



APRIL, 2018 NEWSLETTER

Henderson Historical Society

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Become a Member

HHS members will remember, Dorothy Fresquez Coroneos and Mary Monahan George are in charge of memberships. Many of our readers will remember Dorothy for her deep roots in Pittman and Mary as the Office Manager at McCaw Elementary School.

If you have a question about membership, call 702-296-5167. Already a member? Don't forget to renew membership annually. Your help keeps our memories alive.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Wells Fargo Mural Project

The City of Henderson is about to acquire another history oriented public art piece. The latest proposed mural is a gift from Wells Fargo Bank in partnership with the Henderson Historical Society. Mounted near the entry of the Water Street Branch of the Bank, the mural will be seen by bank customers, shoppers and all manner of visitors to the downtown area. It will include a collage of historic photos that tell the history of the Henderson Post Office that once occupied a spot on Army Street near Water Street where the Bank is now located. Wells Fargo's Jeff Wiley and the Henderson Historical Society's Lou LaPorta, gathered support for the project. Mark Hall-Patton, Clark County Museums Administrator and Dana Bullinger, Digital Project Librarian at Henderson District Public Libraries identified copies of historic photos that are the basis of the artwork presented in the mural.

A License Plate for Henderson

The Nevada State Commission on Special License Plates met on January 4, 2018 to hear comments from applicants for special license plates. Lou LaPorta, Valerie LaPorta Haynes and Denell Butler Hahn addressed the commission with the historic significance and education benefits associated with a Henderson special license plate. Later in the month the commission approved Henderson's application. Motor vehicle traffic control authorities will now make recommendations to assure the plate design is readable by patrol officers. Stay tuned for information about when you can order your Henderson License Plate.



PROJECTS/EVENTS

Community Scanning Day

PASEO VERDE LIBRARY

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018

9 AM - 2 PM

The Historical Society plans to participate in an important activity of its long-time partner, Henderson Libraries. The activity will add to the collection that is so important to HHS's mission to preserve, interpret and share Henderson history. The following is the announcement that appears on the Henderson Libraries: *Preserve your memories for future generations and share your local history memorabilia of Henderson with the community. Help Henderson Libraries preserve our community's history. Bring in your local photographs or documents to be scanned by library staff, and learn about preservation techniques. With your permission, we would like to add select photos to the Henderson Libraries' online [Digital Collections](#). We're looking for historical items that will expand and grow our community-built, online, local history collection. Bring up to 10 photographs or documents to the event. You keep the originals, and receive a copy of the digital scans on a portable digital storage device. Items that are copyrighted will not be scanned unless written permission is obtained from the copyright holder.*

Funds for this project have been provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records.



Emerald Island Meet and Greet: May 4, 2018

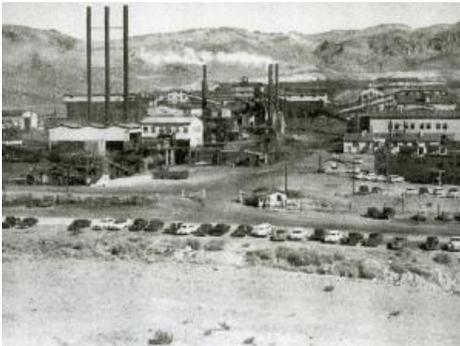


HHS will be showing what the BMI Townsite looked like in the 1940s with historic photos. We'll be remembering the folks who made the 1940s era business district go. We'll be collecting/recording stories from Emerald Island patrons who remember the "Townsite days and all the good days that have followed.

Date/Time: May 4, 2018, 5:30 to 7:30 P. M.,

Location: Emerald Island Casino (watch for the HHS Banner).

The Three Kids Mine: May 16, 2018



A panel discussion will be presented about the old mine's history dating back to its war-time beginnings in 1917, including the story of its contributions in peace and war until its closure in 1961. The discussion will address current plans for restoring and repurposing the site for use by a new generation of Americans. HHS is eager to hear from anyone who worked at the mine/mill as we plan this program.

Date/Time: May 16, 2018 Doors Open at 5:30 P. M. Program at 6:00 P. M.

Location: Nevada State College Theater in the Nursing, Science and Education Building.



RECENT HENDERSON SPEAKS EVENTS:

If It Wasn't for Pittman

January 24, 2018

Dorothy Coroneos, Robert Ellis, Jim Marsh and Mark Hall-Patton put on a great panel discussion about the history of the Pittman community. Most important were the stories they told of the generosity of the leaders in that community and how that generosity influenced future leaders. Here is the link to the 1:10 YouTube recording of the program: <https://youtu.be/s8BhPKr0JKU>

Pittman Stories:

Dorothy Fresquez Coroneos and Pati Summers Guarino sent along interesting written memories of their Pittman experiences.

Dorothy's Story - Early in 1940 Nick (Pop) Coroneos settled his family in Pittman. Pop operated a Greek Restaurant with some rental rooms upstairs at a 2 story building where Skyline Hotel & Casino now exists. Both Coroneos boys, Alex and Paul attended Basic High School. Alex was a star football player and received many awards. After graduation from Basic, Alex attended St Mary's college in San Francisco. He was lonesome for his family, so returned to Pittman and joined his brother, George in the Plumbing business at 1524 Boulder Highway, where Air Gas presently exists. Coroneos Plumbing was booming and was a prime contractor for water line installation at the Black Mountain Golf Course Community. Alex wanted more adventure in the working field, so in the early 1960's, he joined his good friend and talented roofer, Lloyd Elliott in the Roofing Business. They purchased a five acre plot at Boulder Hwy which became 241-247, Elliott Rd. This 5 acre area presently has various business owners renting that have been at same location for over 30 years. In the 60's nothing existed between the 5 acres and Vo-Tech High School. Since then we have the Galleria Mall, Home Depot, Sunset Casino, and many more.

The Coroneos family sold their restaurant and settled at a home at 441 Jefferson. Some of the area was being populated with custom homes and the streets were not paved. Alex was concerned with the dust level as the community grew. He called upon his friend, Lou LaPorta, our Councilman and good supporter of that area, and knew Lou would help, thus began the paving of Pittman streets.

My family had been back and forth from Pittman, as my father could not find



housing for us to permanently join him. My mother refused to live in the small available cabins located behind the Victory Club in Pittman. We stayed at my grandfather's ranch in New Mexico until my Dad secured a rental apartment at Victory Village. I had been enrolled in so many schools with the traveling my father transferred us across New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Nevada. My grandfather in New Mexico became quite ill, so my Mother took me back to New Mexico and I graduated there. Coming back to Henderson, my first job after high school was at Bank of Nevada. Selma Bartlett took me under her wing and I learned every aspect of the Banking business. She was a tough person to work for and she believed in hard work. I am so grateful for the education. Thru her insistence I joined the library, and hospital boards. I admire and adore Selma Bartlett. While working for the Bank of Nevada, I met Pop Coroneos. He would stand in my long teller lines just to learn if I was available to date his son. Although Pop wanted a Greek girl for his son, he told Alex, if he didn't marry me, "he would". In 1961 I came to Pittman as a young bride. Coming to the small community, I was "green behind the ears", but I soon joined the ladies from the Pittman Women's club. We planned parties for the area children, using the Pittman Library as our headquarters. I will never forget the talent and kindness of the wonderful ladies I learned to love, Mary Roberts, Ruth Corn, Mary Foster, Artie Cannon, to name a few. Rae Von Dornum came to our events to write about us in the Home News. She was a grand lady as well. My time in Pittman was one of the most treasured highlights of my life. Now that we are Henderson I have both worlds to always remember. Before I conclude, I would like to have the Hart family in the audience to please stand. I wanted to extend my sincere "thanks" you all of you for the sharing of your Mother, Rosalee Hart. She was an employee of Elliott Roofing for several years. I know these were difficult years as she had to jockey being a wife and mother and still run an office for Alex Coroneos. Her contributions and good working skills helped our business succeed. I know she is in heaven giving Alex pointers on how to curb his temper.



Pati Summers Guarino's Story

My family moved to Pittman in Oct. 1947. For a short period we lived in a tent under some large trees beside the Boulder highway. Then we rented two different small houses. My brother was three years older than me and I was 3 when we moved there. When I was six my dad bought a house across the highway on what is now Margarita St. It was a three room house and my dad added a screened-in porch for their bedroom. When we first moved there was no running water or indoor bathroom. My dad would stop on his way home from work and fill a 5 gal jug with water.

It was wonderful to grow up in Pittman. It was safe and we were allowed to run. The Parkers moved to the area not long after we did. They were so poor. They had ridden two bikes from Florida to Pittman. Their three children were in wagons that they pulled behind. Don't know how they ended up on the land behind our house. They had no money to build a house. My dad told him about the bottle house at Rhyolite NV and that's what they decided to build. All the kids in the area collected bottles from the dump behind the area and from behind the bars and Dick's Market. Would bring them to Mr. Parker and he would let us cement them in. The Parkers lived in the bottle house for several years. When we moved to Henderson I was going into the 4th grade and don't know what happened after we moved.

I remember a couple of years when several truckloads of Gypsies would show up in Pittman. They would set up two carnival rides, giant swings and something for the younger kids. We spent a lot of time going around and around until we would get sick! Think it was probably a nickel to ride the swings.

My mother helped all of us kids put on a play. We charged parents a dime to watch and sold them popcorn. We would set up carnival penny-toss games and give prizes of our old toys. Mr. Parker opened a popsicle stand that was a big success for awhile.

We would run barefoot and hop from the shade of one bush to the next to keep from burning our feet. There was a hermit that lived way out in the desert. My older brother was allowed to go visit him, but I wasn't.

There was no garbage pickup and people would bring their trash to a spot in the desert and dump it. It was a treasure trove. We would load our wagon up and take it home to mom. Some things were kept but most we had to return. I still have and use a Samsonite traincase that we found.



Don and I ran all over the desert. Would take our shredded potatoes, build a fire and cook them. Pittman Bible Chapel was there and Mr. Busk was the preacher. He would drive his little car all over Pittman and pick up any kid that wanted to go. Not unusual to have 10-12 kids pile out when he got to the church. Never knew if he ever checked with the parents or not. There was an angel on his shoulder. One time I noticed that he was driving down the highway with a carload of kids and he had his eyes closed because he was praying. From Henderson on Boulder Highway you would turn right on Merlayne Dr, then left on Margarita Ave. There is a firehouse on that corner, at least there used to be. Our house was the second one on right side. The bottle house was directly behind us on Moser Dr. when we lived there I'm not sure that the streets had names. The roads were just dirt with ruts in them. That is a brief memory of living in Pittman in later 40s and early 50s. These memories are from my perspective as a child.



RECENT HENDERSON SPEAKS EVENTS (continued):

History of the Clark County School District -

March 21, 2018

Panelist included long time CCSD educators Gary Gray, Dennis Ortwein, Dr. P. Kay Carl, and Ralph Cadwallader. They discussed a turbulent era of Nevada education history, the 1950s, when the state reorganized its education system from several hundred small school districts into 17 county districts and modernized its plan for education funding. Along the way the audience heard about the life and times of Las Vegas Superintendent of Schools, R. Guild Gray, who convinced Governor Charles Russell of the need to reorganize. There was a discussion of school integration and impact of inefficient funding methods on segregated Las Vegas Elementary Schools during the 1950s. Present day concerns among Clark County educators and parents were discussed. The audience had many questions about recent legislative action calling for the large school districts in Nevada to decentralize and for schools and the communities they serve to have a greater role in decision making. The audience of March 21st was keenly interested in what the panelist had to say about such things as school choice, charter schools, and innovative methods of education funding. Here is a link to the 1:27 recording: <https://youtu.be/7WF1hWYMST0>



PEPCON STORIES

Pepcon Anniversary by Paul Szydelko - Author, Paul Szydelko, former managing editor of the Henderson Home News, writes about how PEPCON symbolized the rift between old and new Henderson in the May edition of Desert Companion. He generously shares a summary of his upcoming article with the Henderson Historical Society's April, 2018 Newsletter:



Shortly before noon on May 4, 1988, a series of explosions destroyed Pacific Engineering & Production Company (PEPCON), a solid-rocket-fuel component plant near what is now Gibson Road and Wigwam Parkway. Preceded by a fire and a towering plume of smoke, the blasts also flattened the adjacent Kidd Marshmallow, killed two PEPCON workers, injured more than 300 and inflicted losses of more than \$80 million. Like everyone in the valley that day three decades ago, I vividly recall where I was: A Henderson Home Newscolleague and I were in my car stopped at Water Street and Lake Mead Drive, more than two miles from PEPCON. A concussion wave lurched us to the right — a sickening, helpless feeling. Luckily our windows were open. Otherwise we could have been like so many others who had to deal with shattered glass, injuries and more harrowing experiences.

Cleanup progressed quickly, and the community debated about the future of the industrial plants which had given birth to Henderson and how to make them safer.



DO YOU REMEMBER?

Here is another picture from the Dennis Kwiecien collection (circa 1960). The photo shows the old wooden water tanks that were installed in the early 1940s in Henderson before the water pipeline from Lake Mead was completed in 1943. Looking at the Henderson Libraries BMI Photos on-line, it seems that the Henderson tanks were filled from rail cars. How long were these wooden tanks in use? They were near where the permanent reservoirs now stand. Mike Manion says he lived on Tin Street in the early 1950s and that he and friends (Ivorys, McMillans, Blankship, McCloud and their dogs) used to catch lizards in the desert near the tanks and when he and his friends got thirsty they would pull a plug out of the tanks to get a drink. Jack Jeffery once told me that his dad, who was an early arrival to the BMI project, was a cooper, a barrel maker. The wooden tanks in these pictures appear to be constructed like wooden barrels with wooden staves and metal rings. Please send word if you have information to share about the old BMI water tanks.



BMI Tanks ca 1960, Kwiecien photo

