

Book review: 'Women of the Sierra' a good history lesson

By Kathryn Reed

History is filled with the stories of men, their exploits, accomplishments and lives in general. Women have never garnered the same amount of ink.



Anne Seagraves in her book "Women of the Sierra" (Wesanne Publications, 1990) attempts to change that. She brings to life 15 women who many have probably never heard of. Though some of the last names, like Celio, are familiar, with descendants still part of the South Shore community.

Most of the women Seagraves features lived during the mid-1800s to the turn of the century. It was a much different time in the Sierra. It was really the Wild West. Modern conveniences some cities enjoyed at the time were not brought to this area until much later.

At 173 pages, it is a pretty quick read. While it's not the best written book, the stories captured me. I can't imagine enduring the hardships of that era. The strength of these women is admirable. The fact that so many worked beyond the home and even divorced surprised me.

After reading the segment on Allison "Eilley" Orrum it makes me want to visit the Bowers Mansion in Carson City. I didn't know the history of that estate until reading this book.

While it was a man's world, these women proved they could hold their own – were their husband's equals if not more.

This is definitely a great glimpse into the lives of some incredible women. Many would be worthy of book devoted to just them.

The black and white photos were a wonderful addition.