

HRPS Considers Francis G. Newlands' Name on Properties and Elements in Reno

The Historic Reno Preservation Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting historic resources in the Truckee Meadows through education, advocacy, and leadership. In our tours, programming, and associated materials, we strive to present the full complexity of the individuals and groups who are part of the historical development of the city. We seek to include ever more diverse stories, including those illustrating longstanding patterns of inequality and injustice. We believe it is important for our community to learn from all of these histories in order to fully understand the physical and cultural landscape that we see today.

The story of Reno's physical development includes actions and activities undertaken by Francis G. Newlands, the Newlands Company, and members of the extended Newlands family. Senator Newlands was unquestionably and deplorably racist in his personal and political ideologies. It is therefore natural and appropriate to raise concerns about whether and to what extent references to the Newlands name on Reno's landscape carry associations with those disgraceful and destructive beliefs.

We support a thorough examination of all physical features carrying the Newlands name, including their original purpose and intent, as well as their historical and contemporary meaning. Because perceptions of that meaning may vary, we encourage the initiation of a community conversation that is inclusive, open, and welcoming of all viewpoints. As some physical features carrying the Newlands name, including the Newlands Manor stone pillars, Newlands Park, and the Newlands memorial tablet have been recognized as contributing elements to the National Register Newlands Historic District, we urge that great care be taken in their consideration and treatment.

It is only through continued education and conversation that we can develop a more complete understanding of Reno's historic landscapes and the people who inhabited them. We look forward to participating in these important conversations as we work toward ever greater inclusiveness and understanding of each other and the spaces and places we share.