Nevada
Our Home

Gary BeDunnah
This book is dedicated to those of the past—my parents, Pat and Neillie BeDunnah, who moved to Nevada in 1929; to those of the present—my children, Robin, Sherri, and Terri, who grew up in Nevada; and to those of the future—my grandchildren, Craig, Michael, Jordi, Ashlee, Crystal, Hannah, Brady, Bailey, Brice, and Jesse—for whom this book was written.

A special thanks is given for the help that my daughter Robin Swainston gave in writing this history. My colleagues George Wells and Larry Benham also contributed.

Finally, thanks to my wife, Patricia, for her suggestions and proofreading. Her encouragement made this possible.

—Gary BeDunnah

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There is magic on earth where it lies in water, where water is so plentiful as in the desert.”

—Edward Abbey
History Close to Home

Boiling underground water into a well, formed Nevada’s Geyser. It gets its bright color from a special kind of plant that lives in hot water.
Discovering Your Tools

Welcome to *Nevada, Our Home*. Learning about our state will be like going on a great adventure. Have you ever been on an adventure? Maybe you’ve gone rafting on white water rapids. You may have been rock climbing or exploring in underground caves. Maybe you’ve even tried digging for buried treasure in your own backyard.

Did you take special tools on your adventure? You probably needed things like a flashlight, a life jacket, or a shovel. As we study Nevada history, we will use some important tools to help us along the way. Let’s take a closer look at them.

Catch the Vision

Every great adventure begins with a vision. A vision is like a picture in your mind. It can show you where to go. On our adventure through Nevada history, we begin each chapter with a big picture. The picture might give you clues about what you will learn, see, and read. Someone once said, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” What do you think that means? Can a picture tell a story?
Keeping Track of Time

A timeline is another great tool that can teach us about history. Timelines help us see when important events happened. We can also see the order in which these things happened. Did you notice how the numbers on a timeline get bigger as you move from left to right? Timelines look a lot like rulers. What would a timeline of important events from your life look like?

Step by Step

Lessons are the next tool we'll use on our adventure. Each lesson has some important things to watch for:

- PEOPLE TO KNOW
- PLACES TO LOCATE
- WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

Maybe you already know some of the words, people, or places on the lists. It's a good idea to look over each list before reading the chapter. Previewing each list is kind of like taking a peek at what's ahead.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask

Asking questions is one of the best tools you can use when you're on an adventure. Questions can help you learn new things. As you read, you will come across What do you think? questions. These questions ask what YOU think about certain things. There is no right or wrong answer. Look for What do you think? questions next to the big question marks.

Connect the Dots

Have you ever wondered how the past affects your life today? Features called Linking the Past to the Present are a sure way to find out. Many things change over time. However, some things stay the same. As you read Nevada, Our Home, you will learn about both.
Meet the People

Nevada history is filled with stories of interesting people. Reading *portraits* is one way to learn about some of them. A *portrait* tells you a little about a person’s life. Your teacher may have you write a report about an important person in Nevada history. Maybe you already know who you want to write about.

Just for Fun

Activities can be a fun way to learn about history. During our adventures, you will have a chance to enjoy many different kinds of activities. You might act out a moment from history. You might try foods from another country. You might write a story or make a map. What kinds of activities do you like best?

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**A Timeline of My Life**

A timeline of events is a good way to help your memory. Make a timeline of important events in your life beginning with your birth. Be sure to put the year each event took place. Below are a few examples of the things you can put on your timeline.

- Jamal is born.
- Jamal’s brother, Mark, is born.
- I lost my first tooth in the year.
- I learned to ride a bike in the year.
- My family moved to Nevada in the year.
- I learned to walk in the year.
- I started fourth grade in the year.
- Jamal starts fourth grade.

---

Nevada, Our Home
Practice Remembering

Memory Masters are a good way to help you review what you have learned. Sometimes it's easy to forget the things you've read. If you do, just go back and read the lesson again.

Learning in Action

When you make it to the chapter review, you've reached the end of the chapter, but don't stop yet. One of the best parts of your adventure is still to come. It's the action part, where doing becomes part of learning. Here is a quick preview of what you will find there.

It's More Than Skin Deep

As you read Nevada, Our Home, you will learn about many different kinds of people. One of the chapter review exercises called Consider Character will ask you to think about the choices people make. Sometimes people do things that show good character, and sometimes they do not.

As you read this book, look for examples of how people show their character. Pay close attention to the kinds of examples you see.

Think Like an Explorer

Using maps and globes is a great way to explore the world. Geography is the study of the earth's land, plant, and animal life. With Geography Tie-Ins, we will learn about how Nevada's history relates to its geography.

Digging for Clues

Surfing the web may be something you already know how to do. Technology Tie-Ins will give you a chance to practice even more. Technology is a big word that means using tools and science together. Technology can help us do a job better. What kinds of technology do you like to use to learn something? Have you ever tried listening to books on tape or CDs?
History: A Study of the Past

Do you remember what you had for breakfast today? Of course you do. But do you remember what you ate two weeks ago? You probably don’t. Our memories fade over time, so we forget. Sometimes we forget simple things, like what we ate for breakfast. Sometimes we forget important things, like doing homework.

To help us remember, we use pictures, diaries, and newspapers. The Internet, DVDs, CDs, and books can also help remind us of important people and events. Many people in our history have made Nevada the unique state that it is today. Studying our history will teach us how people and events shape our state.

Why Do We Study History?

The study of history tells us many things. It tells us how people of the past lived. We can learn what people liked to eat and drink. We can study the types of clothes they wore and what their schools were like. We can learn how people earned a living and spent their free time. A famous man once said, “To ignore the lessons of history is to repeat them.” The lessons we learn from history can help us now and in the future.

Nevada history gives us a record of many different types of people. Native Americans, miners, farmers, and many others have helped develop our state.
How Do We Study History?

*Historians* are people who write and study other people’s lives and important events. Historians study history for a living. Some study history just for fun. You and your classmates can be Nevada historians too. You can learn to use the same tools that real historians use.

Two important tools historians use are *primary sources* and *secondary sources*. Primary sources are things that were used or made at the time an event happened. Pictures, maps, and diaries are examples of primary sources. Sometimes historians call these *primary documents*. Toys, tools, clothing, and weapons are also primary sources. Historians call these things *artifacts*.

Now, can you guess what a secondary source is? It is something created by someone who heard or read about an event but who wasn’t actually there. Secondary sources are made after an event. Books and movies are examples of secondary sources. They can help us understand what an event might have been like.

Is It Fact or Opinion?

Primary and secondary sources can teach us a lot about Nevada history. We will also learn many *facts* about Nevada’s past. Facts are things you can prove. Facts can help you form *opinions*. Opinions are things you believe. Historians like to learn facts before they form opinions about people or events. With your teacher’s help, you can discover how fun studying history can be.

**Memory Master**

1. List some things that help us remember the past.
2. What are some examples of primary sources and secondary sources?
3. What is the difference between fact and opinion?

**Activity**

*Primary or Secondary Source?*

Tell whether the following is a primary or secondary source:

- birth certificate
- textbook
- photograph
- movie biography
- newspaper article
- diary

---

History Close to Home
Discovering Nevada

If you were asked to name an animal that stands for Nevada, what would you say? Could you name a flower that blooms all around the state? Do you know which tree has been an important part of our state’s history? Nevada has many state *symbols*. Symbols are things that have a special meaning or that stand for something else. Our state has plants, animals, and minerals that stand for Nevada. They show how Nevada is different from other states in the United States.

Nevada’s symbols are a source of pride for the people who live here. They are also keys to understanding Nevada’s history.

**Our State Seal**

Nevada *adopted* the state seal as its first symbol. A seal is a stamp that is used on official state *documents*, or papers. Nevada’s seal shows some of the ways Nevadans have made a living.

Try matching the symbols on the seal with the industry each stands for. Use your finger to draw an imaginary line to each correct choice:

- A miner and a mill
- A plow, a sheaf of grain, and a sickle
- The railroad and the telegraph line
- Transportation and communication
- Mining and milling
- Farming

You will also see 36 stars circling the seal. These symbols stand for the 36 states that were part of the United States when Nevada became a state. Do you see the words “ALL FOR OUR COUNTRY”? They were added to show Nevada’s support for President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

*Nevada, Our Home*
Our State Flag

Nevada has had four different state flag designs. The first flag had a blue background with 36 silver and gold stars. The stars stood for Nevada as the 36th state in the United States. The silver and gold stood for our mining wealth.

Our second flag had the state seal in the center. But a mistake was made when 37 stars were put on the flag instead of 36. The flag stayed that way for a long time.

On the third flag, the state seal was taken off. Two branches of sagebrush were added near the top left corner. The words “Battle Born” were also added. They remind us that Nevada became a state during the Civil War.

In 1991, the flag was changed for the last time. The letters spelling Nevada were changed to make them easier to read.

Our State Trees

Did you know Nevada has two state trees? The first tree our state adopted was the single-leaf piñon pine. It is one of Nevada’s most common trees. It can grow even in dry, rocky places.

Pine nuts are the seeds of the piñon pine. Early Native Americans gathered pine nuts for food. Each year, Native Americans had a celebration to give thanks for the pine nut harvest.

Early miners also used the piñon pine. Trees were cut into timbers to support the walls and ceilings of the mines. The wood was also burned to make charcoal. Hot charcoal fires were used to smelt, or melt metals from rocks.

Not long ago, the bristlecone pine also became a state tree. It was the idea of students from Ely, Nevada. The bristlecone pine is one of the oldest living things on earth. These pines live in our state’s highest mountains. Some bristlecone pines are more than 4,000 years old. Like the piñon pine, the bristlecone also thrives in Nevada’s harsh, or rough, land.

The single-leaf piñon pine (above) was one of the main sources of food for Nevada’s early native peoples.

Why do you think some bristlecone pines (below) are able to live so long?
Our State Flower
Sagebrush, our state flower, is really a bush with small yellow and white flowers. It blooms in the spring and can grow up to 12 feet high. Sagebrush also grows in dry soil, where most plants cannot. It was used in many ways by early Native Americans. They ground the leaves for medicine and stripped its bark to weave into mats.
Early settlers used sagebrush to help them learn about the soil. Where the sagebrush was tall, they knew the soil would also be good for growing crops. Sagebrush was important for animals too. Cattle, sheep, and wild animals ate it during the long winter months.

Our State Bird
The mountain bluebird is our state bird. The male is bright blue with a light blue belly. Like most birds, the female bluebird is not as colorful. Bluebirds live mainly in the higher, cooler regions of the state. They visit the desert floor in winter, looking for food.

Our State Song
Bertha E. Raffetto was living in Reno when she wrote and sang a song about our state. She wrote Home Means Nevada for a picnic celebration. The song is about the beauty of our deserts and mountains. Later, it became our state song.

Activity
Home Means Nevada
Chorus:
Home means Nevada,
Home means the hills,
Home means the sage and the pines.
Out of the truckee’s silvery rills.
Out where the sun always shines.
There is a land that I love the best,
Fairer than all I can see.
Right in the heart of the golden west,
Home means Nevada to me.

Way out in the land of the setting sun,
Where the wind blows wild and free,
There's a lovely spot, just the only one.
That means home sweet home to me.
If you follow the old Kit Carson trail,
Until desert meetsthe hills,
Oh you certainly will agree with me,
It's the place of a thousand thrills.

Bertha Raffetto chose different words in her song to show Nevada’s many parts. Find nouns that name the different landforms of Nevada. Can you find the adjectives she used? (Hint: adjectives are words that describe nouns.) Think of another adjective you would use to describe Nevada’s beauty.
Our State Fossil, Grass, and Metal

The state fossil reminds us of a time when the land was very different. A fossil is a print of a plant or animal preserved in the earth or in rock. Over 160 million years ago, oceans covered parts of the western United States. Animals roamed the shores, and fish swam in the oceans.

One ancient creature was the ichthyosaurus. It was a huge fish-like lizard, more than 50 feet long. It weighed thousands of pounds. Fossils of these huge lizards have been found in central Nevada. You can see them at the state park near the old mining town of Berlin.

Indian rice grass is Nevada’s state grass. It grows throughout Nevada. Early Native Americans ate it, and desert animals grazed on it. Rice grass is a very hardy plant. It is still a favorite food of cattle and sheep.

Our state metal is silver. In fact, Nevada was settled by people who came looking for silver. Nevada has many minerals, but silver has been one of our most important. Silver mines in Nevada have helped our state grow.

Our State Animal

The desert bighorn sheep is Nevada’s state animal. The male bighorn stands about 3 feet high and weighs about 170 pounds. Its large, curved horns can grow until they form almost a full circle. Female bighorns weigh around 125 pounds and usually have small, spiked horns.

Bighorns like to eat grasses and the fruits of small plants. Their official name is Nelson’s Desert Bighorn. Native Americans called the bighorn sheep Old Nagah.

A long time ago, large numbers of sheep roamed all over Nevada. Then people began hunting them. The bighorn was forced to compete with other animals for space and food.

The bighorn were almost destroyed before people realized what was happening. Finally, a place was set aside where bighorns could be safe from hunters. Laws were passed to protect them. Today, the herds are growing, and the bighorn are able to live as they once did.
Our State Fish

The Lahontan cutthroat trout is our state fish. It lives in many of the lakes and streams of Nevada. The biggest cutthroat ever caught in Pyramid Lake was three feet long. It weighed over 41 pounds. The cutthroat was important to the diet of Nevada’s early Native Americans. Once, many of Nevada’s lakes and rivers were filled with cutthroat trout, but today, there are very few. That is because people have taken too many cutthroats out of our lakes and rivers.

Our State Gemstones

The black fire opal is our state’s precious gemstone. A precious gem is one that is rare and expensive. Virgin Valley, Nevada, is the only place in North America where the black fire opal is found.

Nevada turquoise is our state’s semi-precious gem. It is not as rare or as valuable as the black fire opal. Nevada turquoise is known as the Jewel of the Desert. It is found in many parts of our state.

Our State Rock

Our state rock is sandstone. It was formed by a process that took millions of years. Great pressure on layers of sand formed this soft rock. Sandstone can be seen in the Valley of Fire state park in southern Nevada. The mountains around Lake Mead are also made of sandstone.

Las Vegas school children came up with the idea to make sandstone our state rock. Our state government liked the idea. They made sandstone our official state rock at a ceremony at the Gene Ward Elementary School in Las Vegas.
Our State Reptile

The desert tortoise is our state reptile. It can live on very little water, which makes it another good symbol of Nevada. The desert tortoise gets most of its water from eating plants.

Like the bighorn sheep, desert tortoises have been pushed out by people and buildings. Many people feared that tortoises would become endangered. Endangered animals are those that are almost all gone.

People worked to pass laws to protect tortoises. Workers now remove them from building sites and take them to protected areas. It’s also against the law for people to take Nevada’s tortoises out of the desert. Now, tortoises and people can live in harmony.

Our State Artifact

Have you ever seen our state artifact, the tule duck decoy? You’ve probably seen a duck decoy before, but do you know what tule is? Tule is a tall plant that grows in a freshwater marsh. Early Native Americans twisted the stems of the plant into duck decoys. They used the decoys to attract ducks just like hunters do today. You will learn more about tule in a later chapter.

Our State Colors and Nicknames

Silver and blue are Nevada’s state colors. Silver stands for our most important mineral and blue for our beautiful skies. Our state nicknames are The Silver State, Battle-Born State, and The Sagebrush State. The word Nevada means “snow-capped” in Spanish.

Nevada symbols are very important to us. They remind us that Nevada is different from other states. Each symbol reflects strengths that are needed to survive in Nevada’s harsh deserts. We can develop pride in Nevada by learning about our symbols and how they make our state unique.

What do you think?

1. What do all Nevada animals plant symbols have in common?
2. What other symbols can you suggest for our state? How do they become official?

Memory Master

1. List your favorite Nevada symbols and explain why you like them.
2. How many different state flags have we had in Nevada?
3. Which animal did Native Americans call “Old Nagah”?
As you read the stories of our state's history, you will see how people faced many problems. You will learn how some people showed respect for others and some did not. You will read about times when people were honest and about times when they were not. You might even see that some wars started because people did not work together to solve problems. Here are six ways that people can show good character. Watch for them as you read.

**Cooperation**
Have you worked as part of a group at school? Maybe you and some friends made a project for a science fair. Maybe you had a role in a music program or play. Did you do your share of the work? Did you listen to other people’s ideas? If you did, you were showing **cooperation**.

**Courage**
Have you ever done something just because you knew it was the right thing to do? If you saw people making fun of a student, and you asked them to stop, you showed **courage**. Showing courage means being brave—even when it is not easy.

**Honesty**
Have you ever made and kept a promise? Have you ever done something wrong and admitted it was your fault? Being **honest** means telling the truth and keeping your promises.

**Perseverance**
Have you ever worked really hard to make something happen? Did you have to wait to see the results? Maybe you wanted to get a good grade on your math test. When you keep trying even though things are hard, you are showing **perseverance**.

**Respect**
Differences between people help us learn from each other. Have you ever met someone who was different from you? Did you listen to what he had to say? Did you treat him with kindness? If you did, you were showing **respect**.

**Responsibility**
When you get your homework done on time, or when you do something your parents have asked you to do, you are showing **responsibility**. Responsibility means that you do what needs to be done.
Do some research on the Internet to learn more about our state symbols. See if you can find out the year that each symbol became a state symbol. Record your findings on a separate sheet of paper. The first one is done for you.

- State Seal 1866
- ___________________________ 1917
- Home Means Nevada
- Piñon Pine 1967
- ___________________________ 1973
- Ichthyosaur
- Silver
- Rice Grass
- ___________________________ 1981
- ___________________________ 1983
- Sandstone
- Gemstones
- Bristlecone Pine 1989
- ___________________________
- Tule Duck Decoy

Nevada history is not just stories about people. There are also many important places in our history. One such place is Pyramid Lake. Have you ever been there or read about it? Why is Pyramid Lake such an important part of Nevada's past? On a map of Nevada, find one place you have visited. Was it important to Nevada history? Use an encyclopedia, history book, or the Internet to find out. Remember, history is all around us. Then share what you learn with your class.

Design Time!

Design a new state seal for Nevada. What symbols can you draw to show jobs that your parents or relatives do today? Draw your idea for a state seal, and then color it.
the wide world is
...ul, and it matters but
where we go, to high-
or lowlands, woods or
the spot where we
always seems
..."

—John Muir

Nevada has more than 200
mountain ranges scattered
across its desert lands.

Natural Nevada