



**Dangberg Ranch Home**



**Baron Farm**



**Jepsen House**

**CHAPTER 10:  
Historic Preservation Element**



**Town of Minden Silos**



**Walley's Hot Springs Original Bath House**



**Historical Museum  
Genoa**

## Introduction

Douglas County has a rich history dating from the early Native American settlements through the first trade routes and explorations in the 1800's to the more recent past. The Washoe Tribe inhabited an area of approximately 4,000 square miles and spoke a language called Hoka. The Washoe people tended to be seasonal dwellers. In the warmer months, they spent time fishing, hunting, and gathering around Lake Tahoe and in the colder months, they traveled back down to the valley floor. Their skills involved hunting, fishing, and basket making.

Several major exploration trails crossed the county. The trails include the John C. Fremont/Joseph R. Walker Trail (1845-1846); the California Trail (1834-1858); and the Great Sheep Trails (1870-1890). The first white settlement in Nevada was established in 1851 as a trading post by three Mormon settlers in what is now the town of Genoa. Genoa was a major merchandising point in the region, located on both the Pony Express and Overland Stage routes. The community served as the seat of the territorial government until 1861 and served as the County seat until 1916.

Starting in about 1853, claims were made in the Carson Valley for ranches. Ranching and farming are an important part of the heritage of the Carson Valley. By 1860, a wagon trail had been constructed connecting Sacramento and Virginia City. The road was privately owned and tolls were charged for using the all season facility. It was sold to Douglas County in 1889. After discovery of the Comstock Lode (1858), settlers extended the natural meadows in Carson Valley through irrigation to provide hay, meat and butter for the miners in Virginia City and neighboring towns. By 1881, there were about 30,000 acres of land fenced in by ranchers with names still familiar today, such as Dangberg, Settlemeyer, Park, Springmeyer, Dressler, Van Sickle, and Klauber.



After 1851, Genoa was the center for British settlers (largely Mormon), and Gardnerville, after 1879, became the center for 1870 Danish immigrants. From 1870, German, Danish and Swiss immigrants enlarged the area more to supply produce to surrounding mining towns that were booming. Starting in 1898, Spanish and French Basque shepherds tended some 13,000 sheep in Carson Valley, increasing to 25,000 by 1925, when the Basques began acquiring their own sheep and land.

Minden, the seat of Douglas County since 1916, was named for a town in Westphalia, Germany, where the founder of the H.F. Dangberg Land and Live Stock Company was born. The company established Minden in 1905 to provide terminal facilities for the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, which was then extending a branch line southward from Carson City. The passenger and freight depot was situated at this point. The son of the

founder of the H.F. Dangberg Land and Live Stock Company was a secretary of the company and was instrumental in promoting the town. The Dangberg Company presented a plan of the town of Minden to the Douglas County Commissioners in July of 1906, following a rectilinear grid pattern. Since the 1920's, new subdivisions have altered the symmetrical pattern of the town. The nucleus of the town of Minden developed from 1906 until around 1940, and then remained essentially static for the next thirty or so years. In the late 1950's some small subdivisions appeared, and new commercial ventures were developed along Highway 395. By the mid-1970's growth accelerated, with major subdivisions and new businesses being established. This growth continued in the 1980's, 1990's, and to the mid 2000's.

Douglas County's historic communities and buildings are monuments to its rich history, dating from the early Native American settlements through the first trade routes and explorations in the 1800's to the more recent past. The county's significance to Nevada state history is revealed in the communities of Genoa, Gardnerville, and Minden, where many important landmarks still stand.

Genoa, founded in 1851, has many significant architectural and historic landmarks, including the first courthouse and saloon in Nevada. A portion of the Town is now on the National Register of Historic Districts and includes several buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.



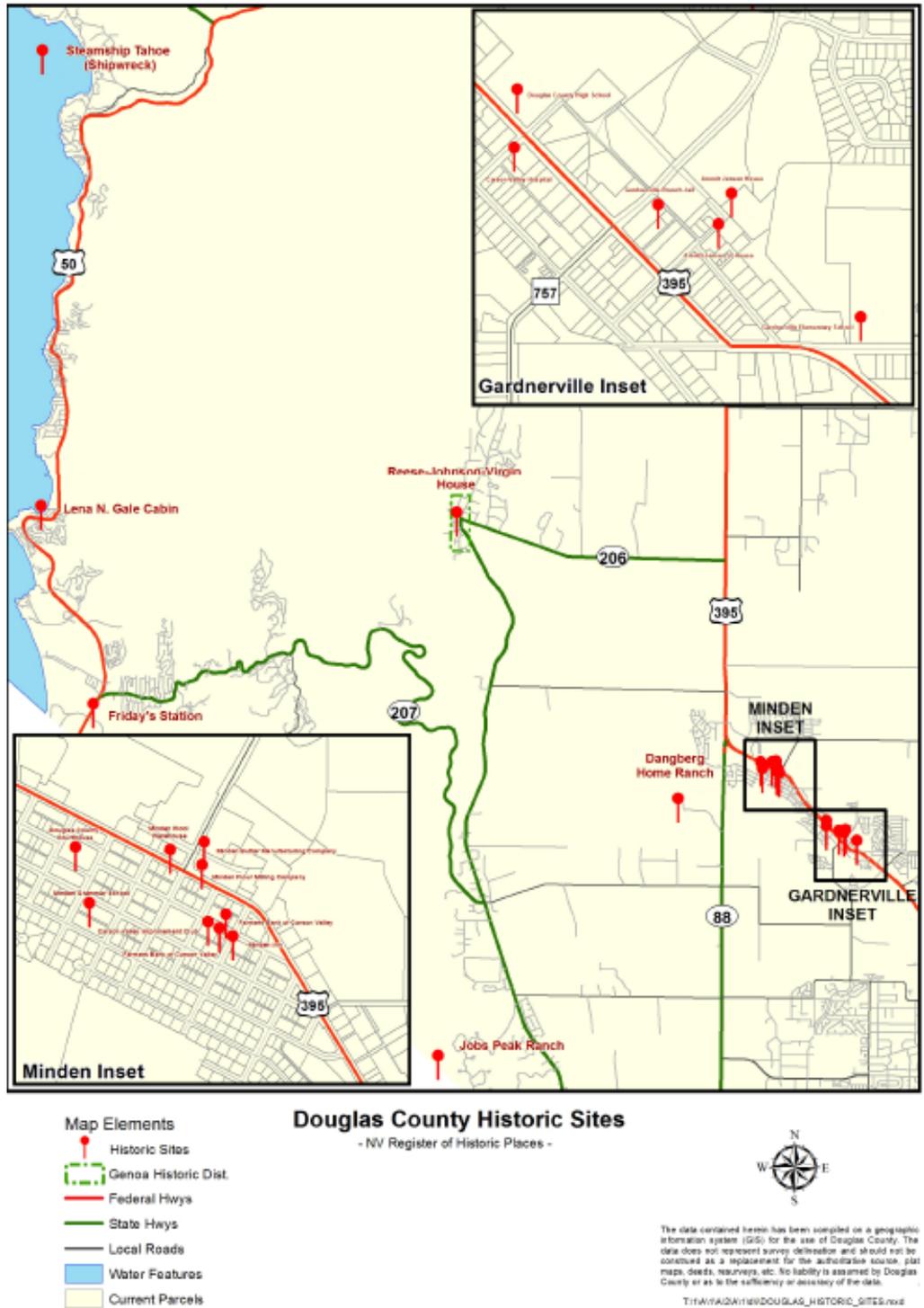
The Town of Gardnerville, founded in 1879, was known as a commercial center for agricultural products. There are many architectural styles indigenous to the community, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Neoclassical Rowhouse, Bungalow, and Victorian Commercial. The Town has potential for a National Register Historic District status. The prominent Nevada architect, Frederick J. De Longchamps designed several buildings in Gardnerville which are on the National Register list including the Carson Valley Hospital, Arendt Jenson House, the Historic Douglas High School, Trinity Lutheran Church, and St. Galls Catholic Church.

**St. Gall Catholic Church** The Town of Minden was founded as a “planned” community in 1905 by H.F. Dangberg, who also was instrumental in bringing the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to the Town. De Longchamps contributed significantly to the architecture of Minden by designing the Historic Courthouse, the Minden Inn, and the Farmer’s Bank. Minden also has the opportunity for consideration as a National Register Historic District. Structures in Minden which are on the National Register nomination list and the current listing on the National Register, include the Minden Flour Milling Company, Carson Valley Improvement (C.V.I) Club Hall, Douglas County Courthouse, Minden Inn, Farmer’s Bank of Carson Valley, Minden Wool Warehouse, and Minden Butter Manufacturing Company. Additionally, the Dangberg Home Ranch is also on the list.

There are three museums in Douglas County: 1) the Courthouse Museum in Genoa; 2) the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center; and 3) the Dangberg Home Ranch Living History and Interpretation Center. The Douglas County Historical Society owns and manages the Courthouse Museum and the Carson Valley Museum. The Dangberg Ranch is managed by the Friends of the Dangberg Ranch.

Figure 10.1 displays the location of National Register districts and buildings in Douglas County.

### Map 10.1 National Register Districts and Buildings in Douglas County



## Issues

### Providing Information about Historic Resources



**Collection at Dangberg Ranch**

The preservation of historic resources is important to the character of Douglas County. Such resources provide focal points which help shape the identity of an area. The rich settlement history of Douglas County can also provide opportunities for tourism. To make the most of these valuable resources, it is important that information about historic, archaeological, and cultural resources be available to residents, businesses, and visitors to Douglas County.

### Encouraging Preservation

Because historic resources can enrich the identity and character of an area, it is important that Douglas County take a leadership role in encouraging preservation. New development should be compatible with the existing historic character of designated areas. A system for identifying and designating sites or structures of historic and cultural significance should be established. Organizations which focus on historic preservation issues should be encouraged and supported. The initiative shown by Douglas County and the cooperation between other government entities and private organizations involved in historic preservation is critical in the on-going preservation of valuable historic, archaeological, and cultural resources.

### Historic Districts

The Genoa Historic District was established in 1974, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior regulations, and NRS statutes covering historic district commissions in the State of Nevada. The Douglas County Development Code regulates the Genoa Historic District under Chapter 2.28, Genoa Historic District Commission, and Chapter 20.680, Genoa Historic (GH) Overlay District. The overlay zoning district insures that any new construction or alterations to existing structures within the Genoa Historic District are reviewed by the Historic District Commission and receive Certificates of Appropriateness. At this time, the Commission does not receive any staff support from Douglas County. The Towns of Gardnerville and Minden may wish to also pursue Historic District status through the State of Nevada.



**Town of Genoa**

## **Historic Preservation (HP) Goals, Policies, and Actions**

- HP Goal 1**      **To preserve Douglas County’s historic, cultural, and archaeological resources as physical reminders of the county’s past and as unique focal points to shape the county’s identity.**
- HP Policy 1.1      Douglas County shall support, whenever feasible, the preservation of the county’s rich cultural heritage, including the establishment of additional historic districts to protect significant historic properties.
- HP Policy 1.2      Douglas County will cooperate and encourage the development of historical preservation efforts within the County, the Towns of Gardnerville, Minden, and Genoa, and other entities in Douglas County.
- HP Policy 1.3      Douglas County will work with the Towns of Minden and Gardnerville to develop appropriate programs to identify, designate, and preserve significant buildings and sites within the Towns and to establish guidelines for new development adjacent to historic structures, and for the reuse of historic structures, in order to preserve their character and setting.
- HP Policy 1.4      Routes of historic trails, including but not limited to, the Emigrant Trail, the Pony Express Route, and the V&T Railway, where they are accessible to the public, are to be included in the county’s network of scenic routes, and should use distinctive signage or other techniques to reflect this heritage.
- HP Policy 1.5      The preparation of informational materials to educate county residents and visitors about historic, cultural, and archaeological resources will be encouraged.
- HP Policy 1.6      Incentives for preservation of historic properties and sites, both urban and rural, will be pursued. These could include property tax relief, special zoning districts, and bonus densities for additional transfer of development rights.
- HP Action 1.1**      **The Community Development Department shall work with the Towns of Gardnerville and Minden to determine if nomination packages for Historic District status should be submitted to the State of Nevada.**
- HP Goal 2**      **To pursue additional resources to increase capacity of local organizations to carry out historic preservation activities.**
- HP Policy 2.1      Efforts to secure State, Federal, or other funding directed toward revitalizing historic areas or maintaining historic buildings and sites will
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be pursued. Under provisions of NRS 244.377, funding may be included in the County's annual budget for maintenance of museums located in the County, including consideration of a tax levy.

- HP Action 2.1 Douglas County shall submit an application for Certified Local Government status to the State of Nevada.
- HP Action 2.2 The 1981 Architectural Heritage Publication shall be updated to include all of Douglas County.
- HP Action 2.3 The Community Development Department shall revise the Development Code to create a unified chapter on Historic District Overlay Zoning Districts and determine if staff support is needed for existing or proposed Historic District Commissions in Douglas County.
- HP Action 2.4 Douglas County will develop incentives for preservation of historic properties and sites, both urban and rural, such as historic tax credits.