constitution of the State of Nevada, pertaining to the official oath, be approved?	YES	
	NO	

Thousands of Nevada mothers are organized and asking to vote. Millions of mothers in the United States are voting.

VOTES FOR NEVADA WOMEN

Published by Nevada Equal Franchise Society, 153 N. Virginia St., Reno

Figure 3.25 Advertisement encouraging Nevada's male voters to approve the women's suffrage amendment to the state constitution. Nevada Historical Society.

A similar group, the Woman Citizens' Club, formed in Reno on January 13, 1915. In their inaugural meeting, the 80 women in attendance adopted a constitution describing it as "a non-partisan organization for the study of questions of general interest to citizens and the promotion of any movement for the betterment of society." Officers chosen included Sadie D. Hurst, president; Helen L. Belford, first vice-president, Mrs. C.H. Burke, second vice-president; Mrs. W.H. Hood, third vice-president; Bessie Mouffee, recording secretary; Emma Mack, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Harold Duncan, financial secretary; Bessie R. Eichelberger, treasurer; Katherine Flett, auditor; and Mrs. F.C. MacDiarmid, librarian.³⁰⁶ Meeting at the Twentieth Century Club, the organization immediately applied themselves to protesting two proposed pieces of state legislation: one that would restore Nevada's six-month divorce (which the 1913 legislature had lengthened to a year), and another that would enable racetrack pari-mutuel betting.³⁰⁷

Martin proposed merging the Nevada Civic League and Woman's Citizens' Club to better leverage the potential influence of women voters and was met with significant resistance. The Woman Citizens' Club insisted that they were a democratic organization, as opposed to the Nevada Civic League, with Martin as president, which they accused of being "an autocratic organization with the aim of us[ing] the women of the state as a voting unit." Martin addressed this attack in a letter to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw that accused the state's politicians of fostering her vilification, out of fear of her influence against George Wingfield, his political machine, and the "wide-open" atmosphere of Nevada politics.³⁰⁸

In late September 1915, an envoy from Washington, D.C. traveling to the Woman Voters' Convention, which included Mabel Vernon and Sara Bard Field, arrived in Reno. The women organized a branch of the Congressional Union in Reno at the Twentieth Century Club.³⁰⁹

In 1916, the CU created another national organization, the Woman's Party, for enfranchised women in western states that had passed suffrage. The Woman's Party had an enormous impact on the suffrage movement out west, particularly in Nevada and Montana. Meanwhile, the CU persisted as an organization for disenfranchised women voters. In March 1917,

306 "Eighty Women in New Society," *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 14, 1915, 8.

307 "Resolutions of Protest Framed," *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 27, 1915, 5.

308 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 34.

309 National Votes for Women Trail website, <http://ncwhs.org/votes-for-women-trail/#trail>; *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 28, 1915, 2.

the two groups merged to form the National Woman's Party (NWP). Once the 19th Amendment was ratified, the NWP shifted its focus to end all legal forms of discrimination against women.³¹⁰

The Woman's Party gained some traction in Nevada. In June 1916, Anne Martin was elected national president of the Woman's Party at its founding convention.³¹¹ In September, the Sparks branch of the Woman's Party was organized at the home of Edna Baker at 445 10th Street in Sparks, which was also the site, later that year, of the first organizational meeting of the Republican Woman's Club.³¹² Suffragist Sara Bard Field, who had spoken at the final rally for woman suffrage in 1914, spoke in Winnemucca on October 4, 1916 and in Golconda, with Woman's Party state chairman Helen Bonnifield (the wife of former state Senator McKaskia Bonnifield), on October 5, 1916.³¹³

When the Congressional Union and Woman's Party came together under the National Woman's Party banner in March 1917, Alice Paul became chairperson with Anne Martin as vice-chairperson and legislative chairperson. Martin resigned in 1918 to focus on running for the U.S. Senate that year, seeing "the admission of women into the highest legislative body in the country" as the next step in equality. Tensions arose between NWP, with their primary goal of a federal amendment, and Martin, with her primary goal of acquiring a U.S. Senate seat.³¹⁴

Women from within and without Nevada assisted Martin with her Senatorial campaign. Calling themselves the GATs (Get Anne There), the core operation included Mabel Vernon, campaign manager and NWP organizer in 1917; Minnie Flanagan, treasurer; Ida Ostrum, personal secretary; Dr. Margaret Long, financial contributor, driver, organizer, and NWP financial resource; all women worked out of Reno headquarters.³¹⁵ Other paid outside organizers were Mollie Condon, NWP organizer in 1917; Kathryn Lincoln; Katherine Mullen, publicity - NWP organizer in 1917; Jessica Granville-Smith, publicity - org secretary for NWP in 1918; Margaret Whittemore, NWP organizer in 1917; Margery Gibson Ross; Ella Riegel; Alice Henkle, NWP organizer in 1917; Bessie Boswell, circulator of petitions; William Rannels, press releases; Sara Bard Field; and Charlotte Perkins Gilman.³¹⁶

During her ultimately unsuccessful 1918 campaign, Martin held rallies throughout the state, especially in the months leading up to the election (Figure 3.26). In August 1918, Jessica Granville-Smith and Ella Riegel traveled to White Pine County in support of Martin's senatorial campaign, speaking at Ely on the 28th, McGill on the 29th, and Ruth on the 30th.³¹⁷ On September 2, Sophia Zadow, chairman of Martin's local campaign, hosted a meeting at the Eureka Theatre,³¹⁸ during which Granville-Smith and Riegel spoke (Figure 3.27). The women had spoken at a previous engagement in Goldfield, and visited Austin and Tonopah after their Eureka rally. In October, Charlotte Perkins Gilman took over as the primary speaker for Martin's campaign, including rallies at the American Theater in Winnemucca³¹⁹ on October 16, in Lovelock on the 17th, at the Temple Theater in Fallon³²⁰ on the 18th, and at Rahbeck's Hotel in Gardnerville³²¹ on the 18th.³²²

310 Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 136; "Historical Overview of the National Woman's Party" (Library of Congress, n.d.), <https://www.loc.gov/collections/women-of-protest/articles-and-essays/historical-overview-of-the-national-womans-party/>; Mead, 151 and onward.

311 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 39.

312 Extant, 445 10th Street.

313 *Winnemucca Silver State*, September 30, 1916, 1.

314 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 39-43.

315 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 49.

316 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 50.

317 Locations unknown; *White Pine News* August 25, 1918, 1; *Eureka Sentinel* September 7, 1918, 4; *Goldfield News*, August 3, 1918, 8;

318 Extant, 31 South Main Street; NRIS #730001078.

319 Location unknown.

320 Location unknown.

321 Extant, 1426 U.S. Highway 395.

322 *Winnemucca Silver State*, October 17, 1918, 1; *Churchill County Standard*, October 16, 1918, 4; *Gardnerville Record Courier*, October 18, 1918, 2.

Anne Martin's second senatorial campaign in 1920 included only three out-of-state assistants: Mabel Vernon, Margaret Long, and Katherine Mullen. On the other hand, 33 Nevadans were paid by Martin's campaign to circulate petitions, canvas, distribute posters, volunteer on election day, and perform office work--up from only three in 1918. The NWP, which tended to support single issue campaigns (i.e. federal suffrage and equal rights) tended to avoid involvement in female political campaigns, but provided uncharacteristic support to Martin's senatorial candidacy, likely due to Martin's close ties to the organization. Despite this support, Martin failed to win the 1920 election.³²³

Women in Politics, 1916-1940

The first woman elected to a statewide office after the passage of woman suffrage was Edna Catlin Baker of Sparks, mentioned above, who was elected to the Nevada Board of Regents in 1916. She lived in the same house in Sparks from 1909 through approximately 1950.³²⁴

Some of the first women elected to office in Nevada were familiar names in public life. Helen J. Stewart became the first woman elected to the Clark County School Board in 1916. Stewart, a charter member of Mesquite Club, was also a juror in the first trial in Clark County with female jurors.³²⁵ In 1920, Florence Doherty, daughter of Delphine Squires and member of the Mesquite Club, became the first woman elected as Clark County Clerk.³²⁶

Sadie Hurst, Nevada's first female state legislator, was elected to the Nevada Assembly from Washoe County in 1918 and took office in 1919. She had been president of the Washoe County Equal Franchise Society in 1914 and had helped found NEFS chapters in other towns, as well as being active with the prohibition movement and with Women's Republicans.³²⁷ While in the Nevada legislature, Hurst presented bills "relating to the guardianship of minors, women's rights regarding community property, cruelty to animals, and several others." This included a bill that strengthened the penalty for rape and increased the age limit for statutory rape. She also presented the resolution on the women's suffrage amendment.³²⁸

By joint resolution, the U.S. Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the Constitution on June 4, 1919. The language was simple: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." The vote was not unanimous, passing 304-89 in the House of Representatives and 56-25 in the U.S. Senate. The amendment, called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment to honor the famous women's rights activist, was ratified by Congress on August 18, 1920. The next step was ratification by the states, at least 36 of which needed to vote in favor of the amendment in order for it to become law.³²⁹

NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt called on the organization's state chapters to promote the ratification campaign. Before final ratification occurred, she organized the League of Women Voters (LWV) in conjunction with a visit to Nevada. A nonpartisan, non-sectarian organization, its purpose was to educate women about the issues in order to vote responsibly.³³⁰

323 Anderson, "Practical Political Equality," 51.

324 Dana R. Bennett, "Leading the Charge: Edna Baker Helped Set Nevada's Course," *Silver and Blue* (March/April 1997).

325 Carrie Townley Porter, "Helen J. Stewart (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/helen-j-stewart/>; Cicero, 37.

326 Cicero, 37.

327 Michelle L. Van Geel and Dana Bennett, "Background Paper 03-1: Women in Nevada Legislature, 1918-2003," (Carson City, NV: Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau, 2003), 6; Tammy McMenomy, "Sadie Dotson Hurst" (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.), <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/sadie-dotson-hurst/>.

328 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 105.

329 "19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History," U.S. Library of Congress, <https://guides.loc.gov/19th-amendment>.

330 Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 134; Watson, *Into Their Own*, 35.



Figure 3.26 Anne Martin and supporters during her 1918 senatorial campaign. Nevada Historical Society.



Figure 3.27 The Eureka Theatre, pictured in the 1960s. UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.

A special session of the Nevada legislature was called to vote on ratification of the 19th amendment on February 7, 1920. Florence Humphrey Church was active in the session as Governor Boyle's advisor on suffrage.³³¹ On the day of the vote, approximately 50 women rode from Reno to Carson City in the V&T Railroad's Coach Car 17, naming it the "Suffrage Special" with a 40-foot banner that was fastened to the outside of the car with 79 brass nails.³³²

When the amendment came to the floor, the Senate and Assembly quickly passed the joint resolution. Only one member of the Assembly voted against the amendment, explaining that he did not want Nevadans to decide whether women in other states should vote.³³³ Women speaking on behalf of the joint resolution were identified mostly by their husbands' names, and included Mrs. Fannie Patrick, Mrs. Florence Humphrey Church, Mrs. Bessie Eichelberger, Mrs. Helen Thomas Belford, Mrs. Eunice Hood, and Mrs. Maud Gassaway.³³⁴ Assemblywoman Sadie Hurst presided over the Assembly vote and had a place of honor beside Governor Emmet Boyle when he signed the legislation later that day (Figure 3.28).³³⁵

The national ratification process met the required three-fourths threshold of 36 states when Tennessee ratified the 19th amendment on August 18, 1920. By that time, 30 states, including Nevada, already had made significant statewide strides to grant women access to the polls.³³⁶

The 19th Amendment did not guarantee all women access to the polls, however. Although it did prevent voter discrimination on the basis of sex, it did not protect against other discriminating barriers put forth by states, such as requiring a poll tax, literacy test, or "moral character" evaluation. Women who lost their citizenship by marrying a non-citizen man were denied the right to vote, as were women who belonged to immigrant groups for whom naturalization was banned. Native American women were also denied citizenship and therefore excluded from voting until 1924.³³⁷

Women continued to work for many improvements in the lives of women and children beyond suffrage, with many former pro-suffrage and anti-suffrage advocates often coming together for the sake of their communities and families. Attorney Bird Wilson wrote a legislative report in 1915 that noted some of the important gains made: "mother's pensions; a change in the inheritance law that benefited women; a bill providing for kindergartens; and one regarding teachers' pensions."³³⁸

In the 1920s, as Dana Bennett points out, "Tonopah was a common factor in the lives of many of Nevada's political women" and "Nye County sent more women, by far, to the Nevada legislature than any other county." Tonopah residents elected to the state legislature in the 1920s included Republican Ruth Averill, who was the first female attorney elected to the legislature (1920) and Democrat Ethel B. McGuire, the first woman re-elected to the legislature (1926 and 1928). The heightened political activity occurring in central Nevada in this decade can be attributed in part to the continued influence of George Wingfield. The wealthiest man in the state at the time as well as the most politically influential, Wingfield had developed many of his relationships in central Nevada, particularly in Tonopah, and his influence extended to both male and female legislators of both parties. Just as Wingfield's earlier opposition

331 National Votes for Women Trail website, <http://ncwhs.org/votes-for-women-trail/#trail>; Watson: 31.

332 Mona Reno and Wendell Huffman, "New Chapters Discovered in Nevada Suffrage and Railroad History" (Nevada Women's History Project and Nevada State Railroad Museum talk, July 2, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bYyM-grPUc>.

333 Winter, 6.

334 "Special Legislative Session Ratifies Suffrage Amendment," *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 7, 1920, 3. Short biographies of these women can be found on the "Suffragist Biographies" section of the Nevada Suffrage Centennial Website, <https://suffrage100nv.org/suffragist-biographies/>.

335 Hurst was not reelected and moved to California in 1922. See Watson, *Into Their Own*, 107.

336 McConaughy, 22.

337 McConaughy, 252.

338 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 103.

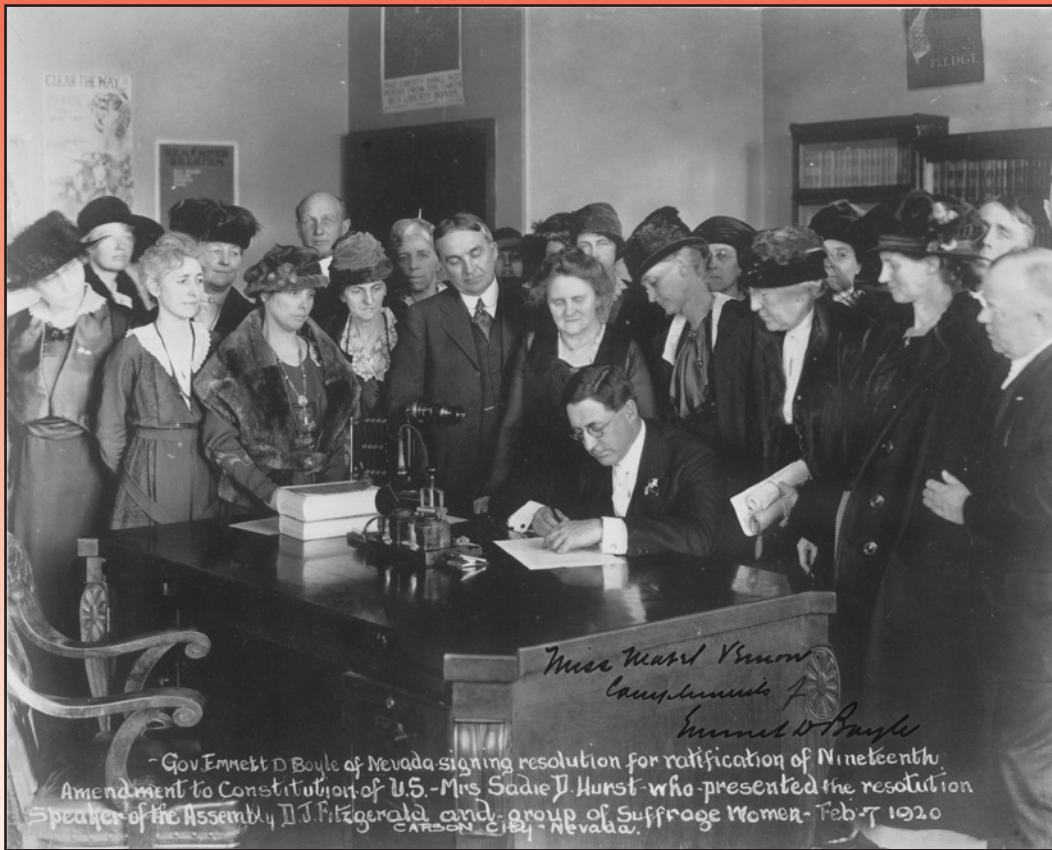


Figure 3.28 Sadie D. Hurst stands just to Governor Emmet D. Boyle's right as he signs the resolution to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment on February 7, 1920. U.S. Library of Congress.

to woman suffrage had stemmed largely from concern for protecting his economic interests, so too did his support for female politicians who would support legislation he favored.³³⁹

Other women elected to the state legislature between 1918 and 1929 included Marguerite H. Gosse (R-Washoe, 1922); Louise M. Hays (D-Nye, 1922); Rita D. Millar (D-Mineral, 1922); Alice S. Towle (R-Churchill, 1922); Daisy Allen (D-Churchill, 1924); Mary G. Rose (D-Humboldt, 1924); Maym Schweble (R-Nye, 1925); Florence B. Swasey (R-Nye, 1924); Ethel McGuire (D-Nye, 1926, 1928); Lillie V. Pinger (R-Churchill, 1928); and Neva Waters (R-Mineral, 1928).³⁴⁰

The state's small population and modest growth in the 1920s (Table 3.7) meant that most politics were relational. Male, as well as female, candidates often won elections in Nevada based on family and other connections. These first female legislators possessed family connections and political knowledge gleaned from their families' involvement in politics.³⁴¹

339 Dana R. Bennett, "The Up-Growth of New Industries: Transformation of Nevada's Economy, 1918-1929," Nevada Historical Society Quarterly 52, no.3 (Fall 2009), 181-182.

340 Bennett, "Smokin' in the Boys' Room," 95. Bennett also provides a breakdown of personal details (age, marital status, children, birthplace, and social/political influence of family) for these legislators on p. 97. Previous careers are discussed on p. 101, club affiliations on p.102-103 (e.g., Twentieth Century Club, YWCA, Business and Professional Women's Club, Woman's Party, Eastern Star, Nevada Native Daughters, DAR, PTA).

341 Bennett, "Smokin' in the Boys' Room," 99.

Table 3.7 U.S. Census, Population of Nevada by Sex, 1920 and 1930

Year	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
1920	77,407	46,240	59.7	31,167	40.3
1930	91,058	53,161	58.4	37,897	41.6

Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930

Many issues were relevant to women in this period, and they could now vote on them. In 1921, the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act required enabling legislation from each state, including Nevada, to obtain federal money for implementation. The bill's purpose was to decrease infant and maternal mortality rates by providing federal aid to state programs for mothers and babies.³⁴² The Nevada League of Women Voters, headed by president Helen (Mrs. Walter A.) Shockley, lobbied for ratification of the bill.³⁴³ The Nevada Legislature ratified the law in 1923 after Emma Little Humphrey, representing the state's women's clubs, and Lillie M. Barber, representing the state labor federation, testified in favor of it.³⁴⁴

Alice Paul of the National Woman's Party (NWP) wrote the original version of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1923. It was brought to the floor of the U.S. Congress for the first time later that year.³⁴⁵ Nationally there was a split between women who pressed for full equality, in support of the Equal Rights Amendment, and those who were satisfied with gains in protective legislation.³⁴⁶ The League of Women Voters, the Women's Bureau, the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, and most other women's organizations staunchly opposed the ERA, worried that it would rescind protective labor legislation for women.³⁴⁷ It is so far unclear whether Nevadans actively campaigned for it.

The first woman to serve in the Nevada Senate was Frances Friedhoff (D-Lyon), who was appointed in March 1935 to serve the remainder of the term of her husband, after he resigned to take a federal appointment. In 1938, Mildred Bray of Carson City was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Nevada. She was re-elected twice more, holding office until 1950.³⁴⁸

A handful of laws relating to women's equality were introduced during this period. Assemblywoman Luella Drumm sponsored a bill during the 1939 legislative session that allowed married women to remove the "Mrs." prefix when registering to vote or filing for public office. It passed in both houses. During the same session, Drumm introduced a bill to grant full title of community property to a spouse upon the death of their spouse. It passed in the Assembly but died in the Senate.³⁴⁹

The participation of Nevada's indigenous women in community, local, and state politics and the pursuit of increased rights for indigenous women and families in this period requires much deeper exploration. Passage by the U.S. Congress of the Snyder Act of 1924 (also called the Indian Citizenship Act) granted full citizenship, and accordingly the right of suffrage, to Native Americans born in the United States. And yet across the country including some western states, many Native Americans were still prohibited from full participation in suffrage due to local and state laws.³⁵⁰ It

342 "The Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act," <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Sheppard%E2%80%93Towner-Maternity-and-Infancy-Act/>.

343 "Sheppard-Towner Bill Fight Is Resumed," *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 19, 1923, 2.

344 "Sheppard-Towner Law is Ratified," *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 15, 1923, 2.

345 Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 137.

346 Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*; Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 135.

347 Freeman, *We Will Be Heard*, 137.

348 Hulse, *The Silver State*, 301.

349 Dana R. Bennett "Undismayed by Any Mere Man': Women Lawmakers and Tax Policy in Nevada, 1919-1956" (PhD dissertation, Arizona State University, 2011), 133-134.

350 Willard Hughes Rollings, "Citizenship and Suffrage: The Native American Struggle for Civil Rights in the American West, 1830-1965," *Nevada Law Journal*, Volume 5 (Fall 2004), 135.

is unclear precisely how this played out in Nevada, where newspaper pundits began to speculate about the potential impact of “the Indian vote” on state elections even before the act’s passage, and particularly in the fall of 1924, with some noting that the 1920 census had numbered the state’s indigenous population at 4,907.³⁵¹

Additional federal legislation in the 1930s enabled greater self-determination for Nevada’s indigenous tribes. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (sometimes called the “Indian New Deal”) was framed as providing greater autonomy for indigenous communities, enabling more formal structures of tribal government.³⁵² A formal examination of the constitutions and bylaws adopted by Nevada’s tribes in this and subsequent eras, as well as records from individual tribal councils, could reveal the extent to which women could, and did, participate in these new forms of government. According to some scholars, the new organizational structures actually reduced the participation of women, as previous systems of self-governance had tended to be more participatory and generally inclusive of both sexes, as least in the more traditionally egalitarian tribes.³⁵³ However, many women have served on Nevada’s tribal councils in the intervening years.

The “Indian New Deal” had additional impacts on Nevada’s indigenous populations, including its women. In 1934, Indian Affairs Commissioner John Collier appointed Alida Bowler, a non-native woman, to the position of Superintendent of the Carson Indian Agency, which had jurisdiction over the Stewart Indian School. She is credited with changing the curriculum to respect native heritage and fighting for native rights.³⁵⁴ She was forced out of her position in 1939 by U.S. Senator Pat McCarran, who disapproved of many of her activities and had himself introduced a bill to keep Nevada’s tribal members from organizing.³⁵⁵

Women’s Clubs and Organizations from the First World War through the 1930s

The entry of the United States into World War I in 1917 helped make the case for Prohibition by arguing that the grain used to produce alcoholic beverages should be directed toward feeding the troops. Women actively participated in lobbying for Prohibition, using an initiative petition to get the measure on the ballot to ban the sale of alcohol.³⁵⁶ The final push toward passage of Prohibition in Nevada succeeded in November 1918 when voters approved banning the sale and manufacture for sale of alcoholic beverages. Nationally the 18th Amendment passed in December 1917, was ratified in 1919, and went into effect in January 1920, only to be repealed in 1933.

The Nevada division of the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense (WCND) was organized in Reno on June 15, 1917.³⁵⁷ Louise Ellis of Carson City was central to its formation and elected president. Nationally this organization had many links to suffrage figures, but it is unclear if that was the case in Nevada, where Ellis herself had been active in the anti-suffrage movement just a few years earlier. One of the activities that occurred under their auspices, nationally and statewide, was the weighing, measurement, and examination of school-age children in an attempt to identify any correctible physical defects, a need that had become evident upon examination of men entering the draft.³⁵⁸

351 “The Indian Vote,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 5, 1924, 4.

352 Green, *Nevada*, 241.

353 Diane-Michele Prindeville, “Women’s Evolving Role in Tribal Politics: Native Women Leaders in 21 Southwestern Indian Nations. (New Mexico State University, May 2002), 6. https://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/tribalpolitics-prindeville_0.pdf.

354 “What Makes the Stewart Indian School Unique” (Stewart Indian School, n.d.), https://stewartindianschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/What_makes_Stewart_Indian_School_Unique.pdf

355 Green, *Nevada*, 242.

356 Hulse, *The Silver State*, 301.

357 *Carson City Daily Appeal*, June 16, 1917.

358 One such event is described in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 23, 1918, 8.

Nationally the YWCA was engaged in 1919 in raising funds to take care of women who were employed in “war work” and direct them back to “normal life.” They were also engaged in “Americanization” or assimilation efforts. The Reno chapter was organized in 1919 or 1920.³⁵⁹ There is reference to a “blue triangle” the YWCA had in 1921 where they offered a rest room and meeting place for women and girls, a recreation center, a safe place for young women to eat, an employment bureau, and more.³⁶⁰ Early on they were given free space in City Hall to meet. In 1944 the YWCA moved into a Victorian house (the former Curtis residence) at 339 West First Street, immediately west of the Twentieth Century Club.³⁶¹ In 1951 an auditorium was added to its north side.³⁶²

Newly empowered with the vote, women began joining political parties and the League of Women Voters, forcing generally nonpartisan, GFWC-affiliated organizations to compete with overtly political organizations for women’s membership. As a result, the quality of leadership and membership numbers for GFWC clubs suffered after 1920.³⁶³

In 1922, the League of Women Voters initiated a campaign to abolish prostitution in Reno, where a city ordinance was passed that prohibited brothels. Their success was brief, however, because after the election of Edwin E. Roberts as Mayor, the City Council “passed an ordinance that established a red-light district along the Truckee River that would become famous for its most visible brothel, the Stockade, so named for the high fence surrounding it.”³⁶⁴

The Twentieth Century Club’s new building in Reno was constructed in 1925 after they sold their existing property to the Scottish Rite and purchased a lot just to the west from Frederic J. DeLongchamps. The club hired Fred M. Schadler to design the building, which was completed in November of that year.³⁶⁵ The club was at the time the largest women’s organization in the state, with a membership including women living throughout western Nevada (Figure 3.29).

The Mesquite Club, in Las Vegas, remained active and engaged. As Cynthia Cicero writes, the organization had representation on the Child Welfare Council, and its members lobbied for the state to take advantage of Title IV of the Social Security Act, which offered federal grants to assist dependent children and to ensure child welfare. They also assisted with legislation for stricter adoption laws and oversight.³⁶⁶ They had a beautiful new building constructed in 1933 and invited women’s clubs from southern Utah and California to attend its opening (Figures 3.30 and 3.31).³⁶⁷

In 1934, the Mesquite Club established a committee on property rights for women and crafted legislation that allowed women to inherit community property, lobbying for its passage. The bill was defeated in the 1935 session, but Nevada Assemblywoman Luella K. Drumm (D-Churchill) reintroduced it in 1939, and it passed.³⁶⁸

Nevada joined the Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) in 1929. Felice Cohn was instrumental in establishing the Reno chapter.³⁶⁹ Reno, Elko and Fallon were among the first chapters. In May 1932, the Las Vegas Federation of Business and Professional Women organized in the Apache Hotel on Fremont and Second Streets.³⁷⁰ Members included Bertha Ronzone, who started the only privately-owned retail chain in Nevada, Ronzone’s, and served as president of the Las Vegas Chamber, and Trudi Radin, owner of Trudi’s Furs and reportedly Nevada’s only

359 See history in *Nevada State Journal*, November 2, 1952, 12.

360 *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 16, 1921, 4.

361 Not extant.

362 See history in *Nevada State Journal*, November 2, 1952, 12-13.

363 McMullen, 44.

364 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 35.

365 Extant; *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 10, 1925, 6; Paula Boghosian, “20th Century Club,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983), Section 8.

366 Cicero, 35.

367 Not extant; “Club Opens Quarters,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, April 30, 1933, 2B.

368 Cicero, 37.

369 Bennett, “Undismayed by Any Mere Man,” 108.

370 Extant but heavily altered, 128 E. Fremont Street.

female furrier. Others included Maude Frazier; Flora Dungan, a Nevada assemblywoman and University of Nevada Regent; and Dorothy Brimacombe, the managing editor of *Las Vegas Age* who was highly active in local clubs.³⁷¹

The Business and Professional Women federation was concerned with educating and training future businesswomen. They operated an education loan fund for girls interested in becoming career women and assisted older women seeking employment. They were opposed to legislation limiting women's rights and campaigned for legislation guaranteeing equal rights and equal pay for women.³⁷²

Maude Frazier was a native of Wisconsin who had moved to Genoa, Nevada to work as a schoolteacher in 1906. Over the next several years, she moved across the state serving as a schoolteacher and principal in many of Nevada's rowdiest mining camps.³⁷³ In 1920, she was named principal of the elementary school in Sparks, Nevada. The following year, she became the first woman to serve as Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Lincoln, Clark, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties, an area that encompassed 75 schools. She lost that appointment when her mentor, Superintendent Walter J. Hunting, lost his 1926 election. In 1927, Frazier was considered the most qualified choice when she was appointed superintendent of the Las Vegas city school system, as well as principal of Las Vegas High School. She retired in 1946 at age 63.³⁷⁴

The extraordinary accomplishments of Frazier, as well as Dorothy Redenbaugh Brimacombe, are illustrative of the culture of women who were making strides in traditionally male fields. Although professionally accomplished, Brimacombe pursued extensive activities in organizations created specifically for women and was lauded in accordance with conventional gender expectations. Brimacombe arrived in Las Vegas in the 1930s and was the second woman to sign with Six Companies, the joint venture hired to build Boulder Dam. She left to work for *Las Vegas Age* and became its managing editor, then married Al Brimacombe. The couple purchased the failing paper, then sold it and opened Brimmies, a print shop and stationery store. She served as president of the Mesquite Club, of local chapters of AAUW and Altrusa clubs, of the Nevada Press Women, and the National Federation of Press Women's Clubs. She was also president of the Las Vegas and Nevada BPW chapters, all between 1943 and 1947. In addition, she organized the Republican Women's Clubs in southern Nevada and ran for Assembly four times. As Cicero points out, women like Brimacombe, Ronzone, and Frazier "brought their femininity into the masculine domains" of politics and business.³⁷⁵

Felice Cohn remained politically and civically active in the 1920s and 1930s and even ran, unsuccessfully, for the office of Reno City Attorney in 1927 (Figure 3.32).³⁷⁶ As the Legislative Chairman for the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs in 1938, Felice Cohn explained--some might say "defended"--the pursuit of legislative goals by the clubs' members. While nearly all the constitutions and bylaws of the state's women's clubs identified them as "non-political," Cohn explained why that did not prohibit them from engaging in legislative activity. As she wrote, "To limit legislative activity would be to strangle all progress or reform, which is the object of an organization interested or concerned with civic questions," concluding, "Were it not for concerted legislative activity without regard to political activity many of the major reforms might never have been accomplished."³⁷⁷

371 Cicero, 70-71.

372 Cicero, 74-75.

373 Jan Cleere, *Nevada's Remarkable Women: Daughters, Wives, Sisters, and Mothers Who Shaped History*. (Gilford, CT: Twodot, 2015), 151, 154-155.

374 Richard O. Davies, ed., *The Maverick Spirit: Building the New Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999), 19.

375 Cicero, 71-72.

376 Watson, *Into Their Own*, 78-79.

377 "Legislative Chairman Discusses Activities," *Nevada State Journal*, March 27, 1938, 10.



Figure 3.29 Members of the Twentieth Century Club pose in front of their second and final clubhouse in the 1930s. To the right can be seen the towers of St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral, located on the corner of Second and Arlington Streets. *Nevada Historical Society.*



Figure 3.30 The Mesquite Club clubhouse, built at 607 S. 5th Street in Las Vegas in 1933, is pictured in this undated photograph. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*



Figure 3.31 A party at the Mesquite Club in the mid-1930s. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

One state policy that Cohn distinctly did not consider in need of reform was Nevada's burgeoning industry of migratory divorce. Cohn herself handled divorces through her own law practice, along with cases involving bankruptcy, child labor issues, foster homes, and adoption. To Cohn, access to divorce was an important human right, enabling both women and men to exit unions that had become untenable. In a speech long attributed to her, she stated, "Nevada has been criticized for her divorce laws, but it is due almost entirely to the need of relief by the citizens of other states that we find ourselves the 'cure' center of the world....They came to Nevada because the laws of their own states afforded no avenue of escape from an intolerable condition, brought about most often by incompatibility and nothing more."³⁷⁸

To the state of Nevada, divorce was also just good business. Due largely to the lobbying of Reno mayor E.E. Roberts and economic/political powerhouse George Wingfield, the Nevada legislature shortened the state's residency requirement from six months to three months in 1927 and again from three months to six weeks in 1931. In that same 1931 session, the legislature legalized wide-open gambling, prompting the opening of scores of clubs and casinos throughout the state.³⁷⁹

World War II

Nevada experienced an influx of population in the 1940s, including substantial numbers of men and women (Table 3.8). A major factor drawing new residents to the state was the growth of the federal military presence. Established in the 1940s alone were the Reno Army Air Base (later known as the Stead Air Force Base) north of Reno, the Las

³⁷⁸ Jean Ford, "Felice Cohn," (Nevada Women's History Project, n.d.),

³⁷⁹ Barber, *Reno's Big Gamble*, 110-111, 119.

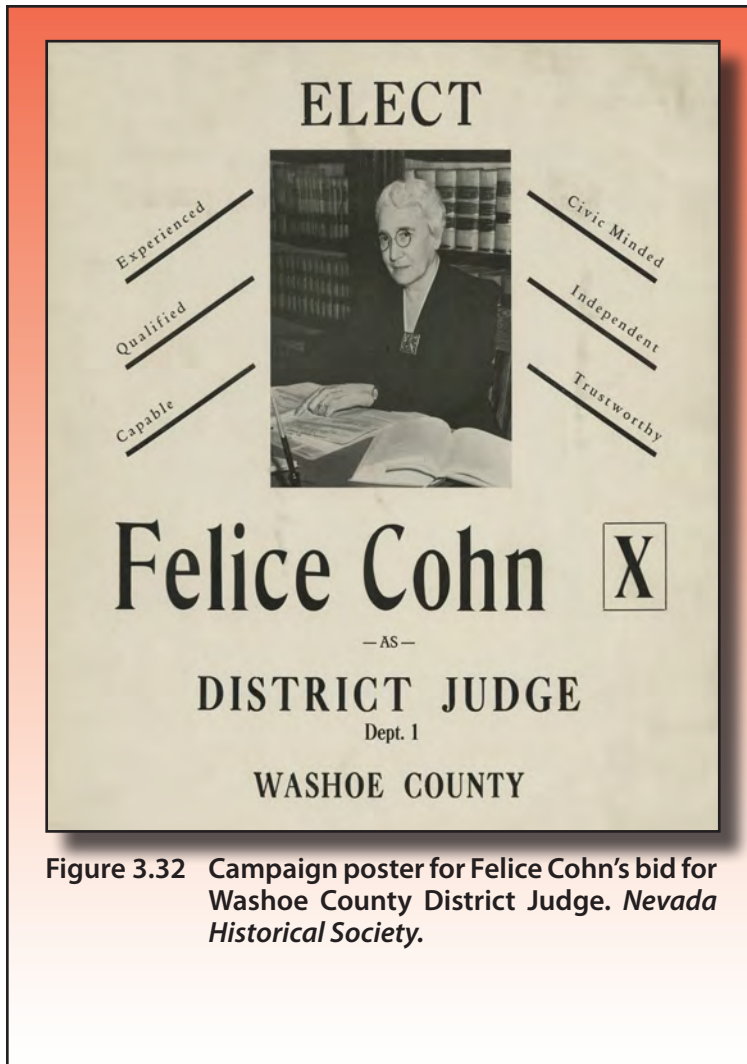


Figure 3.32 Campaign poster for Felice Cohn's bid for Washoe County District Judge. *Nevada Historical Society.*

Vegas Army Air Field (later known as Nellis Air Force Base) near Las Vegas, the Naval Ammunitions Depot in Hawthorne, and a U.S. Navy presence at an airfield in Fallon.³⁸⁰

More women than ever were already working outside the home even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. By 1940, nearly 30 percent of all women in the United States were employed.³⁸¹ Those numbers rose markedly after the American entrance into the war. Due to the massive number of men deployed for battle and related military service, women were needed to fill many of their former roles on the homefront. Additionally, as in other places around the country, more women entered the workforce specifically to fulfill the needs of war production.

In November of 1942, the Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot issued a call for fifty women aged 18 or older "to accept employment in the magazine area...as learners to receive training and instruction in the overhaul, handling, storage and shipment of various types of ordnance material, and in various mechanical operations in connection with maintenance overhaul and repair of depot equipment." The technical title of these positions was "female trainee" with an initial pay rate of 58 cents per hour with time and a half for overtime.³⁸²

The Basic Magnesium plant (BMI) in Henderson also employed increased numbers of women during the war, coining the phrase "Magnesium Maggie," a local version of "Rosie the Riveter." (Figure 3.33). Women worked in various capacities at the plant, including driving forklifts and making asbestos gloves. Notably, there are no Black women on record as production workers at BMI during the wartime period. Citing a surplus of magnesium, the magnesium-producing part of the plant closed in November 1944, leaving only the chlorine-producing division of the plant. This resulted in a number of layoffs.³⁸³

Some Nevada women joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), which was created in 1942. Joining WAAC initially offered women between the ages of 21 and 45 a limited array of non-combatant military positions, such as clerks, typists, cooks, and drivers. On September 1, 1943, the WAAC officially transitioned into the Women's Army Corps (WAC), a division of the U.S. Army, which enabled women to fill jobs typically held by male soldiers, from librarians

³⁸⁰ Green, *Nevada*, 256-258.

³⁸¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

³⁸² *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 24, 1942, 6.

³⁸³ Irene B. Scholl Rostine, "Our Turn: Working Women in the Las Vegas Valley, 1940-1980" (Master's Thesis, UNLV, 2013), 33-36; See Henderson Historical Society; A.D. Hopkins, "Magnesium Maggie," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 7, 1999, <https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/magnesium-maggie>; Green, *Nevada*, 261.

and bookkeepers to radio operators and parachute riggers and gave women “all of the rank, privileges, and benefits of their male counterparts,” including equal pay.³⁸⁴

Table 3.8 U.S. Census, Population of Nevada by Sex, 1940 and 1950

Year	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
1940	110,247	61,341	55.6	48,906	44.4
1950	160,083	85,017	53.1	75,066	46.9

A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States, Census of Population: 1950

Women made other inroads in the state’s other traditionally male industries, including performing unskilled labor at copper operations in the White Pine District.³⁸⁵ Women also gained a greater presence in the gaming industry, especially as dealers, supervisors, and “shills,” women hired to act as paying customers to encourage both women and men to play. Harolds Club in Reno pioneered the employment of women as card dealers, a move the Smith family had initiated in the 1930s with female members of their own family (Figure 3.34). Described variously as a way to add “refinement” and to entice more women to feel comfortable gambling there, employment in casinos gave Nevada women an opportunity no other state could legally offer.³⁸⁶

Such employment could be lucrative; a newspaper ad appearing in August 1943 read, “Help wanted: Harolds Club wants lady clerks, between the age of 21 and 35, capable of learning to deal games. Many of our present dealers who started this way are now earning \$60 a week. Men please do not apply.” In November the ad was revised to advertise possible wages of \$90 per week and opened applications to disabled male veterans as well as women.³⁸⁷

Because of the increased need for women’s labor during the Second World War, the 1943 Nevada Legislature voted to amend a 1937 law that limited women to an eight-hour work day and a six-day, 48-hour work week. The amendment provided for an exception to this law during emergency situations, allowing women to work a maximum of twelve hours per day and 56 hours per week. The law additionally required that women be paid time-and-one-half for more than eight hours per day or 48 hours per week.³⁸⁸

Women also were active during the war in volunteer work and relief efforts, including participation in the Red Cross and war bond drives.³⁸⁹ The Nevada Chapter of the American Women’s Voluntary Services was organized in September 1942 by Mrs. Helen S. Mack, Mrs. Thelma U. Marks, Helen Marye Thomas, and Phyllis Walsh. Their purpose was to recruit and train women in civil defense work, help provide care packages to servicemen, and run U.S.O.s. In peacetime, they worked with veterans’ hospitals, civilian blood banks, nursery schools, and youth centers (Figure 3.35).³⁹⁰

When the war ended in 1945, most working women returned home in Nevada, as they did nationally. The Department of Labor Women’s Bureau conducted a survey in 1944 in which 80 percent of female pre-Pearl Harbor workers and 50 percent of former homemakers planned to continue working after the war’s end. Northwestern Life Insurance Company took a survey the same year, which concluded that 71.5 percent of women planned to remain in the

384 “Creation of the Women’s Army Corps,” *Women in the Army*, U.S. Army website, <https://www.army.mil/women/history/wac.html>. Accessed September 21, 2021; *Nevada State Journal*, August 6, 1943, 8.

385 Green, *Nevada*, 261.

386 Dwayne Kling, *The Rise of the Biggest Little City: An Encyclopedic History of Reno Gaming, 1931-1981*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 62-63; R.T. King and Dwayne Kling, *A Family Affair: Harolds Club and the Smiths Remembered* (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2003), 199-200.

387 Kling, *The Rise of the Biggest Little City*, 63.

388 Rostine, 30.

389 Green, *Nevada*, 261.

390 American Women’s Voluntary Services Records, Collection Identifier NC450, Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries. <https://archive.library.unr.edu/public/repositories/2/resources/474>.



Figure 3.33 “Magnesium Maggie” Loretta Roach tests electrolytic cells at Basic Magnesium Inc. in Henderson in 1943. *Henderson District Public Libraries.*

workforce following the war. When the war ended, industrial jobs dissipated for both women and returning veterans. Returning servicemen were given preference for the jobs that remained. Women who wished to continue working were “forced to return to their former low paying women’s work or search for other lines of work that would be both lucrative and satisfying.”³⁹¹

Some of the state’s female lawmakers sought to improve the lives of children during wartime, especially in response to the Social Security Act of 1935, which included funding for an Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program. The enabling legislation died in the Nevada legislature in 1937, after lawmakers worried that it would cost the state \$50,000. According to Dana Bennett, Nevada was the only western state not participating in the program by 1940. Assemblywoman Helen Williams (D-Nye) introduced ADC legislation in 1941, directing counties to institute a tax to cover the state’s portion of funds. Assemblywoman Edna Montrose (D-Mineral) made an attempt to institute ADC in 1943, suggesting that the existing locally-based aid program be restructured to accommodate the federal program. Despite support from women’s groups, including the Mesquite Club, both bills died in committee.³⁹²

The growth of Nevada’s military installations prompted changes to the state’s longstanding tolerance of prostitution within the state’s largest communities. Military leaders were not pleased that men stationed at the bases would

³⁹¹ Rostine, 43-45.

³⁹² Bennett, *Undismayed by Any Mere Man*, 174; Cicero, 36.



Figure 3.34 In the 1940s, Harolds Club in Reno became the first casino in Nevada to employ large numbers of female card dealers. *Nevada Historical Society.*

frequent nearby red light districts, particularly if returning with sexually transmitted diseases. By mid-1942 the combined pressure of federal, county, and city authorities forced the closure of Reno's in-town brothels including The Stockade, as well as Block 16 in Las Vegas. In subsequent years, cities continued to prohibit the operation of brothels within city limits by declaring them "public nuisances."³⁹³

POSTWAR NEVADA: 1946-1980

Between 1940 and 1950, the number of women in the workforce increased 413 percent.³⁹⁴ According to Joanne Goodwin, women moved to Las Vegas during the postwar expansion of the casino and tourism industries because of the range of jobs available to them there. As the casino and hospitality industry expanded and new hotel-casinos opened, job opportunities arose for women including cocktail waitressing, performing in showrooms, and housekeeping. In general, Nevada's resort industry permitted women to fill select, woman-specific positions, especially in Southern Nevada. Sex and race discrimination, particularly with regard to employment opportunities and property

³⁹³ Green, *Nevada*, 261; Barber, *Reno's Big Gamble*, 164-165.

³⁹⁴ The number of working-age women in the general population increased 196 percent during this period.



Figure 3.35 Members of the American Women's Voluntary Services. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

rights, persisted from the 1940s through the 1960s. Successful legislation to rectify discrimination on the state and national levels would finally pass from the 1960s into the 1980s.³⁹⁵

Employment for women during the postwar era was generally limited to “pink collar” jobs that mirrored women’s roles in the domestic sphere: teachers, housekeepers, food servers, office workers, sales clerks, and nurses. Single women tended to work until they married, and married women worked part time to supplement the household income. One exception was the real estate industry. In Southern Nevada, women first dabbled in real estate in the 1940s, and by the late 1950s, “a core of business-minded women” emerged “as both visible and vocal participants in the real estate industry.” This resulted in the formation of the Women’s Council of the Las Vegas Board of Realtors in 1967 by Jessie Emmett, Helen Naugle, and Betty Krolak.³⁹⁶

Women’s organizations continued to be active during this time. In 1946, the Service League of Las Vegas formed and would go on to advocate for disabled children. The organization created and staffed a nursery school for handicapped children and provided in-home tutoring and care for bedridden children. In doing so, it eased burdens of mothers and helped prevent removal of handicapped children from their families.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Joanne Goodwin, “‘She Works Hard for Her Money’: A Reassessment of Las Vegas Women Workers, 1940-1980.” In *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas*. Edited by Mike Davis and Hal Rothman. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 248-251.

³⁹⁶ Rostine, 97-105.

³⁹⁷ Cicero, 49-50.

A local chapter of the League of Women Voters formed in Reno in 1949, followed in 1950 by Carson City, Elko, Ely, Lovelock, Wells, and Winnemucca. In 1958 the local leagues were incorporated under a new state organization which allowed them to petition for full status. A southern Nevada branch was established in the mid-1960s.³⁹⁸

The Nevada legislature of the 1950s focused on women's wages in multiple sessions. Assemblyman James G. Ryan (D-Clark) introduced a bill to raise the minimum wage from 50 cents to 75 cents per hour for women. It passed overwhelmingly in the Assembly by 40-4, and the Senate unanimously approved it. The law also re-established a maximum eight-hour work day and 48-hour work week for women.³⁹⁹ In the 1955 session, a bill was introduced to raise the minimum wage for women again, increasing the rate from 75 cents to one dollar per hour. The bill was supported by the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs. Although it passed in the Assembly 25-19, the Senate amended the bill to reflect a new rate of 87.5 cents per hour, which then passed both houses.⁴⁰⁰ During the 1957 session, Assemblyman Joe Collins (D-White Pine) introduced a bill to increase the minimum wage to one dollar per hour for adult women and to 87.5 cents per hour for women under the age of 18.⁴⁰¹ It passed both houses and went into effect on July 1, 1957.⁴⁰²

Education Reform

Nevada women had always been concerned about education, and this intensified in the 1950s. The Reno League of Women Voters conducted a survey of school conditions, which was used as a tool to lobby the 1953 legislature. When that session failed to address the school issues mounting in the state, especially dismal funding for education, Nevada's women began to agitate for change. Governor Charles Russell organized a committee to study education in the state, and in 1954, he opened a special session of the legislature, anticipating that if he did not make meaningful progress, "the little mothers of the state [would] murder him at the polls." The special session resulted in a special appropriation to fund a study by the Peabody College for Teachers of Nashville, Tennessee. According to Bennett, Russell "barely survived reelection."⁴⁰³

Women activists mobilized after the special session, gearing up to lobby the 1955 legislature in support of educational reform. Aleta Gray, who had founded the Sparks Republican Women Club in 1952 and served as legislative chair for the Sparks Parent-Teacher Association, emerged as a leader of the movement. Gray spoke as an individual and on panels about Nevada's educational challenges, and she testified in favor of the Peabody Report at a 1955 joint hearing of the Senate and Assembly Committees, chaired by Maude Frazier (D-Clark), who had been elected to the State Assembly in 1950. Margaret Muth and Lois Washburn (D-Nye, 1936-38) were also instrumental in activism efforts.⁴⁰⁴

The Nevada Legislature approved the Peabody Report recommendations with the passage of Senate Bill 267. The report had concluded that: 1) there were too many districts in the state, most of which lacked the resources to offer a quality educational program; 2) most high schools in the state were too small to offer a well-rounded curriculum, or they were in poor physical condition; and 3) the tax base was inadequate and unequitable, favoring wealthier

398 League of Women Voters, "About Us," <http://lwvnn.org/aboutus.html>; League of Women Voters, "History of the League in Southern Nevada," <http://lwvsn.org/history-of-league.html>

399 "Minimum Wage Gets Fast Ride," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 18, 1953:10; "Nevada: Minimum Wage for Women Is 75 Cents an Hour," *Nevada State Journal*, May 28, 1953, 8; "Women Minimum Wage Increase Is Favored," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 12, 1953, 3.

400 "Lower House Passes Gaming Tax Measure," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 4, 1955, 15; "Senate Hears Wage Limit Plea," *Nevada State Journal*, March 15, 1955, 3; "Minimum Wage in Compromise," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 18, 1955, 16; "Minimum Wage Increase Is Made Effective," *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 1, 1955, 24.

401 Prior to this, women under 18 were paid 75 cents per hour.

402 "Minimum Wage Boost Passes Assembly Test," *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 9, 1957, 11; "New Minimum Wage for Women in Nevada Will Not Go Into Effect Until July First," *Nevada State Journal*, April 9, 1957, 20.

403 Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 241-242.

404 Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 244-246.

districts. Their recommendations supported increased taxes and bonding power to fund education, including new school buildings and increased teacher salaries. The recommendations also prompted a new state law requiring each county to have its own school district, creating 17 school districts to replace the more than 200 throughout the state. The bill passed, but it did not include a revenue source to put the reforms into practice.⁴⁰⁵

Two bills were introduced in the 1955 session to institute a state sales tax to fund education in Nevada. The first, introduced by six lawmakers including Assemblywomen Hazel Denton (D-Lincoln) and Mabel Isbell (R-Washoe) did not move. The Senate Committee on Finance introduced a similar bill two weeks later, which passed.⁴⁰⁶

However, as soon as the session ended, petitions began circulating to repeal the tax. Weeks later, the Volunteers in Politics group acquired enough signatures to put the new law to a referendum during the 1956 general election. Aleta Gray, along with representatives from the Nevada Municipal Association, the Washoe County legislative delegation, school-based Parent-Teacher Associations, the Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Reno Chamber of Commerce, the Governor's Committee on Aid to Dependent Children, and the Nevada State Education Association, established the State Committee to Retain the Sales Tax (SCRST). The group adopted the motto: "S.O.S. - Save Our Schools." Gray, along with Beverly Linnecke, secretary of SCRST, traveled throughout the state to explain the new tax to citizens. They visited 13 counties in three weeks, and their campaign resulted in the creation of 11 county committees. Betty Glass, who succeeded Gray as legislative chair for the Nevada Congress of the Parent-Teacher Association, organized a door-to-door canvass of communities throughout the state five days prior to the general election. The women's efforts were successful when voters approved retention of the sales tax by a two-to-one margin.⁴⁰⁷

Female State Legislators in the 1950s

In her study of the women who served in the Nevada state legislature from 1919 to 1956, Dana Bennett explained that their collective goals were not revolutionary nor intended to challenge the broad parameters of Nevada society:

Vigorous politicians, effective legislators, and champions of their state, these women were not social reformers. They did not set out to change--in any radical way--Nevada as a whole. They liked Nevada. They liked their communities and their neighborhoods. They did not want to alter them fundamentally, but they did want to improve them...None of them proposed an extensive codification of sexual equality. Instead, they focused on rather narrow legislation that sought to improve the daily lives of all Nevadans, women included.⁴⁰⁸

As Bennett explains, some of the legislation these women sponsored "sought to equalize the relationship between spouses [...] supported the easy dissolution of unhappy marriages, advocated minimum wages for women, obtained higher salaries for teachers, and assisted in the creation of more employment opportunities, many of which went to women (including themselves)."⁴⁰⁹ They focused on education because "Fighting to improve Nevada's educational system, especially through increased funding, was a productive way to improve the lot of Nevada's women and children."⁴¹⁰ None overtly embraced the concept of "women's rights" but were interested in improving the welfare of

⁴⁰⁵ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 247; McBride and Bedeau, Section E, 9-10.

⁴⁰⁶ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 249-251.

⁴⁰⁷ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 250-253, 258-261.

⁴⁰⁸ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 7-8.

⁴⁰⁹ Bennett "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 8.

⁴¹⁰ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 11.

women and children.⁴¹¹ In the 1950s, Bennett writes, “Women lawmakers, ably assisted by a corps of female lobbyists colloquially known as the ‘little mothers,’ successfully maneuvered the establishment of a state sales tax by associating it with the education of children.”⁴¹²

In 1950, four years after retiring as the Las Vegas superintendent of schools, Maude Frazier first ran successfully for the Nevada Assembly after an unsuccessful run in 1948. She was elected six times and as Dana Bennett writes, “Frazier took the Nevada Legislature by storm.”⁴¹³ By the mid-1950s, she had become one of the most effective advocates for legislation to reorganize and fund the state’s educational system. She played a pivotal role in the establishment of the two percent state retail sales tax to augment school finances (Figure 3.36).⁴¹⁴

Frazier also worked tirelessly to secure public and financial support for the establishment of a Las Vegas branch of the University of Nevada. In 1957 the first building of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (then known as Nevada Southern) was named Maude Frazier Hall in recognition of the pivotal role she had played in establishing the institution (Figure 3.37). The building was demolished in 2009.⁴¹⁵

In 1962, the year before she died, Frazier was appointed to fill out the term of Lieutenant Governor upon the death of Lt. Gov. Rex Bell, becoming the first Nevada woman to hold a constitutional office. The appointment was largely honorary, a symbol of the Governor’s high esteem for her, as only six months were left in the term, and Frazier was at the time frail and largely homebound. She died in June of 1963.⁴¹⁶

Hazel Denton (D-Lincoln) was an Assemblywoman during the 1953 and 1955 sessions. Born in Utah, she first moved to Prince Mine, Nevada in 1914 to teach, and by 1916 she was teaching first and second grade in Caliente, Nevada. She continued teaching until her retirement in 1952. She also served in numerous capacities, including twelve years as President of the Lincoln County Board of Education, as Director of the National Education Association of Nevada (1933-1936), President of the Nevada Federation of Women’s Clubs (1944-1946) and as President of the Lincoln County Classroom Teachers’ Association (1948-1949). She was a member of the Nevada State Assembly, elected as a Democrat in 1952 and reelected in 1954. As a legislator, she focused much of her attention on public libraries and state parks. She passed away on January 30, 1962 in Las Vegas.⁴¹⁷

Fighting Inequality in the Gaming and Service Industries

In 1958, a group of male dealers became concerned that Las Vegas would adopt Reno’s Harolds Club model of hiring only female card dealers, threatening their livelihood. The city commission held a hearing where men argued that women dealers would drive down wages and threaten the reputation of Las Vegas. Women argued for their right to earn a living and support their families. The city sided with the men, and women were banned from working as card dealers in the City of Las Vegas until 1970.⁴¹⁸ The properties on the Las Vegas Strip, which are located in Clark County, not the City of Las Vegas, continued this sex discrimination until the Consent Decree of 1981.⁴¹⁹

411 Bennett, “Undismayed by Any Mere Man,” 23.

412 Bennett, “Undismayed by Any Mere Man,” 6.

413 Bennett, “Undismayed by Any Mere Man,” 236.

414 James W. Hulse, “Maude Frazier,” in *The Maverick Spirit: Building the New Nevada*, 19-20.

415 Hulse, “Maude Frazier,” 20.

416 Hulse, “Maude Frazier,” 22.

417 Hazel Baker Denton papers, UNLV, <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1ng63>.

418 Goodwin, *Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas, 1940-1990*. (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2014), 193.

419 Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 194.



Figure 3.36 Maude Frazier, in a room full of male legislators, looks directly at the camera. *Nevada State Library and Archives.*



Figure 3.37 Maude Frazier Hall in the early-to-mid-1960s. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*



Figure 3.38 Sarann Knight Preddy in 1979. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

In 1950, Sarann Preddy had reportedly become the first black woman with a Nevada gaming license. According to Preddy, Las Vegas passed the resolution prohibiting women from dealing games in Las Vegas because they didn't want women to take over like they had in Reno (Figure 3.38).⁴²⁰ After the ban, she moved for a while to Reno, where as a black woman she could only deal in what she called the "Chinese and black places."⁴²¹ Preddy organized Nevada's first women's organization for the NAACP (in her oral history, she calls it the "women's auxiliary"). She also may have started the first black sorority in Vegas. She ran for Las Vegas City Commissioner for Ward 3. She lost the election, but she was the first African American woman to win a primary. She would have been the first woman and first African American to ever serve on the city commission.⁴²²

Marge Jacques moved to Las Vegas in 1959 and started working as a cocktail waitress at the Sands Hotel and Golden Nugget. In 1970, she bought Club de Paris and renamed it Le Café. Le Café was the first openly gay bar in Las Vegas. The bar also produced the first gay publication, *Gay Notes*. A fire in 1978 forced Le Café to close, but Jacques continued to open and work in other gay bars around Las Vegas along with appearing on local television to discuss gay issues. She moved away from Las Vegas in 1984.⁴²³

Second Wave Feminism Gains Momentum (1960-1980)

Scholars generally recognize a combination of events as the spark for the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Now known as second wave feminism, the movement arose in the early 1960s among sweeping national changes: the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first oral contraceptive in 1960, granting women control over their reproductive choices; increasing numbers of women entering the labor force; President Kennedy, recognizing discrimination against women in education and the workplace, establishing the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961; the formation of the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1963; and the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963.⁴²⁴

On the national stage, various strides in women's rights were made in the 1960s and 1970s. Congress sought to eliminate legal sex discrimination, passing bills on "equal credit, displaced homemakers, flexible work hours, rape, pregnancy disability, and educational opportunities."⁴²⁵

420 Sarann Knight and Yvonne Hunter, "An Interview with Sarann Knight" (oral history, UNLV, 1975), 24.

421 More on this can be found in Goodwin, *Changing the Game*.

422 Sarann Preddy and Claytee White, "An Interview with Sarann Preddy," (oral history, UNLV, 1997); *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 3, 1979, 17.

423 Based upon information in the Marge Jacques Papers Biographical Note: <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f11k55>; Extant, 4817 Paradise Road.

424 SurveyLA, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: Women's Rights in Los Angeles* (October 2018), 58.

425 Caryll Batt Dziedziak, "The Gendering of Nevada Politics: The ERA Ratification Campaign, 1973-1981." (PhD diss, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2010), 88.

In 1965, the Voting Rights Act passed, finally guaranteeing suffrage to all American women regardless of race or ethnicity. The year prior, the League of Women Voters formed a local chapter in Las Vegas.⁴²⁶ The same year, Congress passed the 1965 Higher Education Act, which expanded higher educational access for low-income students. The act increased federal financial support, which increased educational opportunities for American men and women and reinforced gender equality in accessing those opportunities.⁴²⁷

Congress passed Title IX of the 1972 Higher Education Act, which banned sex discrimination in any educational program that receives federal financial assistance. Two years later, in 1974, Congress passed the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, which funded public schools that "countered sex role stereotypes and promoted equality of women's education opportunities."⁴²⁸

Nevada legislators rode this feminist wave, introducing bills to eliminate sexual discrimination in the Nevada Revised Statutes. This included the Equal Pay for Equal Work bill, sponsored by Senator Helen Herr (D-Clark) in 1973, which extended the minimum-wage law to all regardless of sex (Figure 3.39).⁴²⁹

Meanwhile, activists during this era fought for women's rights in the areas of civil and voting rights, welfare reform, eliminating discrimination in the workplace, securing reproductive rights, and establishing the first resource centers and medical clinics for women.

These national and statewide developments corresponded with a period of rapid growth in Nevada. In the two decades from 1960 to 1980, the state's population grew from 285,278 to 800,493. With this influx, the percentage of Nevada's residents who were female reached a new high of 49.4 percent in 1980 (Table 3.9).

The Civil Rights Movement and Women's Rights

In 1961, the Nevada Legislature passed a state Civil Rights law and established the



Figure 3.39 Assemblywomen Geraldine Tyson, Flora Dungan, and Helen Herr pictured in 1964. Herr would become the first woman elected to the State Senate in 1966. *Reno Gazette-Journal Archives.*

⁴²⁶ Cicero, 84.

⁴²⁷ Deondra Rose, "The Public Policy Roots of Women's Increasing College Degree Attainment: The National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965," *Studies in American Political Development*, (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 82-88.

⁴²⁸ Dziedziak, 88.

⁴²⁹ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 302.

Nevada Equal Rights Commission. The commission focused primarily on race, especially segregation in casinos. Lillian Collins of Boulder City was one of its original members.⁴³⁰ It was considered weak and poorly financed, and was widely criticized.⁴³¹

Table 3.9 U.S. Census, Population of Nevada by Sex, 1960, 1970, and 1980

Year	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
1960	285,278	147,521	51.7	137,757	48.3
1970	488,738	247,798	50.7	240,940	49.3
1980	800,493	405,060	50.6	395,433	49.4

General Population Characteristics, 1960, 1970, and 1980 Census of Population

In the 1960s, women's rights advocates joined forces with civil rights organizers.⁴³² The State League of Women Voters released a report in 1968 to assess the progress made since the Civil Rights Act was enacted in 1965. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, passed in 1964, prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race and sex. The act established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to ensure compliance with the Civil Rights Act. However, the League report revealed that the commission was unresponsive to both race and sex discrimination complaints during its first years. The report also concluded that discrimination continued not only in employment, but also in housing. To rectify this, the League recommended open housing and full integration of schools. However, officials largely ignored these calls, and racial discrimination continued to run rampant while tensions mounted. When the Las Vegas NAACP filed a lawsuit against the Clark County School District (CCSD) over educational segregation, known as *Kelly v. Clark County School District*, the League of Women Voters joined the suit as an *amicus curiae*. The court concluded that CCSD policies were discriminatory, eventually leading to district-wide integration.⁴³³

In this era, Lubertha Johnson and Stella Simmons were the first two African American women who became licensed practical nurses. As practical nurses, the women provided basic nursing care to the sick. Johnson also worked in the Anti-Poverty Programs for eight years. She served as Director of Operation Independence, a Head Start-affiliated preschool program, which operated out of various locations over the years, including the new Mesquite Club clubhouse in 1965.⁴³⁴ Other Las Vegas locations included the old Vegas Heights Elementary School at 2201 Concord Street and 325 Jefferson Street, both in West Las Vegas.⁴³⁵

In 1964, Barbara Kirkland founded the Les Femmes Douze organization in Las Vegas to support young Black girls in pursuing higher education and successful careers. Girls participating in the year-long program learned to create resumes and excel in job interviews, in addition to performing community service and raising funds for the organization's annual cotillion. Les Femmes Douze also offered scholarships to girls interested in attending college.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁰ *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 29, 1961, 9.

⁴³¹ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 309.

⁴³² Dziedziak, 66 discusses the intersection of Civil Rights and Women's Rights movements in Nevada.

⁴³³ Dziedziak, 66-67; Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 159.

⁴³⁴ Cicero, 37; The Mesquite Club constructed a new clubhouse at 702 E. St. Louis Avenue in 1961, this property is extant and remains the club's headquarters at present.

⁴³⁵ Neither of these two properties is extant. "VISTA in 'Operation Independence,'" *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 11, 1965, 4; "Independence, Action Packed in to West Las Vegas Plan," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 18, 1964, 64; "Agency Salvation for Westsiders," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 2, 1967, 32; "Day Care Center Asks for Aid," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 7, 1975, 16.

⁴³⁶ Cicero, 96.

Welfare Reform

Nevada's welfare system was in desperate need of reform by the early 1970s. For twenty years following the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935, Nevada declined to accept federal welfare funding. Female lawmakers and constituents advocated the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program from its federal inception, but Nevada lawmakers were worried that the program would pose massive financial implications to the state. In 1955, through a bill sponsored by Chet Christensen (D-Washoe), Nevada finally accepted ADC, the last state to do so.⁴³⁷ Hazel Erskine worked with Barbara Coughlan, director of the state welfare department, to lobby legislators to join the ADC eligibility list.⁴³⁸ Nevada's Business and Professional Women Federation also lobbied for ADC.⁴³⁹ In 1968, George Miller became director of Nevada Welfare, and he "prided himself on running a lean welfare division intent on uncovering welfare fraud."⁴⁴⁰ In addition to cutting off aid to tens of thousands of poor families, Miller lobbied politicians to reject federal aid to provide food, medical assistance, and job training to mothers receiving welfare assistance.⁴⁴¹ In January 1971, he announced the largest cut to benefits in state history, reducing the base stipend well below the poverty level to \$144 for a mother with three children. In addition, the slightest evidence that a mother receiving welfare assistance cohabitated with a man would nullify her right to aid. As Dziedziak notes, Miller's policies placed undue hardship on Nevada's impoverished women.⁴⁴²

As a leader in the northern Nevada branch of the League of Women Voters, Maya Miller invited welfare rights activists from all over the country to create a strategy to reform Nevada's welfare policies. Miller became president of the Nevada League of Women Voters the same year George Miller assumed leadership over the state welfare office, and eventually became the key poverty analyst for the national League.⁴⁴³ According to Orleck, she traveled back and forth "between Washington and Carson City, lobbying Congress for more generous food and cash assistance for the poor, and chastising northern Nevada 'cow county' legislators for their miserly attitudes toward the disadvantaged." Miller's goals were two-fold: to provide decent jobs with subsidized childcare to welfare mothers, and "to convince male politicians that the unpaid labor of mothers deserved both recognition and economic compensation."⁴⁴⁴

On the Westside of Las Vegas, Black women began to organize for welfare reform. Many had experienced the cruelty of Nevada's welfare system firsthand, enduring continual surveillance and harassment by local caseworkers in exchange for inadequate benefits. Women did not receive enough food and financial aid to cover basic expenses, but they were prohibited from seeking jobs to make ends meet. In 1967, Ethel Pearson, who co-founded the Economic Opportunity Board in Las Vegas, persuaded Alversa Beals and Rosie Seals to start a welfare rights group in the Marble Manor public housing development. The National Welfare Rights Organization had recently formed, and local chapters were organizing throughout the country. Initially uninterested, Seals signed on when she learned that some white welfare mothers received more aid than their Black counterparts.⁴⁴⁵

With a handful of other Westside women including Beals, Seals held a meeting in her living room to establish the Clark County Welfare Rights Organization (CCWRO).⁴⁴⁶ The group expanded to include Essie Henderson, Olestine Walker, Emma Stampley, Eddie Jean Finks, and Ruby Duncan, plus others. Referring to themselves as "welfare mothers," the

⁴³⁷ Bennett, *Undismayed by Any Mere Man*, 174.

⁴³⁸ "Friend Indeed," *Las Vegas Sun*, July 15, 1975, 9.

⁴³⁹ Bennett, "Undismayed by Any Mere Man," 110.

⁴⁴⁰ Dziedziak, 68.

⁴⁴¹ Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 92.

⁴⁴² Dziedziak, 68-71.

⁴⁴³ Orleck, 93.

⁴⁴⁴ Orleck, 142-143.

⁴⁴⁵ Orleck, 98-99.

⁴⁴⁶ Likely at 908 Morgan Avenue, which is extant.

women started a larger conversation among Westside residents about welfare rights and reform.⁴⁴⁷ Father Louis Vitale, priest at St. James Catholic Church, and Sisters Mary Litell and Carol Hurray were eager to support the burgeoning movement. At the invitation of Father Vitale, the group met regularly at St. James Church on H Street.⁴⁴⁸

In 1967, the legislature passed a law requiring county prosecutors to interrogate all women applying for state assistance. Rosie Seals and her northern Nevada counterpart⁴⁴⁹ wrote to the national Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in protest of the law. HEW agreed that this questioning was illegal and directed the state to discontinue the practice. The state's welfare rights activists then threatened legal action to halt the practice of forcing welfare applicants to undergo lie detector tests and blood tests to determine paternity of their children. The state relented, agreeing to allow the HEW-recommended practice of simple declarations of needs and income.⁴⁵⁰

In the winter of 1968, Rosie Seals traveled to Reno with a handful of other Westside women to meet with representatives from welfare rights groups there. In contrast to the CCWRO, these organizations, which included the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) Mothers Club, were largely composed of white women. Judy Monk served as president of the ADC Mothers, and Charlotte Foster served as their secretary.⁴⁵¹ The Las Vegas contingent was shocked by the squalid living conditions of poor white families they encountered in northern Nevada. According to Orleck, "For the next two years, black and white Nevada welfare mothers worked together to eliminate state regulations they saw as cruel and capricious." They held rallies at the state capitol and testified before the legislature.⁴⁵²

Although George Miller swore to implement new policies to screen applicants and cut off dishonest recipients, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on three cases that made it more difficult to remove women from public assistance rolls. The court struck down the so-called "man of the house" and "substitute father" rules in *King v. Smith*. Justice Earl Warren wrote in his opinion, "Destitute children who are legally fatherless cannot be flatly denied federally funded assistance on the transparent fiction that they have a substitute father." The court also struck down residency requirements, including those in Nevada, where recipients were required to live in the state for a minimum of one year. Finally, the court prohibited the exclusion of applicants who moved from a state with lower benefits.⁴⁵³

Ruby Duncan emerged as a leader in welfare reform (Figure 3.40). When Rosie Seals resigned as CCWRO president in 1969 due to deteriorating health, Duncan took her place. She organized marches and protests, including a sit-in at director Vince Fallon's office in the State Welfare Office in Las Vegas in 1969.⁴⁵⁴ When George Miller refused to create a Work Incentive Program (WIN) to provide training to women receiving ADC assistance, something every other state had, Duncan wrote to President Nixon, insisting that Miller was violating federal law. HEW responded, threatening to withdraw millions of federal dollars if the state would not comply. Legislators finally voted to institute a WIN program, which was established in 1970.⁴⁵⁵

Under Duncan's leadership, the CCWRO made a number of strides in improving the lives of women and children receiving welfare assistance. Supported by the League of Women Voters, Methodist minister Rev. Jerry Furr, and Sister Mary Littell, the organization pressed the Clark County Commission to expand food distribution to anyone who met federal income requirements and to restore dignity to the distribution process by creating a market where

447 Orleck, 100-106.

448 Extant, now St. Luke's Episcopal Catholic Church at 820 H Street.

449 This may have been Judy Monk, head of the ADC Mothers Club by 1968.

450 Orleck, 117.

451 "Welfare Mothers Cite 'Lack of Communication,'" *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 2, 1968, 5; "Pickets Protest Delay in County Food Program," *Nevada State Journal*, August 28, 1968, 4.

452 Orleck, 116.

453 Orleck, 117.

454 Orleck, 125.

455 Orleck, 127-128.

families could shop for what they needed. The commission approved, quadrupling the number of local families receiving aid from the county food distribution service.⁴⁵⁶

When George Miller announced the steepest welfare cuts in the state's history, affecting more than half of Nevadans receiving assistance, CCWRO jumped into action. Duncan wrote letters to the HEW, Senator Howard Cannon, and Governor Mike O'Callaghan. She appeared on the television news and organized marches, including two to the Las Vegas Welfare Office in 1971, calling on Fallon to halt evictions, hold fair hearings for recipients whose benefits had been cut, and to restore their checks in the interim.⁴⁵⁷ Drawing support from the leadership of the National Welfare Rights Organization, CCWRO staged a protest march down the Las Vegas Strip and through Caesars Palace casino in early March 1971. Like-minded national organizations, celebrities, and other luminaries flocked to Las Vegas to participate in the demonstration. Another march followed the next weekend, resulting in the arrest of 86 protestors.⁴⁵⁸ On March 19, 1971, Judge Roger Foley deemed Nevada's welfare cuts to be illegal. Stating that George Miller had "run roughshod over the constitutional rights of eligible and ineligible recipients alike," Judge Foley's decision reinstated benefits to everyone who had been cut and granted retroactive payments to recipients.⁴⁵⁹

CCWRO made other gains. In February 1972, Ruby Duncan, Mary Wesley, Emma Stampley, and Essie Henderson staged an eat-in at the Stardust Casino in response to Clark County's lack of state funding to feed the poor. Two-hundred and forty Westside mothers and their children descended on the casino to order food, requesting that the casino pay. The casino did not, and Duncan and Wesley were then arrested. The next month, at the invitation of owner Jay Sarno, they held another eat-in at the Circus Circus Casino. This time, the casino paid their bill. Their tactics were noticed in Carson City, and by April, Governor O'Callaghan recommended that the legislature grant Clark County an emergency appropriation to reopen its relief office.⁴⁶⁰



Figure 3.40 Welfare rights activist and Operation Life founder Ruby Duncan in 1971. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

⁴⁵⁶ Prior to this, Clark County engaged in a "humiliating tradition of handing out food from the courthouse steps." Orleck, 136.

⁴⁵⁷ Orleck, 140-147.

⁴⁵⁸ Orleck, 153-160.

⁴⁵⁹ Orleck, 165.

⁴⁶⁰ Orleck, 186-190.

During the summer of 1972, Ruby Duncan founded Operation Life as “a community social service agency run by and for the poor.” Services would include vocational training and placement, daycare, free hot breakfasts for children, medical offices, financial and homeowner counseling, and drug rehabilitation.⁴⁶¹ The group purchased the old Cove Hotel at Jackson Avenue and D Street, adapting it into the Westside’s first medical clinic. It opened in September 1972 (Figure 3.41).⁴⁶²

During the 1973 legislative session, Ruby Duncan joined Sister Carole Hurray, Maya Miller, and Nancy Gomes in lobbying for the creation of a state food stamp program, as well as to raise monthly aid from \$25 to \$67 per child. The finance committees for the Senate and Assembly both voted in favor of establishing a food stamp program for Clark and Washoe Counties.⁴⁶³ In April 1973, the legislature passed a bill to institute the federal food stamp program throughout Nevada, the last state to do so.⁴⁶⁴

In Pursuit of Employment Rights

In 1963, the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, banning sex-based wage discrimination for the same job. The next year, passage of the Civil Rights Act would create the EEOC, which eventually played a large role in challenging sex and race-based discrimination in Nevada.⁴⁶⁵

Las Vegas experienced higher rates of female workforce participation in the 1960s and 1970s than the nation as a whole, although numbers rose nationally as well. Of all legal working-age women in Las Vegas in 1960, 44 percent held jobs compared to just over one-third nationwide. According to Goodwin, there were more women in the workplace because the tourism economy offered a number of positions that involved traditional “women’s work,” including food and beverage service, housekeeping, and typing.⁴⁶⁶

By the 1970s, patterns of women’s involvement in the labor force changed in the wake of civil rights successes and sex-equity legislation. In Las Vegas, 47 percent of all legal working-age women held jobs, up from 43 percent nationwide.⁴⁶⁷ In 1969, the Nevada Corporate Gaming Act passed, allowing corporations to invest in casinos. Corporations tended to have greater levels of administration than private casinos, resulting in restructured business procedures and positions with more opportunities for job growth for women. This also impacted Nevada women’s role in the workplace.⁴⁶⁸

In Las Vegas, the local Culinary Union played a major role in advancing women’s employment rights, including maintaining job security and benefits for female workers. Unions generally improved the lives of women through offering higher wages and benefits, increased job security and dignity on the job, and decreased sex-, age-, and race-based discrimination. Union involvement also honed the leadership skills of women.⁴⁶⁹ Local 226 of UNITE HERE, the Hotel and Culinary Union of Las Vegas, formed in 1938.⁴⁷⁰

By the 1970s, women in the Culinary Union served in leadership positions and helped organize other women in the organization. Sarah Hughes was a business agent at the Culinary Union and a union representative for the Thunderbird

461 Orleck, 196-200.

462 Not extant.

463 Orleck, 201-204.

464 Orleck, 206.

465 Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 158-159.

466 Goodwin, “She Works Hard,” 251.

467 Goodwin, “She Works Hard,” 251.

468 Goodwin, “She Works Hard,” 254.

469 Chandler and Jones, “Because a Better World Is Possible: Women Casino Workers, Union Activism and the Creation of a Just Workplace,” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 30, no. 4 (December 2003), 65-68.

470 Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 116.



Figure 3.41 Exterior of the Cove Hotel, which became the headquarters of Operation Life in West Las Vegas. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

Hotel. She went out of her way to specifically organize women, including Ruby Duncan, Hattie Canty, and Rachel Coleman, developing them into union leaders, and encouraged more women to take leadership positions within the union. Her political and community activism extended beyond Local 226, including associations with the NAACP, Democratic Party Central Committee, and the Central Labor Council. One of her proteges, Rachel Coleman, was an African American woman who represented the union in the housekeeping departments of 18 Las Vegas hotels in the 1970s. Another protege, Hattie Canty, was an African American woman who served as an organizer.⁴⁷¹

In 1971, as a result of local organizing efforts, the Las Vegas consent decree passed to end job discrimination by race. The decree was negotiated between the NAACP, unions, hotel-casinos, and the EEOC.⁴⁷² In 1975, the EEOC began documenting gender bias in hiring and promoting within casinos. Over the next six years, the commission found that women held most jobs as maids, clerical workers, and front desk representatives, while men held the majority of jobs as bartenders, parking attendants, and baccarat dealers. This meant that the highest-tipping jobs went to men. In 1981, casinos and unions settled with another consent decree guaranteeing equal employment opportunities for all sexes and ethnicities.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 52-53; Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 109, 130.

⁴⁷² Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 71.

⁴⁷³ Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 160-161.

The Nevada Commission on the Status of Women

President Kennedy encouraged state governors to establish their own state Commissions on the Status of Women, and on April 17, 1964, Governor Grant Sawyer announced the creation of a Nevada Commission on the Status of Women. He appointed Hope Roberts of Reno as chair, selecting as vice chair William Briare of Las Vegas. Other members included Juanita White of Boulder City, the chair for education; Frances Muguira of Reno, the chair for employment practices; Professor Marilyn Horn of the University of Nevada, the chair for political and civil rights; and Dean Robert Weems of the University of Nevada, protective legislation. In his remarks announcing the new Commission, Governor Sawyer singled out Maude Frazier, who had passed away in 1963, and Eva Adams, who had been appointed the 30th Director of the U.S. Mint in 1961, for exemplifying the strides Nevada women had made.⁴⁷⁴

The 1964 Commission examined the conditions that created barriers for women, looking at the effects of working mothers on children, protective legislation, and practices and laws limiting women. The Commission concluded that there was insufficient evidence to link juvenile delinquency with working mothers. It also promoted daycare for working mothers, suggesting that it assisted low-income, working women who could not afford private child care services. It also recommended that protective legislation, including minimum working hours for women and segregating jobs by sex, be repealed, as both were discriminatory and limiting.⁴⁷⁵

Governor Paul Laxalt appointed a second commission in 1967. Emboldened by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the increasing momentum of the women's liberation movement, the committee recommended repeal of all abortion laws that penalized women, as well as laws that gave husbands control over their wives' wages and laws that exempted women from jury duty. It recommended removal of a child's legitimacy on birth certificates and advocated for public sponsorship of day care services.⁴⁷⁶

As the Laxalt Administration progressed, the Commission on the Status of Women fell by the wayside as it was never codified into law. In 1975, Governor O'Callaghan revived it as the Commission on the Status of People to examine Nevada's laws for discrimination. He appointed 25 people to the commission, including anti-ERA advocates, church leaders, and legislators. Commission staff identified a number of laws with discriminatory language, drafting bills to rectify them.⁴⁷⁷

The League of Women Voters

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the League of Women Voters made great strides in Nevada women's rights (Figure 3.42). Led by Jean Ford in the south and Maya Miller in the north, the League served as a critical training ground for homemakers to become activists. Many members joined for the social aspect of the club, becoming increasingly involved in political and social issues as they learned to conduct research, speak publicly, organize campaigns, attend legislative committee meetings, and publish issue-centric studies. As the League became increasingly involved in the political arena, politicians took note. Senate Finance Committee Chair Floyd Lamb (D-Lincoln) was particularly irked by League members attending committee hearings, viewing them as interlopers who interfered with the political process.⁴⁷⁸

474 Cicero, 78-79; "Governor Lauds Role of Women in Nevada," *Nevada State Journal*, April 18, 1964, 20.

475 Cicero, 80.

476 Cicero, 81.

477 Dziedziak, 172; Jean Ford and Victoria Ford, *Jean Ford: A Nevada Woman Leads the Way* (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 1998), 175.

478 Dziedziak, 72.

Jean Ford moved to Las Vegas in the early 1960s, where she focused on caring for her young family. Appalled at the lack of accessible library services in her neighborhood, she campaigned to establish a new district library. Soon thereafter, she joined the nascent Las Vegas Valley League of Women Voters, serving as president within her first two years with the organization. During her time with the League of Women Voters, Ford learned to research social and political issues, identify community needs, and participate in legislative committees.⁴⁷⁹ These skills helped Ford to be elected to the Nevada State Assembly in 1972 and engage in a decade-long political career. She served two terms in the Nevada Assembly (R-Clark, 1972-1976) and one in the Senate as a Democrat (D-Clark, 1978-1982) (Figure 3.43).⁴⁸⁰ She co-founded the Nevada Women's History Project and taught Women's Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. As Anita Watson writes, "She supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and after that was defeated, she helped introduce a variety of bills to eliminate discrimination based on sex and to create services for women in need."⁴⁸¹

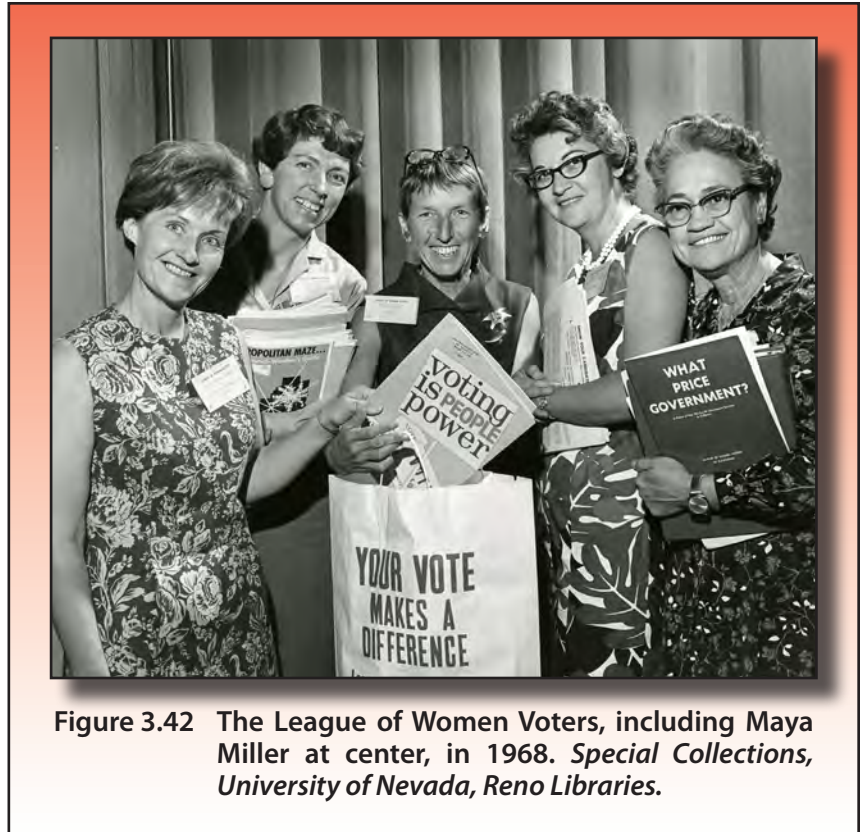


Figure 3.42 The League of Women Voters, including Maya Miller at center, in 1968. *Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.*

Maya Miller moved to Washoe Valley with her husband and young children in the late 1950s. Soon after their arrival, the Millers purchased the Washoe Pines Ranch, a former divorce ranch that they refashioned as the Foresta Institute, a nonprofit center focusing on ecology and social issues, which hosted a summer ecology youth camp.⁴⁸² When the League of Women Voters announced their intention to study poverty, Miller signed up. She became president of the statewide League and director of poverty and race issues for the National League. A vociferous civil rights and anti-poverty activist, Miller was added to President Nixon's "Enemies List" in 1971. She would become an outspoken leader in women's rights activism in Nevada.⁴⁸³

The National Organization for Women

Betty Friedan established the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966. Barbara Burrell calls this "the organizational beginning of the contemporary feminist movement."⁴⁸⁴ The group would become the legal rights branch of the women's movement, with a mission to bring women into full legal and social equality with men. NOW ratified a Women's Bill of Rights in 1967. The document addressed issues such as equal employment opportunity,

⁴⁷⁹ Dziedziak, 61-62.

⁴⁸⁰ Ford's political service is unique in that she was elected to both parties and both houses, serving in the Assembly as a Republican and in the Senate as a Democrat.

⁴⁸¹ Watson, *Into Their Own*, 4.

⁴⁸² Extant, 6205 Franktown Road in New Washoe City.

⁴⁸³ Dziedziak, 63-65.

⁴⁸⁴ Burrell, Barbara C, *A Woman's Place is in the House*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 1.



Figure 3.43 Jean Ford sits behind a stack of legislative bills in 1967. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

access to childcare, equal educational opportunity, the right to job training, and reproductive rights.⁴⁸⁵ On August 26, 1970, NOW organized a nationwide Women's Strike for Equality Day, although there is no evidence that demonstrations were held in Nevada.⁴⁸⁶

Keeping with the national trend, local NOW chapters organized in Nevada. Reno began organizing a chapter in 1973 under the direction of Patricia Lynch.⁴⁸⁷ The Reno chapter reorganized in 1977.⁴⁸⁸ Las Vegas hosted the NOW Western Regional Conference in 1974.⁴⁸⁹

The State of Nevada passed a law allowing prostitution in counties of a certain size in 1971. In 1973, NOW adopted a resolution in support of the decriminalization of prostitution.

In October 1975, NOW proclaimed "Alice Doesn't Day," a national women's strike. The Las Vegas branch of NOW held a rally for the day at city hall, considered one of the city's largest feminist demonstrations, with representatives from the Clark County Welfare Rights Organization, the NERA, and Community Action Against Rape attending.⁴⁹⁰ Reno's local NOW chapter opted not to participate in the strike.⁴⁹¹

Reproductive Rights

During the 1960s and 1970s, reproductive rights became a hot-button issue of the women's movement. After the FDA approved the first oral contraceptive in 1960, access to birth control became a priority in the advancement of women's rights. In Nevada, which had a sizable population of Latter-day Saints, even access to over-the-counter contraception could be difficult to obtain. In 1965, the U.S. Supreme Court granted married people the right to use contraception. This was extended to single women in a 1972 U.S. Supreme Court decision. Additionally, married women could not undergo elective tubal ligation without their husband's written consent in the 1960s.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁵ SurveyLA, 60.

⁴⁸⁶ Burrell, 1.

⁴⁸⁷ "Group to Form to Fight Sex Discrimination," *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 30, 1973, 5; "N.O.W. To Meet in Reno," *Nevada State Journal*, September 25, 1974, 36.

⁴⁸⁸ "National Organization for Women," *Nevada State Journal*, August 9, 1977, 31.

⁴⁸⁹ Renee Diamond Papers, 1972-2000. MS-00377. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

⁴⁹⁰ "Feminists Applaud LV NOW Rally," *Las Vegas Sun*, October 30, 1975, 4.

⁴⁹¹ "Socialize or Strike - What Do Reno Women Do?" *Nevada State Journal*, October 24, 1975, 32.

⁴⁹² Orleck, 77.

In 1968, the Nevada Committee for the Rights of Women (NCRW) was founded and dedicated to educating women about birth control and fighting for abortion law reform in Nevada (Figure 3.44). Specifically, the group sought to liberalize Nevada's abortion laws, as recommended by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. The committee believed that access to abortion should not be dictated by the law, but instead decided upon by physicians and their patients.⁴⁹³ Leola Armstrong, who had worked as assistant chief clerk of the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau beginning in 1953 until she was elected secretary of the Nevada State Senate from 1958 until her retirement in 1982, served as the organization's executive director.⁴⁹⁴ Alice Key, a civil rights activist who served as executive editor of the Black newspaper the *Las Vegas Voice*, was another prominent member of the NCRW. She initially worked as the group's Public Information and Education Officer before replacing Armstrong as director by 1969.⁴⁹⁵ The organization sponsored informational meetings and conferences including one at the Pioneer Center in Reno on August 3, 1968⁴⁹⁶ and the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas on November 16, 1968.⁴⁹⁷ The organization had offices in Reno⁴⁹⁸ and Las Vegas.⁴⁹⁹ By 1971, the group disbanded.⁵⁰⁰

In 1967, there was an attempt to liberalize Nevada's 1911 abortion law, which at the time allowed abortion only to protect the life of the mother or the child.⁵⁰¹ Assembly Bill 180 sought to expand access to abortion in cases of rape or incest, as well as in pregnancies that posed a substantial risk to the

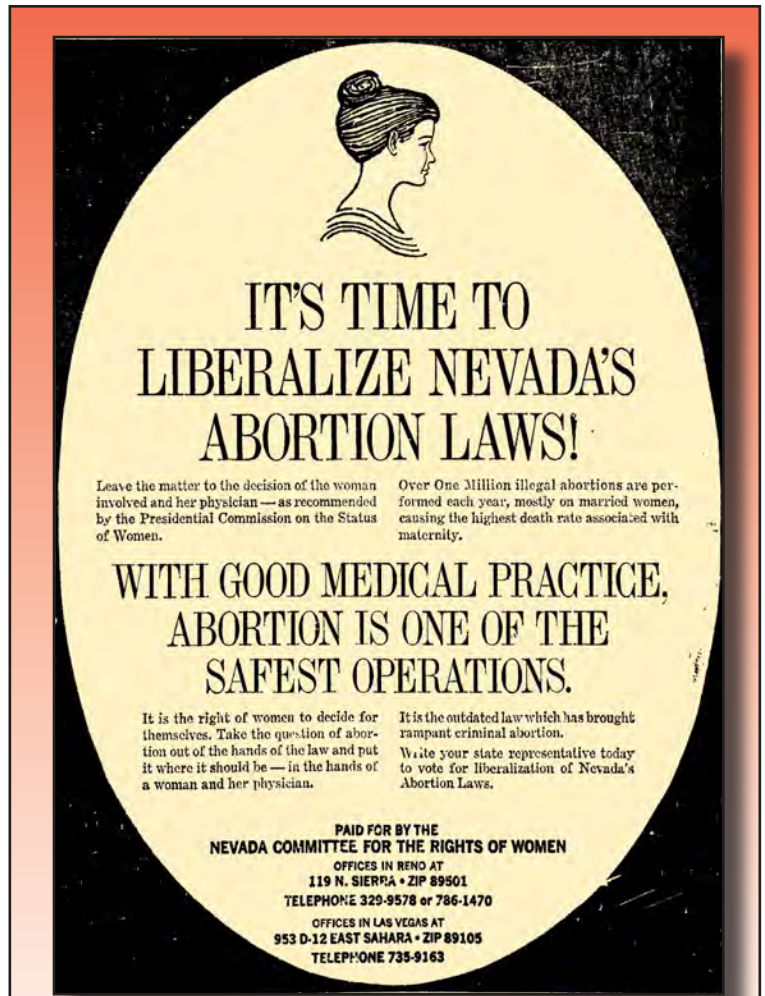


Figure 3.44 The Nevada Committee for the Rights of Women ran this advertisement in the *Reno Evening Gazette* on February 4, 1969. *Reno Gazette-Journal Archives*.

493 "Leola Armstrong Abortion Reform Exec.," *Las Vegas Sun*, October 9, 1968, 9.

494 "Political Activist Armstrong Dies," *Las Vegas Sun*, April 30, 2004; "New Public Information Director for NIC Named," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 6, 1974.

495 Alice Key's long career included cofounding Las Vegas' first local African American television talk show, "Talk of the Town," with Bob Bailey, working with the NAACP in various capacities, lobbying for the Civil Rights Act, serving as a spokesperson for the Clark County Economic Opportunity Board, establishing the Barbara Jordan Democratic Women's Club, and serving as Deputy Labor Commissioner; "LV Newswoman Takes Abortion Reform Post," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 16, 1968, 11; "Alice Was Key Player in City's Desegregation," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 25, 1990, 184; "Alice Key," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 10, 2010.

496 "Women Plan Abortion Talks," *Las Vegas Sun*, July 17, 1968, 5.

497 "Abortion Club Topic," *Henderson Home News*, November 7, 1968, 5.

498 Not extant, 119 N. Sierra Street.

499 Extant, in Commercial Center, 953 East Sahara, Suite D-12.

500 "No Backing by League on Abortion," *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 28, 1971, 12.

501 The 1911 law was considered a "Crime and Punishment" statute, specifying any instance of abortion that did not preserve the life of the mother or child as a criminal act punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for a maximum of five years or in the county jail for a maximum of one year; James G. Sweeney et al, *Revised Laws of Nevada*, Volume 2 (State Printing Office: Carson City, 1912), Number 6447, Section 182, page 1847.

mother's mental health or those with a high chance of the child being born with grave physical or mental defects.⁵⁰² Assemblywoman Flora Dungan (D-Clark) was especially vocal in her advocacy of the bill, calling it "more realistic, more humane, and [containing] greater controls than the present law." These controls included the approval of a judge and three physicians for a woman to secure an abortion. Though supported by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the Methodist Church, it was unsuccessful, passing in the Assembly 30-5 but dying in the Senate Judiciary Committee 5-1, with only one vote in favor by Senator Cliff Young (R-Washoe).⁵⁰³

The NCRW worked on a second attempt to revise the law in 1969. The proposed revision would redefine abortion as a medical practice and require it to be performed by a licensed physician, thereby leaving the decision up to the patient and her doctor.⁵⁰⁴ Alice Key lobbied legislators in Carson City to pass the bill.⁵⁰⁵ Assemblywoman Mary Frazzini (R-Washoe) of Reno sponsored Assembly Bill 229, which passed the Health and Welfare Committee with a 5-4 vote. Before making it out of Committee, the bill was amended to limit abortions within 12 weeks of conception. It also required women seeking abortions to be Nevada residents for at least six months, to have the consent of her husband unless he could not be found, or to have the consent of her parent or guardian if under the age of 18.⁵⁰⁶ The bill was defeated in the Assembly 20-18.⁵⁰⁷

Assemblyman Paul May (D-Clark) introduced Assembly Bill 662, which passed during the 1971 legislative session. It created a Secretary of Population Affairs Department, which made Nevada eligible to receive nearly \$25 million in federal funding for information and access to birth control.⁵⁰⁸

Family planning clinics began to appear in the late 1960s. In 1969, the Economic Opportunity Board (EOB) established a family planning program. As early as 1971, the EOB opened two Family Planning Clinics in the Las Vegas area. The Central clinic was located on the Westside at 940-A West Owens Avenue⁵⁰⁹, and the North Las Vegas clinic operated out of Dr. Sol De Lee's office at 2445 Las Vegas Boulevard North.⁵¹⁰ By 1973, a Henderson clinic opened at 9-D Carver Park.⁵¹¹ The clinics offered pap smears, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted infection testing, and contraception.⁵¹²

Planned Parenthood of Washoe County, the first Planned Parenthood in the state, was established in April 1972 as a nonprofit with Donna Dixon as executive director and Dr. Paul White as medical advisor. Other members included Emily Greil, Dr. Fred Stull, Marlene Peterson, Frank Titus, and the Reverend Arnold Vorster.⁵¹³ The brick-and-mortar clinic opened at 505 N. Arlington Avenue in Reno in November 1971.⁵¹⁴ Later called Planned Parenthood of Northern Nevada, it relocated to 406 Elm Street by 1977.⁵¹⁵

In January 1972, Planned Parenthood of Southern Nevada held an organizational meeting to begin a Clark County branch of the organization. Assisted by Donna Dixon, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Washoe County,

502 "Abortion Law Revision 'Political Suicide,'" *Nevada State Journal*, March 16, 1967.

503 "Abortion Bill Okay," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 29, 1967, 12.

504 "Nevada Abortion Law Change Now Possible," *Las Vegas Sun*, December 29, 1968, 28.

505 Alice Key and Claytee White, *An Interview with Alice Key*, Las Vegas Women in Gaming and Entertainment Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1998.

506 "Abortion Bill Getting Support," *Las Vegas Sun*, April 2, 1969, 9.

507 "Showdown Vote Kills Nevada Abortion Bill," *Las Vegas Sun*, April 10, 1969, 8.

508 "LV Population Control Group Briefed on Nevada Policies," *Las Vegas Sun*, January 19, 1972.

509 Extant.

510 Not extant.

511 Property status unknown.

512 "EOB to Create Legislative Task Force," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 27, 1972, 13; "NLV Clinic Facility Opening," *Las Vegas Sun*, December 8, 1971, 8.

513 "First Nevada Planned Parenthood Group Forms in Washoe County," *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 30, 1971, 13.

514 Not extant; "Birth Control Clinic to Open," *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 12, 1971, 11; "Newlyweds Urged to Consider Concept of Planned Parenthood," *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 23, 1972, 32.

515 Not extant; "Every Child A Wanted Child" advertisement, *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 19, 1977, 5.

and Derwent Suthers of the Western Regional Office in San Francisco, the meeting was the first step in establishing a clinic in southern Nevada.⁵¹⁶ An anonymous \$25,000 donation funded the new Las Vegas clinic, which established a board that included Judie Loudermilk of the League of Women Voters and Susan Whitney as acting chairs, and Dr. Jordan Goodman as medical advisor.⁵¹⁷ Operating out of a clinic located at 1380 E. Sahara Avenue in Las Vegas, it offered specialized medical care to women, including examinations and family planning services.⁵¹⁸ Darlene Hinkle served as executive director from 1974 to 1977, overseeing the clinic's relocation to a larger facility at 601 S. 13th Street in June 1976.⁵¹⁹

In early 1973, the State Assembly considered a bill to allow minors to obtain birth control counseling and devices without parental consent.⁵²⁰ The bill died in committee, but access to birth control remained a critical issue for women.

In 1973, when the *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, the Nevada State Legislature took action to amend Chapter 442 of the NRS, aligning the state law with the new law of the land. Previously, the Nevada Revised Statutes prohibited abortion in all cases, except to save the life of the mother. Assembly Bill 319, as introduced by Assemblymen Robert Barengo (D-Washoe) and Robert Broadbent (R-Washoe), allowed abortions within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, or after 24 weeks if: 1) continuance of the pregnancy would endanger the life of the mother or gravely impair her mental or physical health; 2) the child would be born with grave physical or mental defects; or, 3) the pregnancy resulted from rape, incest, or illicit intercourse with a girl under the age of 16. All abortions were required to be performed by a licensed physician in a licensed hospital or healthcare facility. To appease anti-abortion interests, provisions were added to the bill requiring doctors to attempt to save aborted fetuses and requiring married women to obtain their husbands' consent for an abortion.⁵²¹

The Reno chapter of NOW sponsored a meeting to organize a Northern Nevada Chapter of the National Abortion Rights Action League in September 1974. The meeting was held at the Center for Religion and Life, an interfaith organization adjacent to the University of Nevada, Reno, at 1101 N. Virginia Street.⁵²²

Women's Resource Centers

In the 1960s and 1970s, brick and mortar locations for woman-serving organizations proliferated. In 1964, the Reno-Sparks YWCA organized a building drive and received a \$160,000 grant from the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation.⁵²³ The group then sold its converted Victorian house on the corner of Riverside Drive and Stevenson and moved to an expansive new building at 1301 Valley Road in Reno in 1965.⁵²⁴ In 1977, organizers established a Women's Resource Center at the Reno-Sparks YWCA with the stated goal of assisting ADC families, as well as to educate local women on resources available to them.⁵²⁵

Also in 1965, the Reno office of Women in Community Service (WICS) moved from 339 W. First Street to 1301 Valley Road. The organization screened women between 16 and 21 years old from low-income families for local jobs.⁵²⁶

516 "Planned Parenthood," *Las Vegas Sun*, January 18, 1972, 10.

517 "Planned Parenthood," *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 18, 1972, 19.

518 Extant; "Planned Parenthood's Mission," *Las Vegas Sun*, July 17, 1975, 16.

519 Extant; "Applications Open," *Las Vegas Sun*, October 30, 1977, 64; "The Boy Scouts Are Cleaning Up," *Las Vegas Sun*, April 3, 1977, 4C.

520 "Doctor Advocates Contraceptives Without Parental Consent," *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 16, 1973, 7.

521 "Nevada No 'Abortion Mill,'" *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 24, 1973, 26; Legislative History of Assembly Bill 319. Legislative Counsel Bureau, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/LegHistory/LHs/1973/AB319,1973.pdf>

522 Extant, now the Our Lady of Wisdom Newman Center; "N.O.W. To Meet in Reno," *Nevada State Journal*, September 25, 1974, 36.

523 *Nevada State Journal*, January 17, 1964, 8; *Nevada State Journal*, January 18, 1964, 4.

524 The building on Valley Road is now the Evelyn Mount Community Center.

525 "Women Working Together Center," *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 24, 1977, 2.

526 *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 28, 1965, 18.

In the 1970s, a new focus arose on establishing support systems for women experiencing trauma and abuse. In 1970, Dorothy Brimacombe started Nike House, a group home in Las Vegas for girls aged 13-17 who experienced trauma related to their home situation, or who were struggling with drug abuse.⁵²⁷

The Rape Crisis Center in Reno was established at 325 Flint Street by 1974.⁵²⁸ Founders and board members included Judie Monk, Judy Helms, Faith Greaves, Chris Norden, Patricia Lynch, Jan Chastain, Shirley Buckner, Isabel Kimble, Cheryl Yee, and Dr. Tom MacGruder. The group worked with the Reno police department to refer survivors to the center and phone line. They remained at 325 Flint Street until 1976.⁵²⁹ During this period, the building also served as headquarters for the Women Associates organization. Founded by Judie Monk, Maya Miller, Nancy Gomes, and others, Women Associates provided emergency housing, food, and personalized assistance to women in crisis.⁵³⁰

In 1974, Florence Shilling McClure and Sandra Petta founded Community Action Against Rape (CAAR), a crisis counseling center in Las Vegas. McClure ran CAAR out of her home for five years, and the CAAR hotline was operated from an answering service. Cofounder and trained counselor Sandi Petta trained volunteers, and the answering service would connect on-duty volunteers with callers. Petta delivered counseling services, and McClure served as an advocate to community institutions, including the police department, District Attorney's office, college campuses, and hospitals. During the 1975 Legislative Session, Florence McClure worked to change the official legal term from "rape" to "sexual assault." The measure passed in the next legislative session. CAAR was renamed the Rape Crisis Center, and McClure served as its director until 1984 (Figures 3.45 and 3.46).⁵³¹

Bernadine Schneider, an early female stockbroker in Las Vegas, established Temporary Assistance for Women (TAW) in 1977 to support and empower women.⁵³² The organization's mission was to provide temporary shelter and assistance to women, as well as their children, who were victims of domestic violence, assault, sexual abuse, desertion, divorce, or death of a family supporter.⁵³³ In 1996, the organization changed its name to SafeNest and continues to operate in 2021.

The Equal Rights Amendment

Nearly 50 years after Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman penned the original language for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the U.S. House of Representatives passed the amendment on October 12, 1971, followed by the U.S. Senate on March 22, 1972. Although lawmakers had introduced the ERA in every session of Congress from 1923 to 1971, it never received the majority vote required for passage. By the early 1970s, female legislators pushed for the ERA to be a priority. The revised amendment read: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."⁵³⁴

527 Cicero, 72; "Yardstick of Ways to Help the Young," *Las Vegas Sun*, September 17, 1975, 31.

528 Extant.

529 "Area Women Helped by Rape Crises Line," *Nevada State Journal*, September 11, 1974, 48; "Rape...A Complicated Crime," *Nevada State Journal*, November 6, 1977, 1A; "Working for Women," *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 15, 1975, 20; National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, *Rape*, (New York), 1977, 13.

530 "Women Associates: 'There is Somebody Who Cares,'" *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 15, 1975, 20.

531 Goodwin, *Changing the Game*, 155-156.

532 Bernadine Schneider oral history interview, 2006, University of Nevada, Las Vegas University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives.

533 "Realtors Assisting Women's Charity," *Las Vegas Sun*, October 22, 1977, 17.

534 "The Long Road to Equality: What Women Won from the ERA Ratification Effort" (U.S. Library of Congress, n.d.), <https://guides.loc.gov/american-women-essays/era-ratification-effort>.

After passing both houses, the ERA was sent to the states for ratification on March 22, 1972. Congresswoman Martha Griffiths (D-Michigan) and Senator Birch Bayh (D-Indiana), co-sponsors of the amendment, agreed to a seven-year ratification time limit to appease Senator Samuel Ervin (D-North Carolina), the leading senatorial opponent of the bill. By 1973, it secured ratification by 30 states.⁵³⁵ For the amendment to become law, ratification was required by 38 states. The amendment was introduced to the Nevada Legislature during the 1973 legislative session.⁵³⁶

In 1973, four women served in the Nevada State Assembly. These included Eileen Brookman (D-Clark), Margie Foote (D-Washoe), Jean Ford (R-Clark), and Mary Gojack (D-Washoe). First elected in 1965, Assemblywoman Brookman enthusiastically supported the ERA and would serve for the next sixteen years. Jean Ford and Mary Gojack, both freshmen assemblywomen, also supported ratification.⁵³⁷ Margie Foote, on the other hand, opposed ratification. She believed that the amendment would lead to a multitude of women's issues ending up in the courts. Foote remained vocally opposed to ratification, even joining the northern STOP-ERA organization, until her defeat in the 1978 election.⁵³⁸

Nevada state Senator Helen Herr, who sponsored legislation in 1973 that guaranteed equal pay for equal work for men and women, also opposed ERA ratification. As the only female senator, she claimed, "This act would deliberately undermine the family which is the cornerstone of our society. God made us different for an important purpose and function. The laws that protect us from burdens we were not built for must not be denied us." Herr would become a leader in the anti-ERA movement before losing the 1978 primary election, a defeat she credited to her stance on ratification.⁵³⁹

After the contentious 1971 legislative session, which centered on welfare reform, legislators were trepidatious of another controversial session in 1973. The divisive nature of the ERA all but guaranteed acrimony at the Nevada State Legislature. According to Dziedziak, Democratic Senate Majority Leader



Figure 3.45 Florence McClure in 1985. UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.



Figure 3.46 Community Action Against Rape Banner, c.1985. UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.

⁵³⁵ Dziedziak, 59.

⁵³⁶ Winter, 7.

⁵³⁷ Dziedziak, 76.

⁵³⁸ Dziedziak, 77.

⁵³⁹ Dziedziak, 78.

B. Mahlon Brown (D-Clark) and the Democratic majority did little to pass ERA ratification, even though Democratic Governor Mike O'Callaghan publicly supported it.⁵⁴⁰

Senators Richard Bryan (D-Clark) and Thomas R.C. "Spike" Wilson (D-Washoe) introduced Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR 1) to ratify the ERA. It then moved to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which held public hearings on the Resolution overseen by Committee Chair Mel Close (D-Clark). After receiving testimony from more than 100 individuals on both sides of the issue, Close adjourned the hearings. After weeks of debate, the Senate voted against the resolution 16-4. In the State Assembly, Jean Ford introduced Assembly Joint Resolution 8 (AJR 8), calling for ERA ratification. The Resolution never advanced beyond the Assembly Judiciary Committee, effectively ending legislative discussion until the next session in 1975.⁵⁴¹

Although ratification failed in 1973, small victories emerged from legislative discussion of the ERA during that session. In his official adjournment remarks, Senator Close had commented that, "I feel there are many discriminatory laws with regards to women; some favoring them and some detrimental to them [...] [w]e have had a study by the Legislative Counsel Bureau showing where possible areas of discrimination occur by statute. Where they are unjust or unreasonable, they should be amended [...] [i]f the amendment is not adopted until 1979, or if it is never adopted, the alleged discrimination would continue to exist, unless action is taken in Nevada today. The committee is prepared to take that action."⁵⁴² In this spirit, Close and the Senate Judiciary Committee continued to examine the Nevada Revised Statutes to identify and eliminate discriminatory language. Armed with this knowledge, the committee drafted bills to guarantee equality under Nevada law.⁵⁴³

Senator Joe Neal (D-Clark), a freshman during the 1973 session and Nevada's first African American state senator, was an impassioned proponent of the ERA. Weeks after taking office, he provided the following remarks:

I always flinch with amazement when we come to the portion of the Pledge of Allegiance that says, 'one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.' With liberty and justice for whom? Certainly not for women, certainly not for blacks, and certainly not for Indians. It is liberty and justice for the white Caucasian male, who by his pride is willing, by his vote against Equal Rights for Women, to make the Senate Chamber a den of inequity instead of a place for liberty and justice for all. It is not only power that you exercise here this morning by voting against this amendment, it is power buttressed by fear. What I am saying is simply this: if you do not allow women to become an equal part of our social, economic, political, and religious institutions, you will be shouting your insecurity to the world. Whatever the American women have and will become, will be a reflection of your action here today.⁵⁴⁴

Following the 1973 legislature's failure to ratify the ERA, activists began preparing for the next biennial session. Jean Ford arranged a meeting at her home in January 1974, during which the ERA Coalition was established to coordinate the efforts. Kate Butler, of the League of Women Voters, announced the organization's plan to produce an unbiased film about the ERA and screen it throughout the state. Other organizations in attendance donated funds for the coalition to lease an office in Reno for the next year. The Nevadans for ERA (NERA) statewide organization also formed shortly after the 1973 session ended. Kate Butler served as state coordinator. Mylan Roloff coordinated for the northern portion of the state, and Renee Diamond and Cynthia Cunningham chaired southern Nevada. NERA's

540 Dziedziak, 78.

541 Dziedziak, 78-79; Winter, 7.

542 Dziedziak, 79; Nevada Legislature, Nevada Legislative Record, Senate Judiciary Committee, 27 February 1973 (Carson City 1973).

543 Dziedziak, 80.

544 Dziedziak, 83; Nevada Legislature, Journal of the Senate, (Carson City, 1973), 28 February 1973.

activities included production and statewide distribution of a newsletter that chronicled ERA-related legislative activity to raise public awareness of the amendment.⁵⁴⁵

Pro-ERA organizations and their volunteers utilized different tactics to amplify their message. They sponsored publications, radio spots, and public meetings. They distributed pro-ERA brochures throughout Nevada's neighborhoods and phone-banked to determine which neighborhoods they would canvas. The local activists joined forces with national organizations that supported the ERA, including NOW, Women's Political Caucus, AFL/CIO, Labor Women United, and the American Association of University Women. An advisor from National NOW arrived in Nevada to help formulate a strategy, and volunteers from California NOW arrived each weekend to assist the Nevada groups. NERA created Nevadans for a Better Government as their ERA political action committee and began fundraising to support the campaign.⁵⁴⁶

As the campaign to ratify the amendment progressed, anti-ERA sentiment intensified. The NERA offices in Las Vegas and Carson City were graffitied with slurs and threats. Someone wiretapped the Las Vegas office, which later was burglarized. According to Caryll Dziedziak, "This campaign no longer reflected a single-issue; an ideological war had begun."⁵⁴⁷ The ERA challenged long-held notions of the role of women in society, and many feared that the amendment threatened the traditional role of women, the stability of the American family and, by extension, the very underpinnings of society.

The Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS) was particularly organized in its opposition to the amendment, as church leaders of the era encouraged women to seek fulfillment through submission as wives and mothers. However, not all LDS women agreed with their church's official stance on Feminism or the ERA, and Dziedziak⁵⁴⁸ identifies a number of LDS women who supported ratification.⁵⁴⁹

The most visible anti-ERA organization of the 1970s was STOP-ERA, led by Phyllis Schlafly of Illinois. Following the 1973 legislative session, Nevada state Senator Helen Herr began planning an offensive against ratification. She formed a Nevada branch of STOP-ERA in Las Vegas in September 1974. The organization's goals included educating the public on the perceived negative consequences of the ERA, as well as to lobby representatives to vote against it. Sylvia Ford and Janine Hansen co-chaired the northern Nevada committee, and Herr oversaw the southern Nevada committee. Anti-ERA activists characterized pro-ERA women as radicals who wished to destroy the American family.⁵⁵⁰

Public debates over ERA occurred between the 1973 and 1975 sessions, including one between Assemblywoman Jean Ford and Senator Helen Herr on September 30, 1974. Ford stated that the amendment guaranteed that people would be judged on their merit rather than their sex. Herr, on the other hand, asserted that the amendment would destroy the family and society by sending women into the working world, unconcerned about the care of their children.⁵⁵¹

The Nevada Legislature reconvened in February 1975, and Reno Assemblyman Bob Barengo introduced Assembly Joint Resolution 1 (AJR 1) to ratify the ERA. During this session, freshman Assemblywoman Sue Wagner (R-Washoe) joined the pro-ERA legislative caucus. Wagner ran as a Republican on the platform of "Open Government." Once in office, she joined NERA and worked with fellow pro-ERA colleagues during the 1975 session.⁵⁵² The Assembly voted

⁵⁴⁵ Dziedziak, 84-85.

⁵⁴⁶ Dziedziak, 85-86.

⁵⁴⁷ Dziedziak, 86.

⁵⁴⁸ Dziedziak, 100-114.

⁵⁴⁹ Dziedziak, 99; Winter, 7.

⁵⁵⁰ Dziedziak, 126-127.

⁵⁵¹ Dziedziak, 128.

⁵⁵² Dziedziak, 87.

in favor of the resolution 27-13. However, it faltered in the Senate, despite Senator Mary Gojack's efforts to sway her fellow legislators to vote in favor of the resolution. Senator Gojack moved up to the Senate from the Assembly in the preceding election, as did Jack Schofield (D-Clark) and Margie Foote. Senators Schofield and Foote voted against the amendment, along with the majority of the Senate, with a vote of 12-8. The next month, Senator Carl Dodge (R-Churchill) introduced a Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR 1) to ratify the ERA. Senator Foote moved to kill the resolution, and Senator Dodge seconded. For the second session in a row, ratification of the ERA failed.⁵⁵³

Activists in favor of and opposed to ratification organized again between the 1975 and 1977 sessions. NERA and STOP-ERA held events and marches, published and distributed literature, canvassed neighborhoods, and organized phone banks.⁵⁵⁴

The Nevada Legislature discussed ratification of the ERA for a final time in 1977. Vocal ERA supporters included Senator Mary Gojack and Assemblywomen Sue Wagner, Eileen Brookman, and Nancy Gomes, while Senator Margie Foote and Assemblywoman Karen Hayes (D-Clark) opposed the amendment. Losing her 1976 bid for State Senate, ERA supporter Jean Ford returned to Carson City in another role: as a lobbyist for the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. Anti-ERA Senator Helen Herr was also out of the picture for the 1977 session, having lost her re-election bid in 1976. However, the Senate remained under the leadership of three men who opposed the ERA: Senate Majority Leader Jim Gibson (D-Clark), Senator Mel Close, and Senator Floyd Lamb. Although NERA garnered pledges of support from many members of the Assembly, a backroom deal had been arranged between the two houses to kill the amendment before it reached the Assembly, and thus these "supporters" knew that it would not be called to a vote.⁵⁵⁵

Because the 1975 Assembly overwhelmingly passed the ERA, supporters chose to first introduce the amendment in the Senate as Senate Joint Resolution 5 (SJR 5). After learning that two anti-ERA senators planned to abstain from the vote to prevent a tie, which would be broken by the pro-ERA Lieutenant Governor Bob Rose, Senator Joe Neal invoked little-known Senate Rule 30, which mandated that all present must vote aye or nay, with abstentions automatically being counted as nays. With a vote of 10 ayes and 10 nays, Lieutenant Governor Bob Rose broke the tie, voting in favor of the resolution. The resolution moved on to the Assembly, which voted it down 24-15. Eight of the 24 assembly members who voted against the amendment had accepted contributions from NERA with the reassurance of a favorable vote.⁵⁵⁶

For the third time, the Nevada Legislature failed to ratify the ERA during the 1977 session. Assemblywoman Sue Wagner called the defeat "a slap in the face to women that we were just not important enough or equal." However, before the session adjourned, Assemblyman Don Mello (D-Washoe) introduced Assembly Bill 301, which called for a citizens' advisory referendum on ERA ratification. ERA activists declared their opposition to the referendum, filing a lawsuit that challenged its constitutionality. The Nevada Supreme Court disagreed, striking down the lawsuit.⁵⁵⁷

Understanding that the referendum was imminent, ERA advocates established the Equality NOW campaign, encouraging citizens to support pro-ERA candidates and vote in favor of the referendum. The Northern Nevada Chapter of NOW organized a 12-mile walk-a-thon through Reno, concluding at Idlewild Park for a rally, to garner support for the referendum.⁵⁵⁸ However, anti-ERA activists worked against the referendum. In total, 123,952 residents voted against the measure, and 61,768 citizens voted in favor. The referendum, known as Question 5 on the 1978

553 Dziedziak, 87-88.

554 Dziedziak, 129-135.

555 Dziedziak, 91-92.

556 Dziedziak, 92-93; Joseph Neal and Dana Bennett, "Joseph M. Neal, Jr. Oral History," Nevada Legislature Oral History Project, 2008, 28-29.

557 Dziedziak, 94.

558 "March," *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 24, 1977, 2.

election ballot, failed by a 2 to 1 margin, killing all chances of ERA ratification in Nevada. Although the referendum was advisory in nature, anti-ERA legislators in later sessions insisted that “the voice of the people” defeated ERA. Resolutions for ratification were introduced in the 1979 and 1981 sessions before dying in committee.⁵⁵⁹

The national ratification deadline for the ERA ended on June 30, 1982. By that time, 35 states out of the required 38 had ratified the amendment.⁵⁶⁰ In March 2021, the U.S. Congress voted to remove the 1982 deadline for ratification. As of the time of this writing, the U.S. Senate has not voted on the resolution, which was introduced in January 2021.⁵⁶¹

Legislative Victories

Historian James Hulse writes that despite its failure to be ratified, the debate over the ERA led to some gains for Nevada women. The 1975 legislative session was a landmark year for bills that rectified discriminatory laws.⁵⁶² Also in 1975, Jean Ford sponsored Assembly Bill 219, which removed discriminatory provisions from the state’s labor law. It required that overtime payment for maximum hours, wage rates, rest periods, meal breaks, and uniforms at employer expense would be governed without regard to sex. It also repealed the maximum limit on hours worked by women.⁵⁶³ Other landmark bills of 1975 that signaled gains in women’s rights in Nevada include the following:⁵⁶⁴

- Assembly Bill 366 changed wording for the Nevada Industrial Commission workmen’s compensation benefits to be provided to spouses of covered workers, rather than wives.
- Assembly Bill 488 extended the scope of the Nevada Equal Rights Commission to cover age, sex, and handicapped discrimination.
- Senate Bill 222 provided protection for rape victims, providing restrictions on admissible evidence regarding prior sexual conduct of the victim. It prohibited any reference being made to “unchaste character” of a victim. It also ensured that no costs incurred on behalf of the victim for initial emergency care or evidence gathering would be charged to the victim, instead requiring counties to pay those costs.⁵⁶⁵
- Senate Bill 252 provided that following a divorce, a wife’s last name could be changed to any previous name she used.
- Senate Bill 253 provided that alimony and property could be awarded to either spouse, male or female, based on the circumstances of the parties, or to a husband in a divorce suit if he is disabled or unable to provide for himself.
- Senate Bill 286 repealed the sole trader law, allowing a married woman going into business to be treated the same as a married man.
- Senate Bill 381 prohibited sex and marital status discrimination in granting credit. It provided married couples the right to apply for credit as a unit with their salaries considered jointly or individually at their discretion, not at the discretion of the creditor.
- Senate Bill 433 made the legal age of marriage 18 years old, regardless of sex. Previously, a woman could marry at the age of 16 and a man at the age of 18, and a father’s consent was needed for his daughter to marry between 16 and 18.

⁵⁵⁹ Dziedziak, 93-94.

⁵⁶⁰ Winter, 7.

⁵⁶¹ 117th Congress, Senate Joint Resolution 1, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/1/related-bills>.

⁵⁶² Dziedziak, 89; Hulse, *The Silver State*, 203.

⁵⁶³ Legislative Counsel Bureau, Legislative History of Assembly Bill 219 from 1975, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/LegHistory/LHs/1975/AB219,1975.pdf>.

⁵⁶⁴ Legislative Counsel Bureau. Research Division.

⁵⁶⁵ Legislative Counsel Bureau, Legislative History of Senate Bill 222 from 1975, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/LegHistory/LHs/1975/SB222,1975.pdf>.

The Nevada Women's Conference

The Nevada Women's Conference was held from June 17 to June 19, 1977 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The National Commission for the International Women's Year (IWY) appointed former Assemblywoman Jean Ford as chair of Nevada's Coordinating Committee. The National Commission appointed Reno attorney Frankie Sue Del Papa to the state committee, and she would later be elected as vice-chair.⁵⁶⁶ Some of the goals established by the Nevada State Coordinating Committee included: "examining the role of women in Nevada's economical, social, cultural and political development; identifying barriers that prevent Nevada women from participating fully and equally in all aspects of state and national life; seeking consensus on means by which such barriers can be removed; and bringing women of Nevada closer together." In preparation for the conference, the event steering committee formed the Nevada Women's Task Force, a volunteer organization that sought members from women's organizations throughout the state. When the conference commenced, nearly 1,400 people attended. Gloria Steinem spoke at the conference's Saturday luncheon, drawing a crowd of more than 1,100 as she encouraged unity in the campaign to ratify the ERA (Figures 3.47 and 3.48).⁵⁶⁷

The National Women's Conference took place in Houston five months later, in November 1977. Nevada conference participants elected the delegation to represent their state, including Jean Ford, Nevada Women's Conference coordinator, NERA founder, and former assemblywoman; Frankie Sue Del Papa, Reno attorney and NERA member; Kate Butler, NERA coordinator and legislative lobbyist; Ruby Duncan, Operation Life founder and Clark County Welfare Rights Organization past president; Renee Diamond, Clark County Women's Democratic Club president, Operation Life board member, and NERA member; Chris Everhart, Reno realtor and Northern Nevadans for ERA member; Mary Gojack, pro-ERA state Senator from Reno, NOW member, and Washoe County Women's Democratic Club member; Josephine Gonzales, director of the Community Health Program for Indians and chair of the Centro de Informacion Latino Americano in Reno; Jan MacEachern, League of Women Voters and Clark County Health Systems Agency member; Blaine Rose, Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County planning specialist and Planned Parenthood of Southern Nevada director; Sue Wagner, Reno assemblywoman and NERA member; and Lois Whitney, Elko Indian Colony council member and Americorps VISTA volunteer for community outreach. Alternate delegates represented the anti-ERA contingent and included Assemblywoman Karen Hayes, Adelene Bartlett, Carrie Bagley, Janine Hansen, and Patricia Little.⁵⁶⁸

Women celebrated the national conference as a success. With nearly 20,000 participants who ran the gamut in age, ethnicity, and occupation, the conference also welcomed three First Ladies, including Lady Bird Johnson, Betty Ford, and the sitting First Lady Rosalynn Carter. The event accomplished two overarching goals: it promoted inclusivity, extending feminism beyond its traditionally white, middle-class core with exceedingly diverse state delegations, and it also provided a collegial environment for women of all ideological inclinations to openly discuss and compromise on women's issues. The conference's resolutions therefore bridged the goals of middle-class, equality-focused feminists with those of radical separatist feminists.⁵⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

Efforts to secure woman suffrage and rights for women and families in Nevada did not proceed in a direct line, nor at a steady pace, throughout the state's history. As the record shows, they have been spurred, time and time again, by both everyday and extraordinary acts of individual initiative and collective action. They have not always been

⁵⁶⁶ Dziedziak, 145-146.

⁵⁶⁷ Dziedziak, 151-155.

⁵⁶⁸ Dziedziak, 158-159.

⁵⁶⁹ Dziedziak, 163-164.



Figure 3.47 ERA Booth staffed by an unidentified woman at the Nevada Women's Conference in Las Vegas, June 1977. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*



Figure 3.48 Keynote speaker Gloria Steinem greets guests at the Nevada Women's Conference in Las Vegas, June 1977. *UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives.*

accompanied by the pursuit of equity and equality for women of all backgrounds and status, although such gains have accelerated and expanded over time. Much more remains to be learned of the efforts of those whose actions were not chronicled in the newspapers or archived in documents deposited in institutional collections. Although citizens, activists, and lawmakers have made great strides in advancing women's rights in Nevada, there remains much work to be done.

In the years since 1980, women in Nevada, as elsewhere, have experienced a variety of successes and setbacks. The increasing conservatism of the Reagan Era had a significant impact. In 1980, the Republican Party officially dropped its endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment for the first time since 1940.⁵⁷⁰ Nevada state senator Sue Wagner reintroduced the amendment to the state legislature in 1981, but it was afforded no consideration. The deadline for its ratification, extended by the U.S. Congress from 1979 to 1982, came and went, with Nevada failing to ratify within the allotted time.

Finally, on March 22, 2017, 45 years to the day since the U.S. Senate originally passed the ERA and sent it to the states for ratification, the Nevada State Senate followed the State Assembly in voting to ratify the amendment. Due to the long-expired deadline, its passage was considered largely symbolic. And yet the highly celebrated act brought to 36 the number of states that had ratified the amendment, one step closer to the 38 required for it to become law. In 2018, Illinois became the 37th to ratify, followed by the state of Virginia in 2020. Although the U.S. House of Representatives voted to retract the deadline in March 2021, the Senate has not voted on the matter, and it remains unknown whether the deadline will be deemed flexible, and if so, whether the votes already cast will be considered legitimate, despite the fact that five states have since voted to rescind or withdraw their ratification.

Other actions had more tangible benefits for the lives of Nevada women. In 1981, the U.S. EEOC filed suit against the Nevada Resort Association to end sex discrimination in casino employment in casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. A consent decree was ordered two weeks later to prohibit hiring discrimination based on sex and national origin.⁵⁷¹

In 1990, former NERA members, along with new activists, founded Campaign for Choice to protect reproductive freedom for Nevada women. Leading the charge were Vivian Freeman, Martha Gould, Mylan Roloff, and Sue Wagner from northern Nevada, and Renee Diamond, Harriet Trudell, and Naomi Millisor in the south.⁵⁷² Although the Nevada statutes had already been rewritten to align with *Roe v. Wade*, these leaders called for a public referendum, a process designed to put an already existing law on the ballot for a vote of approval or disapproval. The measure passed in a 63 to 37 percent landslide, a result that meant the state's abortion law could not be changed by the state legislature, even if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn *Roe* at a future date.⁵⁷³

Women have served in every level of Nevada government so far, with the notable exception of Governor. Sue Wagner, who was elected to the Nevada Assembly in 1974 and later to the state Senate, became the first woman to be elected Lieutenant Governor of Nevada in 1991. Patty Cafferata became the first female State Treasurer in 1983, while Frankie Sue Del Papa became the first female Secretary of State (1986) and then the first female Attorney General (1990). Women have also held leadership positions on the councils of Nevada's federally recognized tribes, including election to Tribal Chair.

570 Dziedziak, 182.

571 Goodwin, "Women at Work," 190.

572 Dziedziak, 184.

573 Dennis Myers, "Campaign for Choice: When Nevada Showed How to Protect Abortion," *Reno News and Review*, June 6, 2019. <https://www.newsreview.com/reno/content/campaign-for-choice/28232056/>. Accessed September 22, 2021.

Women have also represented the state on the federal level. The first woman elected to represent Nevada in the U.S. Congress was Barbara Vucanovich (1983-1986), followed by Shelley Berkley (1999-2013), Dina Titus (2009-2010 and re-elected 2013), Jacky Rosen (2017-2019), and Susie Lee (elected in 2019). The first female U.S. Senators from Nevada were Catherine Cortez Masto (elected in 2017) and Jacky Rosen (elected in 2019).

The right to marry was challenged in Nevada as elsewhere in the late 1990s and early 2000s by a coordinated national campaign to ban gay marriage. Through use of the initiative petition, which required an initiative to be passed by the electorate in two successive general elections, a two-thirds majority of the people of Nevada voted in 2000 and 2002 to insert a ban on same-sex marriage into the state constitution. But in 2014, that ban was struck down by the 9th U.S. Court of Appeals and rendered void. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that state laws banning same-sex couples from any of the terms and conditions that applied to opposite-sex couples were invalid. Even though those decisions rendered Nevada's ban on same-sex marriage unenforceable, Nevada citizens voted to formally remove it from the state constitution in 2020. Public support for the amendment, with 62 percent voting in favor, followed approval at two successive sessions of the State Legislature in 2017 and 2019.⁵⁷⁴

Nevada became the first state legislature with a female majority in 2019, at a time when women's rights were in the spotlight more than ever. On a national level, the Women's March on Washington took place on January 21, 2017, the day after the inauguration of President Donald Trump. The "Me Too" movement, a term first coined in 2006 by activist and sexual assault survivor Tarana Burke, strengthened and expanded after news of sexual abuse allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein emerged in 2017. The heightened scrutiny of sexual harassment policies and violations that followed that and other high-profile cases reverberated through Nevada government and workplaces as it did across the country.

The 2020 centennial of the ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution brought renewed attention to the historical accomplishments of Nevada's women, through commemorative and documentary projects including the National Votes for Women Trail, the Nevada Suffrage Centennial commemoration and website, and the creation of this very document. Whether through legislative action, political service, social activism, or community involvement, women continue to shape and reshape the social, cultural, and physical landscapes of Nevada, making history as they go.

574 Emerson Marcus, "Nevada's Reversal of the Same-Sex Marriage Ban," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 64, No. 2 (Summer 2021), 155-158.

CHAPTER 4: PROPERTY TYPES AND EVALUATION METHODS

PROPERTY TYPES

According to the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation Planning*, "A property type is a grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics" ("Developing Historic Contexts," *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation Planning*). Property types are a tangible expression of the historic context, physically illustrating the ideas set forth in the conceptual narrative. This section provides guidance for identifying and evaluating properties that may be significant for their association with women's suffrage and women's rights in Nevada. The themes and associated eligibility standards only apply to properties that are specifically associated with the suffrage movement and subsequent advancement of women's rights. Women and organizations who made significant contributions in other areas are not included in this section, although their work may be identified in relevant extant and future historic contexts for the state.

Various property types have been identified and are referenced throughout the context statement. They generally date from 1870 to 1980, beginning with the Progressive Era period and ending with the second wave of feminism, though some are earlier. They are distributed throughout the state, although property types associated with more recent history are concentrated in the population centers of Las Vegas and Reno.

The property types identified in this section are organized by historic theme and include a summary statement of significance, recommended period of significance, and applicable area of significance. Each identified type also includes generalizations as to geographic distribution within the state. Finally, preliminary NRHP criteria recommendations, integrity thresholds, and preservation goals are provided for each type.

Property Categories

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) identifies five classes of significant properties: buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts. The NRHP does not consider intangible values for listing, except insofar as they are associated with or embodied by physical properties. Neither cultural events, nor skilled or talented individuals, are eligible for listing in the NRHP. Instead, "the National Register is oriented to recognizing physically concrete properties that are relatively fixed in location" (Bulletin 15a). Definitions for NRHP property categories, derived from *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1997), are provided below.

Building

A building, such as a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar construction, is created principally to shelter any form of human activity. "Building" may also be used to refer to a historically and functionally related unit, such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.

Buildings eligible for the National Register must include all of their basic structural elements. Parts of buildings, such as interiors, facades, or wings, are not eligible independent of the rest of the existing building. The whole building must be considered, and its significant features must be identified. If a building has lost any of its basic structural elements, it is usually considered a "ruin" and is categorized as a site.

Structure

The term “structure” is used to distinguish from buildings those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter. Structures nominated to the National Register must include all of the extant basic structural elements. Parts of structures can not be considered eligible if the whole structure remains. For example, a truss bridge is composed of the metal or wooden truss, the abutments, and supporting piers, all of which, if extant, must be included when considering the property for eligibility.

If a structure has lost its historic configuration or pattern of organization through deterioration or demolition, it is usually considered a “ruin” and is categorized as a site.

Object

The term “object” is used to distinguish constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although it may be, by nature or design, movable, an object is associated with a specific setting or environment.

Small objects not designed for a specific location are normally not eligible. Such works include transportable sculpture, furniture, and other decorative arts that, unlike a fixed outdoor sculpture, do not possess association with a specific place.

Objects should be in a setting appropriate to their significant historic use, roles, or character. Objects relocated to a museum are inappropriate for listing in the National Register.

Site

A site is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.

A site can possess associative significance or information potential or both, and can be significant under any or all of the four criteria. A site need not be marked by physical remains if it is the location of a prehistoric or historic event or pattern of events and if no buildings, structures, or objects marked it at the time of the events. However, when the location of a prehistoric or historic event cannot be conclusively determined because no other cultural materials were present or survive, documentation must be carefully evaluated to determine whether the traditionally recognized or identified site is accurate.

A site may be a natural landmark strongly associated with significant prehistoric or historic events or patterns of events, if the significance of the natural feature is well documented through scholarly research. Generally, though, the National Register excludes from the definition of “site” natural waterways or bodies of water that served as determinants in the location of communities or were significant in the locality’s subsequent economic development. While they may have been “avenues of exploration,” the features most appropriate to document this significance are the properties built in association with the waterways.

District

A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a wide variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties. For example, a district can reflect one principal activity, such as a mill or a ranch, or it can encompass several interrelated activities, such as an area that includes industrial, residential, or commercial buildings, sites, structures, or objects. A district can also be a grouping of archeological sites related primarily by their common components; these types of districts often will not visually represent a specific historic environment.

Period of Significance

All historic properties have a period of significance, which is defined as the span of time during which a property attained the significance that makes it eligible for the NRHP.

Areas of Significance

The NRHP employs Areas of Significance to organize properties into thematic categories considered important in American history. The Areas of Significance, as provided in National Register Bulletin 16a How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form, are as follows:

AGRICULTURE - The process and technology of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and plants.

ARCHITECTURE - The practical art of designing and constructing buildings and structures to serve human needs.

ARCHEOLOGY - The study of prehistoric and historic cultures through excavation and the analysis of physical remains.

- Prehistoric --- Archeological study of indigenous cultures before the advent of written records.
- Historic-Aboriginal --- Archeological study of indigenous cultures after the advent of written records.
- Historic-Nonaboriginal--- Archeological study of non-indigenous cultures after the advent of written records.

ART - The creation of painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, and decorative arts.

COMMERCE - The business of trading goods, services, and commodities.

COMMUNICATIONS - The technology and process of transmitting information.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - The design or development of the physical structure of communities.

CONSERVATION - The preservation, maintenance, and management of natural or manmade resources.

ECONOMICS - The study of the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth; the management of monetary and other assets.

EDUCATION - The process of conveying or acquiring knowledge or skills through systematic instruction, training, or study.

ENGINEERING - The practical application of scientific principles to design, construct, and operate equipment, machinery, and structures to serve human needs.

ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION - The development and practice of leisure activities for refreshment, diversion, amusement, or sport.

ETHNIC HERITAGE - The history of persons having a common ethnic or racial identity.

- Asian - The history of persons having origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.
- Black - The history of persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- European - The history of persons having origins in Europe.
- Hispanic - The history of persons having origins in the Spanish-speaking areas of the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America.
- Native American - The history of persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, including American Indian and American Eskimo cultural groups.
- Pacific Islander - The history of persons having origins in the Pacific Islands, including Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.
- Other - The history of persons having origins in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East or North Africa.

EXPLORATION/ SETTLEMENT - The investigation of unknown or little known regions; the establishment and earliest development of new settlements or communities.

HEALTH/MEDICINE - The care of the sick, disabled, and handicapped; the promotion of health and hygiene.

INDUSTRY - The technology and process of managing materials, labor, and equipment to produce goods and services.

INVENTION - The art of originating by experiment or ingenuity an object, system, or concept of practical value.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE - The practical art of designing or arranging the land for human use and enjoyment.

LAW - The interpretation and enforcement of society's legal code.

LITERATURE - The creation of prose and poetry.

MARITIME HISTORY - The history of the exploration, fishing, navigation, and use of inland, coastal, and deep sea waters.

MILITARY - The system of defending the territory and sovereignty of a people.

PERFORMING ARTS - The creation of drama, dance, and music.

PHILOSOPHY - The theoretical study of thought, knowledge, and the nature of the universe.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT - The enactment and administration of laws by which a nation, State, or other political jurisdiction is governed; activities related to political process.

RELIGION - The organized system of beliefs, practices, and traditions regarding mankind's relationship to perceived supernatural forces.

SCIENCE - The systematic study of natural law and phenomena.

SOCIAL HISTORY - The history of efforts to promote the welfare of society; the history of society and the lifeways of its social groups.

TRANSPORTATION - The process and technology of conveying passengers or materials.

OTHER - Any area not covered by the above categories.

Geographic Distribution

Per the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation Planning, generalizations about where certain property types are likely to be found can assist in the identification and treatment of those properties.¹ In general, historical, environmental, or cultural factors determine the location of specific property types, and their geographic distribution can therefore be approximated by examining these factors. According to the Guidelines, "Locational patterns of property types should be based upon models that have an explicit theoretical or historical basis and can be tested in the field. The model may be the product of historical research and analysis, or it may result from sampling techniques." For the purposes of this context, predicted locational patterns of property types have been developed based on the association between historic trends identified in the context and the development and evolution of Nevada's various communities.

Physical Condition

The current and/or expected condition for each property type is characterized in this chapter. Expected physical condition assists in the development of identification, evaluation, and treatment strategies and helps define physical integrity thresholds for various property types.

The inherent characteristics of a given property type can define its physical condition by either contributing to or detracting from its physical preservation. For example, a property type commonly constructed with sturdy materials is less likely to deteriorate than a property type commonly constructed with flimsy materials. Similarly, resources whose historic function or design limits the potential for adaptive reuse are less likely to be rehabilitated, and therefore more likely to be physically deteriorated, than structures whose design allows for a wider spectrum of alternative uses.

Aspects of the social and natural environment may additionally contribute to the condition of the property type. For example, community values placed on certain types of properties, such as religious buildings, may result in their preservation, whereas the need to reuse building materials may lead to the dismantling of properties like abandoned houses and barns.

¹ https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_standards.htm.

For the purposes of this context, the predicted condition of property types is based on professional knowledge of existing properties, which was then field-tested using a small sample of properties representative of each type. This approach is encouraged by the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation Planning.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Evaluation Criteria

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation presented in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60 represent the uniform standard by which buildings, structures, and sites are to be assessed. Guidelines for the evaluation of properties and eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are specific, and each property must meet at least one of four criteria by "being associated with an important historic context and retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance" (Bulletin 15a, National Register Staff 1997:3).

Criteria Considerations

Certain resource classes are generally not considered eligible for the NRHP. These include religious properties, cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, buildings that have been removed from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, commemorative properties, and properties less than 50 years of age. However, these properties will qualify for NRHP listing if they are integral parts of districts, or if they meet the following considerations:

- a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- c. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
- d. A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or

- e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when the same association has survived; or
- f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

Aspects of Integrity

Evaluation of property integrity is also of considerable importance. Without integrity, even properties meeting one of the four basic NRHP criteria are not considered eligible. Integrity, therefore, is a fundamental component of the historic preservation process. The term is prominent in the federal regulations governing the National Register process, which require that eligible properties possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property's integrity is not the same as its condition. The National Register definitions for each aspect of historical integrity are presented in the table below. In order for a property to be determined eligible, the appropriate aspects of integrity must be determined. For example, integrity of materials, design, and workmanship might be especially important for buildings being evaluated under Criterion C, while integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association might carry more weight for properties being considered under Criterion A.

Table 4.1 The Seven Aspects of Integrity According to the National Register

Location	Location is the place where the historic property was constructed, or the place where the historic event occurred.
Design	Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
Setting	Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.
Materials	Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time, and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
Workmanship	Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
Feeling	Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
Association	Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Preservation Goals

The Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation Planning defines a preservation goal as a statement of preferred preservation activities for a property type. The purpose of establishing preservation goals is to establish an ideal version of how properties associated with the historic context should be identified, evaluated, registered, and treated.

According to the Guidelines, “Preservation goals should be oriented toward the greatest possible protection of properties in the historic context and should be based on the principle that properties should be preserved in place if possible, through affirmative treatments like rehabilitation, stabilization, or restoration. Generally, goals will be specific to the historic context and will often be phrased in terms of property types. Some of these goals will be related to information needs previously identified for the historic context. Collectively, the goals for a historic context should be a coherent statement of program direction covering all aspects of the context.”²

Preservation goals are organized into four categories: identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment.

Identification

According to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines, there are three standards for identifying properties that are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP.

- Standard I. Identification of Historic Properties is Undertaken to the Degree Required to Make Decisions. Extant properties associated with suffrage and women’s rights in Nevada should be identified in terms of this context and assessed for potential significance as necessary for a given project.
 - Example: A city plans to rezone a specific neighborhood. A survey is undertaken to identify historic properties that may be affected by the new zoning code, including properties that are significant for their association with women’s rights in Nevada.
- Standard II. Results of Identification Activities are Integrated into the Preservation Planning Process. Properties related to important suffrage and women’s rights history should be taken into account when making planning decisions that could affect these properties. This includes coordination with the NVSHPO in planning-related decision making.
 - Example: The city incorporates the results of the survey into planning decisions regarding the neighborhood rezoning.
- Standard III. Identification Activities Include Explicit Procedures for Record-Keeping and Information Distribution. When identifying and recording resources related to this context, NVSHPO guidelines and methodologies must be followed. This includes recording resources on appropriate resource forms, and ensuring that information on the forms is compatible with the NVSHPO’s restricted and public databases for cultural resources.
 - Example: The survey of historic properties adheres to the NVSHPO’s guidelines for historic resource survey and documentation.

Evaluation

The process of evaluation determines whether a resource possesses the significance and integrity for listing in the NRHP. According to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines, there are four standards for evaluating properties that are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP.

- Standard I. Evaluation of the Significance of Historic Properties Uses Established Criteria. The NRHP Criteria established by the Secretary of the Interior (i.e., A, B, C, and D) must be utilized to evaluate the significance of a property.

² https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_standards.htm

- Example: A historic property can be significant under one or more of the following criteria - A, B, C, and/or D.
- Standard II. Evaluation of Significance Applies the Criteria Within Historic Contexts. Properties must be evaluated using a historic context, which provides a comparative framework for applying the NRHP Criteria. For properties associated with suffrage and women's rights, this document serves as that context.
 - Example: The significance of a Nevada suffragist's office is evaluated within this context.
- Standard III. Evaluation Results in a List or Inventory of Significant Properties that is Consulted in Assigning Registration and Treatment Priorities. The NVSHPO's Nevada Cultural Resources Information System (NVCRIS) is the state's ongoing inventory of evaluated resources, which helps guide preservation of Nevada's important historic properties.
 - Example: Survey data for properties associated with suffrage and women's rights in Nevada is entered into the NVCRIS database.
- Standard IV. Evaluation Results Are Made Available to the Public. When a resource is formally evaluated, that evaluation becomes part of the public record, and the resource form becomes a public document. However, sensitive information and other circumstances may preclude sharing this information with the public. Additionally, the majority of archaeological information is not released to the public.
 - Example: The NVSHPO makes survey reports and forms available to the public as appropriate.

Registration

According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, there are three standards for registering properties in the NRHP.

- Standard I. Registration Is Conducted According To Stated Procedures. To nominate a property for the NRHP, the regulations set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR 60, must be followed. This includes following instructions provided in the National Park Service's publication How to Complete the National Register Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A).³
 - Example: Having evaluated the suffragist's office as significant for its association with suffrage in Nevada, a local preservation group nominates it for the NRHP, following official procedures for registration.
- Standard II. Registration Information Locates, Describes and Justifies the Significance and Physical Integrity of a Historic Property. When nominating a property for the NRHP, adequate information must be provided to allow users to locate the property and understand its significance. Utilizing the National Register Registration Form ensures that sufficient information is provided.
 - Example: The local preservation group uses the National Register Registration Form to nominate the suffragist's office. Information from this context is incorporated into the nomination to justify the property's significance.
- Standard III. Registration Information Is Accessible to the Public. When the National Park Service formally lists a property into the NRHP, the nomination form becomes accessible to the public. However, sensitive

³ National Park Service. How to Complete the National Register Registration Form. Washington, D.C. 1997.

information and other circumstances may preclude sharing some information with the public. Additionally, the majority of archaeological information is not released to the public.

- Example: Upon approval by the National Park Service, the nomination is made public through the National Register online database.

Treatment

Ideally, treatment of property types associated with this context should adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. These standards provide four approaches to the treatment of historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Each approach has its own set of treatment guidelines. An appropriate treatment approach is selected for a property based on its significance, existing physical condition, available documentation, and interpretive goals, when applicable.

IDENTIFIED PROPERTY TYPES AND ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

The property types below are recommended as most useful in representing the historic trends associated with women's suffrage and women's rights in Nevada. They are directly related to the ideas and themes put forth in the preceding historic context. In addition to their connection with context themes, these types are additionally informed by contexts and MPDFs from other locations.

Each type is organized by historic theme and includes recommendations for period of significance, predicted geographic locations, applicable areas of significance and NRHP criteria, associated property types, eligibility standards, character-defining features, integrity thresholds, and preservation goals.

Eligibility standards for these property types were defined through existing knowledge of historical associations and physical characteristics, in addition to comparative analysis of those qualities. Integrity requirements and considerations were determined based on resource prevalence, relative integrity, and National Register significance under Criterion A and Criterion B. Resources may additionally be eligible for listing under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Engineering.⁴

Theme: Prominent Persons in Women's Suffrage and Women's Rights in Nevada

Summary Statement of Significance

Resources evaluated under this theme are directly associated with the productive life of a person who advanced and supported women's rights, including but not limited to the following issues: suffrage, labor laws, education equality, juvenile justice, justice reform for women, public health, women's health services, domestic violence reform, child welfare, politics, workplace equality, and second wave feminism.

Period of Significance

1861-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada.

⁴ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

Area(s) of Significance

Art, Commerce, Communications, Education, Ethnic Heritage, Health/Medicine, Literature, Performing Arts, Politics, Social History, Other.

NRHP Criteria

B

Associated Property Types

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Sites

Property Type Description

Properties associated with persons significant in the history of women's suffrage and women's rights in Nevada include single-family and multifamily residences, as well as commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings, and demonstration and protest sites. Most identified properties are single-family residences owned or occupied by prominent women. These residences often served secondary functions as offices or meeting places.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be directly associated with the productive life of an individual who played a significant role in promoting and supporting suffrage and/or women's rights.
- The individual must have made a proven and significant contribution to one or more areas of significance as it relates to suffrage, women's rights, or improving the lives of women and children.
- The individual must have resided at or otherwise utilized the property during the period in which they achieved significance.
- To identify resources that best represent an individual's historic contributions, each property associated with an individual must be compared with other properties associated with that same individual. In general, only the property representing the strongest association with an individual would be eligible.
- The contributions of an individual must be compared with those of others who were also significant within the same context. The individual must have a high level of comparative significance.
- The property must have been built or used by significant persons during the period of significance.

- Properties associated with the lives of living persons are potentially eligible, provided that the person's active period contributing to women's rights and/or improving the lives of women and children has ended. Additionally, sufficient time must have passed to assess the historical significance of the person's contribution.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant person was directly associated with the property.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.
- For multi-family residential properties, the apartment or room occupied by the person must retain integrity to the period of significance.

Theme: Business and Commerce

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of Commerce and Social History for its association with businesses that promoted and supported issues related to suffrage and/or women's rights, as well as businesses that catered specifically to women. Some properties may be additionally significant under the themes of Ethnic History and LGBT History. Owners of these businesses may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these businesses may also be significant under Criterion B. Woman-owned businesses that are not directly associated with suffrage and/or women's rights are not eligible within this context; however, they may be eligible under other contexts and/or themes.

Period of Significance

1861-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada. Early resources are likely to be located along historical main streets or in business districts. Later resources may be located in suburban locations, including commercial centers, in addition to urban and rural areas.

Area(s) of Significance

Commerce, Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Other (e.g., LGBTQ History).

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Commercial
 - Banks/Financial Institutions
 - Boarding Houses
 - Casinos/Hotels
 - Divorce Ranches
 - Office Buildings
 - Restaurants
 - Stores
- Sites

Property Type Description

Properties associated with business and commerce in the history of women's suffrage and women's rights in Nevada include commercial buildings. Examples of properties include boarding facilities, restaurants, and retail stores owned and run by women; casinos and hotels important in securing equal rights for women and promoting women in leadership roles; and office buildings that contained woman-owned and/or women's rights supporting businesses. Other properties may include boarding houses and ranches that catered to women fulfilling Nevada residency requirements to secure a divorce between 1905 and 1970.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be strongly associated with a woman-owned and operated business, or a business that catered to women and that played a significant role in promoting and supporting suffrage and/or women's rights issues.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant business occupied the property.

- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Street-facing or primary elevations should retain the majority of their character-defining design features.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Children's Services

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History for its association with programs organized by prominent women, women's organizations, and institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to care for children. This applies to childcare-specific programs and businesses that supported working women, as well as organizations that advocated for and otherwise supported the welfare of children. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage. Leaders and founders of these organizations may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1861-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada. Later resources are more likely to be located in urban and suburban areas.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage, Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Residential
 - Single-family residences
- Commercial
 - Daycares
 - Nursery Schools
- Institutional

- Homes for orphaned and/or abandoned children
- Sites

Property Type Description

Properties associated with woman-led children's services in Nevada include residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. Early properties may include institutional homes for orphaned or abandoned children, whereas later properties may include daycares and nursery schools operated out of residential and commercial buildings.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be associated with programs founded and operated by prominent women, women's organizations, and institutions that promoted child welfare and women's rights in Nevada.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the property was used to provide children's services.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Education

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Education for its association with institutions that promoted education for girls and women. This applies to girls' and women's schools, as well as organizations that promoted and supported female education. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage and Community Planning and Development. Leaders and founders of these organizations may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1861-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada.

Area(s) of Significance

Community Planning and Development, Education, and Ethnic Heritage.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Residential
 - Single-family residence
- Commercial
 - Office buildings
- Institutional
 - Schoolhouses and other school buildings
 - Buildings on college/university campuses
- Sites

Property Type Description

Properties associated with female education in Nevada include residential and institutional buildings. Early properties may include schools for girls and women, as well as private residences out of which women operated educational programs for female children and adults. Other resources may include buildings dedicated to women-specific education on college campuses. Later properties may include offices that promoted and supported women's education from a women's rights perspective and operated out of residential or commercial buildings.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be associated with programs, organizations, and institutions that promoted the education of girls and women in Nevada.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the property was used to promote and support education of girls and women.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Women-Serving Institutions and Organizations

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History for its association with institutions and organizations that provided services and support for women. This applies to women's clubs dating from the onset of the Progressive Era in 1890 through the twentieth century; boarding houses and other accommodations for women; organizations that promoted and supported women's rights; facilities providing services and resources to women, including those characteristic of 1960s-1970s second-wave feminism; and women's shelters. These places provided a variety of services to support and empower women. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage and LGBT History. Leaders and founders of these organizations may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1890-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage and Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Residential
 - Single-Family Residences
 - Boarding Houses

- Commercial
 - Office
- Institutional
 - Church
 - Clubhouse
 - Women's Resource Centers
 - Women's Shelters

Property Type Description

Properties associated with woman-serving organizations and institutions in Nevada include residential and institutional buildings. Clubhouses for women's clubs may be among the earliest property types associated with this theme. Buildings serving as headquarters or meeting spaces for women's clubs and organizations important in the history of women's rights in Nevada are relevant under this context until 1980. Properties under this theme may also include residences and institutional buildings out of which women's organizations operated shelters for battered women and children. Later properties may include buildings that provided resources to empower and foster autonomy in women, including legal services, counseling, housing, money management, job training and support, and self-defense.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be associated with an institution or organization significant in the history of women's rights in Nevada that provided services to support and empower women.
- Alternatively, must have been built or used by an institution or organization that provided supportive services for women during the period of significance.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the property was used by an organization or institution providing services or support to women.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials.

- Primary interior spaces, such as conference rooms or social halls, should retain integrity to the period of significance. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Social History

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History and/or Politics for its association with activities and events significant in the suffrage and women's rights movements, dating from the late nineteenth century through the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. These activities and events may include organizational meetings, speeches, and public demonstrations. Buildings serving as headquarters or meeting spaces for women's clubs and organizations that promoted suffrage and women's rights in Nevada are relevant under this context until 1980. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage and LGBT History. Important individuals associated with this theme may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

It is important to note that meeting places for organizations promoting suffrage and women's rights are differentiated from meeting places for organizations providing supportive services to women. The former include social and political organizations established to advance women's rights, including the Nevada Equal Franchise Society and the League of Women Voters. The latter include organizations dedicated to supporting and empowering women, including Progressive Era women's clubs and second wave feminist organizations such as Community Action Against Rape.

Period of Significance

1890-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada. Resources associated with the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are likely to occur in settlements throughout Nevada, whereas those associated with the late twentieth century are more likely to occur in the more populous areas of Carson City, Las Vegas, and Reno.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage, Politics, and Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Residential
 - Single-Family Residence

- Commercial
 - Hotel
 - Office
 - Restaurant
 - Theater
- Institutional
 - Church
 - Clubhouse
 - Meeting Hall
 - School or University
 - Union Hall
- Sites
 - Public Space

Property Type Description

Properties associated with Social History as it pertains to suffrage and women's rights in Nevada include meeting places for suffrage and anti-suffrage organizations and activities, meeting places for organizations and activities dedicated promoting and supporting to women's rights, and sites or routes of protests and demonstrations important in the history of suffrage and women's rights in Nevada.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be associated with strategy and event planning to promote and support suffrage or women's rights during the period of significance, and/or
- Must have been built or used as a meeting place by a women's organization that played a significant role in promoting and supporting suffrage and women's rights during the period of significance, and/or
- Must be associated with a public event, such as a rally, speech, protest, or march, significant in the history of the suffrage or women's rights movement in Nevada during the period of significance.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the event took place, or the period during which the property was used by the women's organization.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.

- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.
- Sites of public speeches, rallies, and demonstrations must retain key features relating to the period during which the event took place. Specifically, these sites must retain integrity of location, feeling, and association. Setting and design are likely to have changed and are considered less important aspects of integrity for these sites.

Theme: Health and Medicine

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History and Health/Medicine for providing specialized health services for women, supporting women's access to healthcare, and/or promoting women's rights as they pertain to healthcare. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage and LGBT History. Important individuals associated with health and medicine may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1960-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage, Health and Medicine, and Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Commercial
 - Office
- Institutional
 - Clinic
 - Hospital
 - School

Property Type Description

Properties associated with health and medicine as it pertains to women's rights in Nevada include medical clinics that provided women's health services, especially reproductive health services including but not limited to: access to birth control, STD testing and treatment, and abortion. Properties may also include hospitals and clinics organized by women's charitable organizations important in the history of women's rights in Nevada.

It is important to note that women's resource centers also may have offered women's healthcare services. These should be discussed and evaluated under the theme of Women-Serving Institutions and Organizations.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be an original or long-term location of a medical facility significant in the history of women's rights in Nevada.
- Alternatively, must have been built or used by an organization that provided specialized healthcare for women during the period of significance.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the property was used to provide specialized women's healthcare.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Labor and Industry

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History and Industry for promoting and supporting women's rights in the workplace. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of

Ethnic Heritage and LGBT History. Important individuals associated with labor and industry may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1941-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada. Most likely to occur in areas with a significant female workforce, including Carson City, Henderson, Las Vegas, and Reno.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage, Industry, and Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Commercial
 - Casino
 - Hotel
 - Office
- Industry
 - Industrial Plant
- Institutional
 - Union Halls

Property Type Description

Properties associated with labor and industry as it pertains to women's rights in Nevada include casinos, hotels, and industrial plants associated with women workers, as well as places associated with labor unions important in the history of women's rights in Nevada.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be a location or meeting place for a labor union, strike, or other labor-related activity associated with women workers' rights during the period of significance.
- Alternatively, must be associated with significant gains in labor rights made by women.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.

- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the property was associated with women in the workforce and/or women's labor rights.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.
- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Theme: Politics and Government

Summary Statement of Significance

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the area of Social History and/or Politics for its association with activities and events significant in the suffrage and women's rights movements, dating from the late nineteenth century through the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. These activities and events may include campaigns to elect candidates supportive of suffrage and women's rights, including campaigns of early female political candidates, as well as campaigns and other events to pass legislation important in the history of suffrage and women's rights in Nevada. Some resources may additionally be eligible under the theme of Ethnic Heritage and LGBT History. Important individuals associated with this theme may additionally have been influential women's rights leaders, and therefore these resources may also be significant under Criterion B.

Period of Significance

1890-1980

Geographic Locations

Statewide in scattered locations, including urban and rural areas of Nevada.

Area(s) of Significance

Ethnic Heritage, Politics, and Social History.

NRHP Criteria

A

Associated Property Types

- Residential
 - Single-Family Residence
- Commercial
 - Automobile
 - Office
 - Railroad Car
- Institutional
 - Courthouse
 - Government Building
- Sites
 - Public Space
 - Transportation Route

Property Type Description

Properties associated with Politics/Government as it pertains to suffrage and women's rights in Nevada include campaign offices for suffrage and women's rights candidates and political organizations; vehicles used for transportation to significant events related to suffrage and women's rights, such as automobiles or railroad cars; political campaign sites and routes important in the history of suffrage and women's rights in Nevada; and official government buildings, including legislative halls and courthouses, where important events related to suffrage and women's rights took place.

Eligibility Standards

- Must be associated with the campaign of a political candidate significant in the history of the suffrage or women's rights movement in Nevada.
- Alternatively, must be associated with a campaign for, or successful passing of, legislation significant in the history of the suffrage or women's rights movement in Nevada.

Character-Defining/Associative Features

- Must retain a majority of essential character-defining features from the period of significance.
- In addition to historical significance, the property may possess architectural significance under Criterion C as the work of a noted architect/designer, or as a remarkable example of a style or method of construction.
- Properties that are less than 50 years of age, or that are associated with events that occurred within the last 50 years, must possess exceptional importance per Criteria Consideration G.

Integrity Considerations

- Integrity is based on the period during which the event took place, or the period during which the property was used by a candidate or organization.
- Properties must retain overall integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association to the period of significance.

- Setting may have been altered by changes to surrounding resources, development patterns, land use patterns, and infill.
- Some original materials may have been altered, replaced, or removed, thereby impacting integrity of Workmanship and Materials. This may have little effect on eligibility under Criterion A and B, whereas it may negatively affect eligibility under Criterion C.

Identified Historic Resources

Until the recent activities of the Nevada contingent of the Votes for Women Trail, little effort had been expended in linking the lives and actions of Nevada women to physical sites and structures. This context additionally connects important women's history with tangible places.

Specific properties identified during this project are listed in Appendix A. Of these, some are already listed in local, state, and national registers, although most are not specifically listed for their association with suffrage or women's rights. It is recommended that these nominations eventually be amended to include this area of significance. This list is not exhaustive, and it is expected that future research and survey efforts will update and expand the inventory of known resources associated with this context. While resources located within a 50-mile radius of Reno and Las Vegas were field-checked in September 2021 to assess integrity and condition, properties located more than 50 miles beyond these cities were investigated using desktop methods, specifically Google Street View, to assess integrity and condition.

CHAPTER 5: BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Special Collections and Archives, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries

Charles P. and Delphine Squires Papers

Claudine Williams Papers

Cynthia Cunningham Papers

Eileen Brookman Papers

Florence McClure Papers

Harriett Trudell Papers

Hazel Baker Denton Papers

Helen J. Stewart Papers

Jean Ford Papers

Junior League of Las Vegas Records

League of Women Voters of Las Vegas Valley Records

Maude Frazier Professional Papers

Mesquite Club Papers

National Organization for Women, Las Vegas Chapter Records

Renee Diamond Papers

Ruby Duncan Collection on Operation Life

Stocker Family Papers

Thalia Dondero Political Papers

Special Collections and University Archives, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries

Alice L. Smith Papers

American Women's Voluntary Services Records

Anne Martin Campaign Literature

Call to Women Voters Broadside

Carley Sullivan Papers

Commission on the Status of Women Records

Eva Bertrand Adams Papers

Esther Nicholson Papers
Helen Herr Papers
History of the Suffrage Movement in Nevada, 1900-1920
History of White Pine Women
Jean Ford Papers
League of Women Voters of Nevada Records
Louise Aloys Smith Papers
Mary Coffey Papers
Mary J. Gojack Papers
Maude Swain Taylor Papers
Maya Miller Papers
Monday Club Records
National Organization for Women, Northern Nevada Chapter Records
National Organization for Women, Rural Nevada Chapter Records
Nevada Federation of Women's Club Records
Nevada Women Research Papers
Nevadans for ERA Records
Reno Women's Civic Club yearbooks
Republican Women's Club of Reno Records
Ruby Duncan Papers
The Tonopah Ladies
Twentieth Century Club Records
University of Nevada, Reno, Associated Women Students Records
University of Nevada, Reno, Women's Studies Program Records
Vivian Freeman Papers
Women in Politics Collection

Nevada Historical Society, Reno, Nevada

Alice Baltzell Addenbrooke Papers
American Association of University Women Papers
American Business Women's Association
Anne E. Martin Papers

Bessie R.L. Eichelberger Papers
Brookside Women's Golf Club Papers
Daughters of the American Revolution Papers
Eastern Star Fraternal Order, Iphigenia Chapter Papers
Edna Covert Plummer Papers
Edith Roberta Page "Sunny" Mentzer Papers
Felice Cohn Papers
Hannah Clapp and Elizabeth Babcock Papers
Helen Delich Papers
International Order of the King's Daughter and Sons Papers
Jackalyn Ross Laxalt Papers
Jeanne Elizabeth Wier Papers
Marcia de Braga Papers
Margaret Eleanor Hartman Papers
Marie Louise Summerfield Papers
Nettie P. Hershier Papers
Nevada Equal Franchise Society Papers
Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
Nevada Women's History Project Papers
Nevada's Native Daughters Papers
Peg Wheat Papers
Phyllis J. Walsh Papers
Reno Women's Civic Club Papers
Sarah Emeline Mack Papers
Sorooptimists International Club of Reno Papers
20th Century Club Papers
Verna S. Patterson Papers
Women's Auxiliary to the American Institute of Mining Engineers Papers
Women's Christian Temperance Union of Nevada Papers
Women's Club of Goldfield Papers
Young Women's Christian Association of Reno/Sparks Papers

Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, Nevada

Clark County Historic Properties Report

Ida Browder Collection

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Appendix

Known Properties Associated with Women's History in Nevada

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition
n/a	C&C Shaft Building	Across from Comstock History Center	Virginia City	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Capitol Hotel	North Reese Street and North First Street	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Edith (William T.) Jenkins (later Southward)	East Front Street and South Broad Street	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Felice Cohn	1204 Carson Street	Carson City	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Ormsby County Courthouse	Carson Street	Carson City	c.1864	Politics and Government	Demolished
n/a	Goldfield Women's Club	112 West Crook Avenue	Goldfield	Unknown	Women-Serving Organizations	Demolished
n/a	Home of Bird May Wilson	409 West Myers	Goldfield	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Hippodrome	416-418 North Columbia Avenue	Goldfield	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Ruby Fitzgerald	123 East Crystal Avenue	Goldfield	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Operation Life (former Cove Hotel)	H Street and Jackson Avenue	Las Vegas	Unknown	Social History; Health and Medicine	Demolished
n/a	Hotel Nevada	First and Fremont Street	Las Vegas	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Eva Bertrand Adams	604 South Sixth Street	Las Vegas	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Charles and Delphine Squires	411 South 4th Street	Las Vegas	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition
n/a	First United Methodist Church	231 South 3rd Street	Las Vegas	1913	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Las Vegas School	301 South 4th Street	Las Vegas	1911	Women-Serving Organizations	Demolished
n/a	Home of Katherine (Mrs. O. J.) Enking	3rd and Bridger	Las Vegas	Unknown	Association?	Demolished
n/a	Home of Maude Frazier	222-224 South Seventh Street	Las Vegas	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Mesquite Club Building	607 South Fifth Street	Las Vegas	1933	Women-Serving Organizations	Demolished
n/a	EOB Family Planning Clinic	940 West Owens Avenue	Las Vegas	Unknown	Health and Medicine	Good
n/a	Le Cafe	4817 Paradise Road	Las Vegas	Unknown	Business and Commerce	Demolished
n/a	Bishop Whitaker's School for Girls	University Terrace	Reno	1876	Education	Demolished
n/a	Home of Mary Allen Boyd	437 Chestnut (Arlington)	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Family home of Anne H. Martin	157 Mill Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Emma Mack	428 Hill Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Florence Church	358 Washington Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Jeanne Wier	844 North Center Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition
n/a	Home of Margaret Stanislawsky	220 Mill Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Mary (Mrs. Alf) Stoddard Doten	323 West Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Miss Minnie Flanigan	429 West Second Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Home of Sadie Dotson Hurst	135 Mill Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Demolished
n/a	Harmony Hall	244 Sierra Street	Reno	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	McKissick Opera House	Unknown	Reno	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Nevada Committee for the Rights of Women	119 N. Sierra Street	Reno	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Planned Parenthood	505 N. Arlington Avenue	Reno	Unknown	Health and Medicine	Demolished
n/a	George H. Taylor	235 S. Virginia Street	Reno	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Home of Ada Lee	543 Court Street	Reno	1907	Prominent Persons; Social History	Demolished
n/a	Nixon Opera House	Unknown	Winnemucca	Unknown	Social History	Demolished
n/a	Humboldt County Courthouse	Unknown	Winnemucca	Unknown	Social History	Demolished

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
NRIS #3000750	Lander County Courthouse	122 Main Street	Austin	1871	Social History	Good	Intact
B1783	Lemaire Store	80 West Front Street	Battle Mountain	c.1882	Social History	Good	Altered
B1801	Home of Ella Horton	Scott Street at North First Street	Battle Mountain	1907	Prominent Persons; Social History	Good	Intact
B1775; B1776	Home of Kate Lemaire	West 2nd Street between Broad and South Humboldt	Battle Mountain	1914	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Mary Theresa Miller Clark	West 4th Street between Humboldt and S. Broad	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Olive Nevada Wise Catlin	East 3rd Street and S. Broad Street	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Rosalie Hassock Holcomb Hash	East Front Street and S. Broad Street	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Sophia Wise	West 3rd Street and S. Broad Street	Battle Mountain	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Ida Browder's Cafe	554 Nevada Way	Boulder City	1936	Prominent Persons; Business and Commerce	Good	Altered
n/a	Adams, Emma L (Mrs. Jewett) Home	314 Mountain Street	Carson City	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown - unlikely	Unknown
NRIS #75002126 SR #810035	Nevada State Capitol	401 South Carson Street	Carson City	1870	Politics and Government	Good	Intact
B63	Home of Hannah Clapp and Eliza Babcock	512 N. Mountain Street	Carson City	1865	Prominent Persons	Good	Altered
n/a	Home of Louise A. (Mrs. Pearis) Ellis	107 Telegraph Street	Carson City	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown - unlikely	Unknown

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
n/a	Home of Minnie L. (Mrs. John Edwards) Bray	707 Sierra Street	Carson City	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	V & T Passenger Car #17	2180 South Carson Street	Carson City	1878	Politics and Government	Good	Intact
n/a	Knights of Pythias Hall	Unknown	Ely	Unknown	Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	St. Lawrence Hall	Unknown	Ely	Unknown	Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Minnie Marie Comins (Mrs Dan) McDonald	Campton Street	Ely	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
B1581	Eureka Courthouse	10 South Main Street	Eureka	1879	Social History	Good	Intact
NRIS #730001078; B1572	Eureka Theatre	31 South Main Street	Eureka	1880	Social History	Good	Intact
n/a	Temple Theater	Unknown	Fallon	Unknown	Politics and Government	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Nancy A. Taylor	Unknown	Fallon	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Dr. Nellie B. Hascall	Unknown	Fallon	Unknown	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
B4721	Rahbeck's Hotel (J.T. Basque Restaurant)	1426 U.S. Highway 395	Gardnerville	c.1870s	Politics and Government	Good	Intact
n/a	Tonga Club (previously Lincoln Bar)	E Street	Hawthorne	Unknown	Business and Commerce	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	Home of Adelaide (Ada) Holmes (Mrs. Alfred J.) McCarthy	E Street and 5th Street	Hawthorne	1913-1915	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown - unlikely	Unknown

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
n/a	Marble Manor Housing Project	1219 Reed Place	Las Vegas	1951	Social History	Fair	Intact
n/a	Home of Rosie Seals	908 Morgan Avenue	Las Vegas	1951	Prominent Persons; Social History	Fair	Intact
n/a	Home of Florence McClure	2432 Natalie Avenue	Las Vegas	1967	Prominent Persons; Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
n/a	Home of Jean Ford	3511 Pueblo Way	Las Vegas	1963	Prominent Persons	Good	Altered
n/a	Naval Reserve Center	Casino Center	Las Vegas	Unknown	Women-Serving Organizations	Unknown - unlikely	Unknown
n/a	Commercial Center	East Sahara Avenue	Las Vegas	Unknown	Social History	Fair	Altered
n/a	Las Vegas Convention Center	3150 Paradise Road	Las Vegas	1957	Social History	Good	Altered
B10954	Culinary Union Local 226	1630 East Commerce Street	Las Vegas	1956	Labor and Industry	Good	Intact
n/a	Hotel Apache	128 East Fremont Street	Las Vegas	1931	Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Altered
n/a	Mesquite Club	702 East St. Louis Avenue	Las Vegas	1961	Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
n/a	Nevada Committee for the Rights of Women	953 E. Sahara Avenue, Suite D-12	Las Vegas	Unknown	Social History	Good	Altered
n/a	Planned Parenthood	1380 E. Sahara Avenue	Las Vegas	1954	Health and Medicine	Good	Altered
n/a	Planned Parenthood	601 S. 13th Street	Las Vegas	1961	Health and Medicine	Fair	Altered

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
B5889	St. James Catholic Church (now St. Luke's Catholic Episcopal Church)	820 H Street	Las Vegas	1940	Social History; Woman-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
n/a	Washoe Pines Ranch/ Foresta Institute	6205 Franktown Road	New Washoe City	1946	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown	Unknown
B1987; B2143	Mountain View Hotel	Lacour St. (next to the Million Dollar Courthouse).	Pioche	Unknown	Social History	Fair to Poor	Intact
NRIS #84002074	Thompson Opera House	644 Main Street	Pioche	1873	Social History	Good	Intact
n/a	Home of Margaret W. Horsey	Unknown	Pioche	Unknown	Prominent Persons	Unknown	Unknown
B2013	Union Sunday School/Union Church	825 Ely Street	Pioche	Unknown	Social History	Unknown	Unknown
SR #030126; B3357	Washoe County Bank	195 North Virginia Street	Reno	1877	Social History	Good	Altered
n/a	Odd Fellows Hall	195 N. Center Street	Reno	1908	Social History	Good	Altered
NRIS #83001113; B2787; B4283	20th Century Club	335 West First Street	Reno	1925	Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
B16579	Home of Judge Wm. P. Seeds	403 Flint Street	Reno	1902-1914	Social History	Good	Intact
B2560	Nevada Association of Women Opposed to Equal Suffrage Headquarters	566 Ridge Street	Reno	1909	Social History	Good	Intact
B2618	Home of Felice Cohn (Colonial Apartments)	118 West Street	Reno	1907	Prominent Persons; Social History	Good	Intact
NRIS #03000416; B15031	Field Matron's Cottage, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony	1995 E. Second Street	Reno	1927	Health and Medicine	Good	Intact

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
n/a	Home of Eva Adams	711 Skyline Boulevard (street number changed from 701 after 1993)	Reno	1940	Prominent Persons	Good	Intact
n/a	Our Lady of Wisdom Newman Center (former Center for Religion and Life)	1101 N. Virginia Street	Reno	1965	Social History	Good	Altered
n/a	YWCA	1301 Valley Road	Reno	1965	Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
n/a	Rape Crisis Center	325 Flint Street	Reno	1922	Women-Serving Organizations	Good	Intact
B3475	Home of Edna Baker	445 10th Street	Sparks	1910	Prominent Persons; Social History; Politics and Government	Good	Intact
NRIS #78001725; SR #810033	Mizpah Hotel	100 North Main Street	Tonopah	1905	Social History	Good	Intact
NRIS #82003233; B4879	Belle (Mrs. Zeb) Kendall	159 University Avenue	Tonopah	1906	Prominent Persons; Social History	Fair	Intact
NRIS #82000613; B4856	Home of Marjorie (Mrs. Hugh H.) Brown	129 Ellis Street	Tonopah	1906	Prominent Persons; Social History	Fair	Intact
n/a	Home of Helen Ann (Mrs. M.S.) Bonnifield	110 South Bridge Street	Winnemucca	1912-1915	Prominent Persons; Social History	Unknown - unlikely	Unknown
n/a	American Theatre	Unknown	Winnemucca	Unknown	Social History	Unknown	Unknown
n/a	The Toggery	227 South Bridge Street	Winnemucca	Unknown	Social History	Good	Altered
B11128	Winneva Hall	140 South Bridge Street	Winnemucca	c.1915-1920	Social History	Good	Intact
Various	Lincoln Highway	Various	Various	1913-1921	Politics and Government	Varies	Varies

Resource or NRIS/SRIS Number	Name	Address	City	Year Built	Theme	Condition	Integrity
B4745	Lyon County Courthouse	31 South Main Street	Yerington	1911-1912	Social History	Good	Intact