

Journal #4874

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Two Sisters' Story Unforgotten

Western Shoshone Defense Project Featured in University Libraries New Mining Exhibit
[Education & Public Service](#) | February 09, 2021

Jacquelyn Sunstrand | Robin Monteith | Jill Stockton



Photograph of the Dann Ranch, June 2, 1997

For the past several months, the University Libraries staff have been curating a portion of the new [University Libraries](#) mining exhibit, “Nuggets: Short Stories About Nevada Mining,” which features portions of the [Western Shoshone Defense Project collection](#). The exhibit was made possible by the generous support of IGT.

While the physical exhibit was developing and taking shape on the walls inside the Knowledge Center, the installation team and [Special Collections](#) staff, along with the rest of the world, learned of the passing of Carrie Dann, rancher, grandmother and co-founder of the Western Shoshone Defense Project. Carrie passed away on January 1, 2021 at her home in Crescent Valley, Nevada. A Newe (Western Shoshone) woman and activist for Newe land sovereignty and rights, Carrie had no birth certificate, but was believed to be between 86 and 88 years old.



Carrie (L) & Mary Dann, circa late 1990's

Carrie and her sister Mary grew up and lived on the ranch in Crescent Valley, once owned by their father. For decades, both sisters fought to reclaim Newe traditional lands covered by the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley. Under the treaty, the United States formally recognized Western Shoshone rights to about 60 million acres covering four states, including a vast swath of Nevada.

Decades ago, the tribe sued the government for failure to honor the treaty and the legal battles began.



Photograph of Western Shoshone Defense Project staff, circa late 1990s

The Western Shoshone Defense Project was founded in 1991 by the Western Shoshone National Council to provide support to the Dann sisters as they faced confiscation of their livestock by the United States Bureau of Land Management. The sisters grazed their livestock on unceded Western Shoshone homelands and as a form of protest, did not pay the grazing fees imposed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Western Shoshone Defense Project

The decades of records and documents generated by the Western Shoshone Defense Project comprise a collection that now resides on campus as part of the University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives department. The sisters lived this history and saved items documenting the Defense Project's mission to affirm Western Shoshone jurisdiction over Western Shoshone ancestral homelands by protecting, preserving, and restoring Shoshone rights and lands for present and future generations.

The collection documents the sisters' and other members of the Western Shoshone Nation's resistance, and also records the Dann sisters' decades long tenacious legal battle against the United States government's control of Western Shoshone ancestral lands, a fight which took them all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and the United Nations.



Photograph of Western Shoshone National Council cultural site sign, June 2004

That this collection, which so intimately chronicles this significant battle to preserve unceded homelands would be gifted to a public non-tribal affiliated institution is rare. However, a chain of events precipitated the donation. On Earth Day in 2005, Mary Dann died in a ranch accident. Her sister Carrie, then 79 years old, sought guidance from board members of the Western Shoshone Defense Project concerning what to do about the materials. Carrie, understanding that there exists no central administrative repository for Western Shoshone papers and wanting to have these materials available as an educational tool, signed a deed of gift in April 2013 to allow the University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections and University Archives to provide such a site in order to safeguard and make these records available to everyone. The department is thankful to Shayne del Cohen, who served on the State Historical Records Advisory Board with University Libraries Manuscripts & Archives Librarian Jacquelyn Sundstrand, for paving the way. Shayne made the introductions and told Carrie about the work of the department.

In 2013 the department received a one-year grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to organize what was then 120 linear feet of records during 2014-15. There were many segments within this collection that, once pulled back together, helped to illuminate the chronology of events. The department was very fortunate to hire our processing archivist, Mary Gibson, who is Western Shoshone and also worked with the Defense Project, bringing her own intimate knowledge of the events and culture to our work.

As the Western Shoshone Defense Project struggled to fight the United States government, the encroachment on the Western Shoshone lands continued. Despite the best efforts of the Western Shoshone and environmentalists to protect the sacred lands surrounding Mount Tenabo, the Cortez Hills mining project was granted permission to dig an extensive open pit gold mine. To reach the microscopic gold, the company dug below the water table, disturbing the waters that to Western Shoshone are important to maintaining the balance and power of life. “This area is where the seasons of the year were named — in the time before people were here,” Carrie Dann said in 2011.



Learn More and Get Involved

Manuscripts & Archives Librarian Jacquelyn Sundstrand

The University Libraries is privileged to include Western Shoshone Defense Project collection photos and documents in our upcoming exhibit *Nuggets: Short Stories About Nevada Mining*.

Please join us on March 25 at 7 p.m. for a virtual “talk and tour” led by Manuscripts & Archives Librarian Jacquelyn Sundstrand, as we explore the Western Shoshone Defense Project and Carrie and Mary Dann’s legacy. All are welcome and the event is free but registration is required. To register, please visit [Eventbrite](#). For questions, please contact Robin Monteith at robinmonteith@unr.edu.

About the University Libraries

The University Libraries embrace intellectual inquiry and innovation, nurture the production of

new knowledge, and foster excellence in learning, teaching and research. During each academic year, the Libraries welcomes more than 1.2 million visitors across its network of three branch libraries: the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library and the Savitt Medical Library. Visitors checked-out more than 80,000 items and completed more than 2 million database searches.

Special Collections and University Archives

Special Collections and University Archives contains the Libraries' rare books, book arts collection, manuscript collections, and University archives. The materials in Special Collections and University Archives are available to all individuals for research and scholarship. For questions about Special Collections and University Archives questions please email Department Head Kim Anderson at kda@unr.edu or call 775-682-5614.

Nevada Rangeland Resource Commission

Do Ranchers benefit our public lands? Check out this FREE 30 min documentary "Rangeland Grazing and Water". nevadarangelands.org



Giving away California desert to renewable energy is still destroying public lands

By The Aggie, 2/8/21

In a small corner of California, the Biden administration's climate policies and promise to protect public lands are about to be tested. Two universally accepted principles of our country's plan to fight climate change are the development of renewable energy and protection of open wilderness across the nation. California is a great example of this since it has more national parks than any other state and laws mandating that it gets the majority of its energy from renewable sources by 2030. With a hefty goal like this, sacrifices are going to have to be made, but what happens when these two ideas come into conflict?

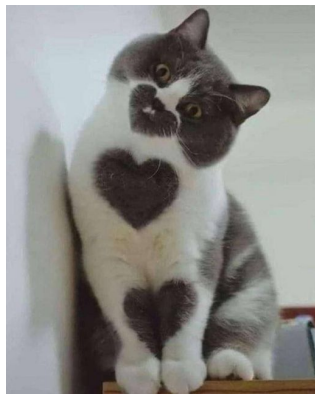
'This Land Feeds Our Souls': The Battle to Save the Rockies From Big Coal

Leyland Cecco, Guardian UK

Cecco writes: "To the east of the Bluebird Valley ranch, the grasslands of the Canadian prairies extend beyond the horizon. To the west, the fields rise, and then sharply erupt into the Rocky Mountains." [READ MORE](#)

China Plans Expansion, Tibetan Tradition Be Dammed

- China is planning to build the [world's biggest hydroelectric dam](#) on the sacred Yarlung Tsangpo river in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). Respect for nature is deeply rooted in the centuries-old Tibetan culture, and this river is particularly significant.
- The Yarlung Tsangpo is the world's highest river at nearly 16,404 feet above sea level. It originates in the glaciers of western Tibet and snakes its way through the Himalayan mountain range before plunging 8,858 feet through the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon, forming a gorge more than twice the depth of America's Grand Canyon.
- The precipitous fall makes it particularly conducive to collecting hydroelectric power, but with likely political and environmental consequences. Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha, head of Environment and Development at the Tibetan Policy Institute, says reverence for the natural world was born from the Tibetan Plateau's unique landscape. "There's a very strict tradition that no one will go near certain streams or do anything that would disturb it... every Tibetan abides by it."
- But since China annexed Tibet in 1950, Zamlha says Tibetans have lost all say in what happens on their land. "The Chinese will do anything to benefit their growth and this is very frustrating because Tibetans are not consulted." (Al Jazeera)



Amid COVID-19, a Minnesota organization develops a DIY will for Native Americans

The issue of estate planning, especially for Native land owners, has become especially important due to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19. The CDC says Native Americans die from COVID-19 at nearly twice the rate of white people.

By [Solomon Gustavo](#) | MinnPost Staff Writer

Ensuring land stays in the hands of Native people has become especially important due to the coronavirus pandemic and the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on Native people. REUTERS/Lauren Justice

As statistics show Native Americans dying from COVID-19 at nearly twice the rate of white people, a Little Canada-based nonprofit has developed a way for those who own tribal lands to write a do-it-yourself will, free of charge.

Created by the Minnesota-based [Indian Land Tenure Foundation](#) along with other Indian legal services groups, the organization's "[Will-in-a-Box](#)" offers an easy way for Native American landowners in three states — Minnesota, Montana and Oklahoma — to ensure their lands stays in the hands of Native people.

The issue has become especially important due to the coronavirus pandemic and the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on Native people. The CDC says Native Americans die from COVID-19 at 1.8 times [the rate](#) of white people.

But the tool also speaks to the intensely complicated nature of probate for those who own tribal land. When an Indian territory landowner dies without a will, the question of who should inherit their property isn't sent to a state probate court where the person died, but a federal probate judge, who presides over a Byzantine and often lengthy process of settling the estate.

"A case in federal probate court can take years," said Cris Stainbrook, president of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation.

The process is a legacy of the Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, passed in 1887, which put reservation land in a trust that the federal government owns, with individual tribes and landowners holding title to the land. The Allotment Act also put the federal government in charge of final decisions regarding land use and inheritance. "It was a blanket declaration painting individuals and tribes as being incompetent to handle their own affairs," said Stainbrook.

In the federal probate courts, a common ruling is one Stainbrook calls "splits." Half of the estate goes to the spouse and the children get the other half. "If you have nine kids, they would get one-eighteenth of the interest," Stainbrook said, and the process gets repeated with each successive generation, so that "by the time you get through seven, eight, 10 generations, that land has been divided into very small pieces.

"The smallest I've seen is one over 32 million," said Stainbrook.

A will can avoid some of those situations, which is where Stainbrook and the Indian Land Tenure Foundation come in. The free "[Will-in-a-Box](#)," allows a tribal landowner to fill out a series of forms on the ILTF's website, which are then reviewed by the organization's legal team.

The documents still have to go to a federal probate judge, who validates the will, but it speeds up the process. Currently, the service is available for American Indians who own trust land in Minnesota, Montana, and Oklahoma, though the ILTF is working on adding to that list.

ILTF, which offers other services around Indian land recovery and management, began in 2001 with a \$20 million endowment from the Northwest Area Foundation. ILTF is able to fund the free Will-in-a-Box program, which launched last year, through similar contributions from businesses, individuals, Indian nations, and other foundations.

The Native people in Minnesota who often seek their estate planning services are those on Minnesota's various reservation land, and adults living in the Twin Cities making arrangements for their parents. "I think, especially for some of those reservations harder hit (by the pandemic), we really need to rack these up," said Stainbrook. "The only real way we have to do that right now is with the Will-in-a-Box."

He also urges those who own trust land outside where the Will-in-a-Box is currently valid to fill out the free form, since people can have an attorney in their state make adjustments, usually at much lower costs than starting a will from scratch.



"We need to recognize that our community colleges will play an even bigger role in workforce training. That's why I will be asking the Legislature to work with the Nevada System of Higher Education over the next two years to develop a framework to transition Nevada's community colleges to a new independent authority that will focus on making Nevadans job ready."

— Gov. Steve Sisolak in his State of the State Address

As Sisolak spoke last month, there was something of a higher education policy surprise, tucked roughly halfway through the speech. It has triggered a flurry of questions with no clear answers, all centered on a simple idea: transition Nevada's four community colleges out from underneath the governing umbrella of the Nevada System of Higher Education. [Jacob Solis talked to a slew of people about the idea's ins and outs.](#)

'This Land Feeds Our Souls': The Battle to Save the Rockies From Big Coal

Leyland Cecco, Guardian UK

Cecco writes: "To the east of the Bluebird Valley ranch, the grasslands of the Canadian prairies extend beyond the horizon. To the west, the fields rise, and then sharply erupt into the Rocky Mountains." [READ MORE](#)

***It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.* — [Frederick Douglass](#)**

On Friday, February 12 MNHS to transfer 120 acres from Lower Sioux Agency historic site to Lower Sioux Indian

The LSIC has partnered with MNHS to provide interpretive programming and to manage the site since 2009. In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature approved the transfer of the MNHS property which is adjacent to the LSIC's tribal lands along the Minnesota River. The retained land is a mix of MNHS and state ownership. Our contract with the LSIC will continue and MNHS will continue to steward the site by funding the LSIC to maintain and manage the historic warehouse, interpretive trails, archaeological sites, and the visitor center.

The tribe's ownership of the land will benefit the public through a richer and more complete telling of the important history connected to the Lower Sioux Agency, a place of great historic significance. It is located on both historical and contemporary Dakota homeland along the Minnesota River Valley known as Cansa'yapi (where they marked the trees red) and is a site of key events related to the US-Dakota War of 1862.

A public event commemorating the transfer will be held at the Lower Sioux Government Center on Friday, February 12, at 11 a.m. The event will be streamed via [Facebook Live](#).

Speak up for Minnesota History during Virtual History Matters Advocacy Day!

While we cannot be at the MN State Capitol in person this year, History Matters Advocacy Day will still happen! MNHS staff, volunteers, and interns are invited to be advocates for history by meeting with your legislators virtually on Thursday, February 25. Please coordinate with your supervisor, and [register for Virtual History Matters Advocacy Day](#), or contact rebecca.douden@mnhs.org or david.kelliher@mnhs.org with any questions.

Join MNHS CEO, Kent Whitworth for a Zoom gathering at 9 a.m. with members of the statewide history community to discuss the relevance of history. MNHS Director of Public Policy, David Kelliher will provide an advocacy orientation immediately following Kent's talk.

If you are not able to join for Virtual History Matters Day on February 25, you can still be a part of the advocacy team! Consider speaking up on behalf of history by sending a message to your state representative, senator, and the governor, by calling or scheduling a Zoom meeting with your representative, writing a letter to your representative or a letter to the editor of a newspaper, or spread the word about the importance of history via social media. [Learn more about how to be a history advocate](#). Thanks to all for your continued efforts in getting the word out that history matters! Whenever you speak up for history, you're making a difference.

Thank you and be well.

-MNHS Leadership and Internal Communications Teams

Grijalva's hope for Haaland starts with not having Interior secretary 'there to sabotage us'

<https://www.dailykos.com/story/2021/2/10/2015012/-When-political-alliances-work-the-way-they-should-for-all-of-us-you-get-Haaland-Grijalva-force>

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." — [Nelson Mandela](#)

Even More Scholarships with March 1-15 Deadlines		
UC San Diego Regents Scholarships	\$8,000	03/02/2021
Udall Scholarship	\$7,000	03/05/2021
UMHEF Scholarships	Varies	03/01/2021
UMW Arnold & Cora Benson Scholarship	Varies	03/15/2021
UMW Emerick - DI Emerick Scholarship	Varies	03/15/2021
UMW Jane Buttrey Scholarship	Varies	03/15/2021
UMW Morningstar Traditional & Non-Traditional Scholarship	Varies	03/15/2021
UNCF Jay Charles Levine Scholarship	\$3,000	03/19/2021
United Methodist GBHEM General Scholarships	Varies	03/07/2021
United Methodist GBHEM Ministry as a Career Scholarships	\$12,500	03/01/2021
University of Maryland President's Scholarship	\$12,500	03/01/2021
Upsolve Access to Justice	\$2,500	03/31/2021
USMA/Blake Family Metric Awards	\$2,500	03/31/2021
USTA Foundation Scholarships	Varies	03/30/2021
UW Stout Polytechnic Scholarship	\$2,000	03/15/2021
UWF Elmira K. Beyer Scholarship	\$11,000	03/05/2021
Valent USA Tree Fruit	Varies	03/01/2021
Valparaiso University Ament-Benner Scholarship	\$5,000	03/01/2021
Viceroy Auto Trans Scholarship Program	\$1,000	03/08/2021
Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation Scholarship	\$5,000	03/02/2021
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado Grossman Scholarship	\$5,000	03/31/2021
WAEF Scholarships	\$1,250	03/01/2021
West Virginia Engineering Science and Technology Scholarship Program	\$3,000	03/01/2021
West Virginia PROMISE Scholarships	Varies	03/01/2021
Westmar Scholarship	\$2,500	03/01/2021
Wings Over America Scholarships	Varies	03/01/2021
Women's Overseas Service League	\$2,000	03/01/2021
Women's Western Golf Foundation Scholarship	\$2,500	03/01/2021
WV State Fair Junior Livestock Show Scholarships	\$4,000	03/05/2021
Wyoming Space Grant Undergraduate Fellowships	\$5,000	03/15/2021
Young Women in Public Affairs Scholarship	\$1,000	03/15/2021
Zonta International Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship		

Teen Scientist Finds a Low-Tech Way to Recycle Water

Meet Shreya Ramachandran: This high school senior founded a nonprofit based in California that teaches people how to recycle water in their homes. She's also shown that the water left after cleaning with soap nuts can be reused to irrigate crops.

By [Jeremy Deaton](#) January 27, 2021 2:00 PM

https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/teen-scientist-finds-a-low-tech-way-to-recycle-water?utm_campaign=weekly-roundup-2021-02-11&utm_content=weekly-roundup-2021-02-11a&utm_medium=email&utm_source=customerio

"The Fight for an Equitable Energy Economy for the Navajo Nation" (*High Country News*)

"Idaho Republican Congressman Lays Out Framework for Removal of Four Snake River Dams" (*Willamette Week*)

*[The missing continent it took 375 years to find](#) (BBC). It's not exactly a needle in a haystack.

And because it is Friday:

In 1910, these brothers, aged 10 and 6, decided to go on an adventure. It involved crossing America on horseback alone. Just wait until you find out how they got back home... 🤯

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