

NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



SOCIETY NEWS

Trifolium andersonii (fiveleaf clover).
Photo by James Morefield.

NORTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

October 3 – Jeanne Sharp Howerton, author, historian, 4th generation Nevadan, and educator presents, “The Astonishing Backstory Behind the Discovery and Naming of *Primula nevadensis*, the Nevada Primrose.”

Meetings are held in room 300G of the Fleischmann Agriculture Building on the UNR campus, north of 9th Street and Evans Avenue. Enter the building under the breezeway on the west side near the street. There’s an elevator at the east end of the building. Meet on the third floor and down the hall from the **UNR herbarium**.

Social time at 7:00 PM; program at 7:30. The outside doors are locked at 7:30.

SOUTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

June 3 – Larry Lodwick, Wetland Ecologist, will discuss his work on identifying plant communities at Ash Meadows using aerial photography and imaging.

July and August – Summer Break. No meetings scheduled. Enjoy the summer and keep an eye out for our fall program beginning in September.

Our program coordinator is Lesley DeFalco. Contact her at defalco@usgs.gov to receive email updates for Southern Nevada events.

Events subject to change.
Visit nvnps.org for updates.

POLLINATOR DAY REPORT

by Shannon Swim

NNPS had a great time at the UNR Museum and Pollinator Day! We spoke with lots of people about the beauty and importance of native plants. In a collaborative effort with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), we were able to provide free milkweed (*A. fascicularis* and *A. speciosa*) seedlings to visitors. We

were also a participating booth in the FWS bingo game. To get a stamp, kids had to tell us their favorite native plants. We sold \$72 worth of merchandise and received \$16 in donations. Special thanks to Charlene Duncan, Emma Winn, and Gina Robinson for all of their help with this event!

Shannon Swim is our event coordinator and the Sagebrush in Prisons Project Coordinator for Nevada.



Cirsium andersonii (Anderson's thistle).
Photo by Janel Johnson.

CHARLES LEWIS ANDERSON

Story by Olga Reifschneider

One of the first botanists to collect plant specimens on his own initiative within the present area of Nevada was Dr. Charles Lewis Anderson, a practicing physician and naturalist. He was born at Salem, Roanoke, Virginia, September 22, 1827, and moved to Indiana with his family when he was 10 years old. He taught school to earn his way through Indiana Asbury University where he received his degree in medicine in 1852. He first practiced in Hennepin County, Minnesota, and he was the first superintendent of schools of that county. While he was in college he became interested in botany, and he often accompanied students from Yale and Harvard on their western field trips.

Anderson considered a move to the Far West. When he asked returning travelers about the botany there, he was told he could botanize in "sagebrush and greasewood." Undaunted, on May 13, 1862, Dr. Anderson bid his wife and two daughters farewell and began the 3½ months' journey which ended in Carson City, Nevada Territory.

Dr. Anderson and two companions, Edward W. Emerson and Mr. Rheem, joined a wagon train on the Overland Route. Salt Lake City offered them the first opportunities to enjoy the comforts of civilization and rest. The three men decided to sell their wagon and equipment and replace it with a lighter-weight conveyance and fewer animals so that they could travel easier.

On the road to Carson City, 192 miles from Salt Lake City, they met a weary teamster with whom they shared their food. For \$200 they sold him their wagon and mules and returned to Deep Creek to board the stage for the balance of the trip to Carson City, which would shorten their trip by almost three weeks. Dr. Anderson kept his pony "John," leaving him and his medicine chest with the party, to be delivered to him when they reached Carson City.

On August 29, 1862, Anderson arrived in Carson City. He immediately bought a new hat and other small articles, then took the stage to Washoe City to visit friends from home, Mr. and Mrs. John W. North. After a pleasant visit with the family he walked over Mt. Davidson to Virginia City. He wanted to visit the various communities around Carson City before opening his office. He was impressed with the "happy, smiling faces of the well-dressed people, and their extravagance and their concern of gold



Astragalus andersonii (Anderson's milkvetch)
Photo by Janel Johnson.



Delphinium andersonii (Anderson's larkspur) and
Hyles lineata (white-lined sphinx moth).
Photo by Janel Johnson.

and silver." This experience was in marked contrast to Minnesota and the "greenback" money. He noted the library and the number of good books available. He considered the people "good society."

After he walked to Gold Hill, Silver City, and Dayton, he determined to open his office in Carson City on September 6, 1862. Dr. Anton W. Tjader, a prominent physician and surgeon of Carson City, was friendly and hospitable, offering to send him patients. This was a new experience for Dr. Anderson, as he wrote to his wife comparing life in Nevada Territory and Minnesota, "In the selfish, pecazunish towns of Minnesota and Wisconsin, I might have expected opposition; here I have found liberality and a hearty welcome."

The weather was of particular interest for the long, bright, sunny autumn was unlike the early, cold winters of Minnesota. In Nevada he noted that the first real storms did not arrive until late in December. His practice grew slowly that winter and his patients often lived some distance from Carson City. On

Prunus andersonii (desert peach) and *Callophrys spinetorum* (thicket hairstreak butterfly). Photo by Janel Johnson.



one occasion he held a “consultation” with a patient from Aurora by mail.

With spring came the swarms of gold seekers, the excitement of the crowds and the extravagant living. He was encouraged at times and believed he would like to stay in Carson City and, again, he felt the uncertainty of a mining community. He was seeking a place with a good climate for his family, where they would be comfortable, have good “society,” enjoy a good living and be happy. He was not sure Carson City offered these possibilities even though he considered the climate healthful. He wanted his family to be with him, but the problem of distance and transportation to Carson City, and the environment of a mining community made it difficult for him to decide. Should he

stay in Carson City and have his family join him, or should he go on to California and seek a homesite there? During the winter he debated, but his wife, Meriel, made the decision. She and the two daughters, Carrie and Seddie, arrived in Carson City August 1, 1863, by wagon train via the Overland Route. They stayed in Carson City until 1867 when the family moved to Santa Cruz, California.

During the time he was in Carson City, Dr. Anderson served as the third superintendent of schools of Ormsby County, and he was the first surgeon-general on the military staff of the first Governor of Nevada, Henry Good Blasdel.

Dr. Anderson was always alert to the unfamiliar plants around him. He made notes of them as he crossed the prairie and

when he reached Carson City, he collected them. His collections were sent to Dr. Asa Gray of Harvard University, expert on North American flora.

Four hundred twenty-seven species of flowering plants and 39 grasses collected in the Carson City area are listed in The Report of the State Mineralogist of Nevada 1871, under the title "Catalogue of Nevada Flora" by Charles L. Anderson. Dr. Anderson comments, "The country is rich in vegetable novelties as it is at all times in mineral wealth." He wrote of the "nutritious grasses," and the "abundance of vetches and clovers."

His description of *Trifolium andersonii* is, "A most peculiar clover; resembling lupine, covered with soft, silky hairs, grows in tufts 3 to 4 inches high, forming beds or patches in moist, sandy soil near the foothills. The roots like 'alfalfa,' grow very deep, and so strong are the fibers that an ordinary breaking plow with two yoke of oxen can scarcely tear them up."

Dr. Anderson became interested in the study of seaweed (*Algae*) after moving to Santa Cruz. He collected in California, and some specimens are in the California

Academy of Sciences Herbarium in San Francisco.

Desert peach (*Prunus andersonii*), an endemic species found along the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, was one of the many western plants dedicated to Dr. Anderson. He died December 22, 1910, in Santa Cruz, California.

Ed. Note: Dr. Anderson collected 36 type specimens. Of these, the following 12 were named for him:

Trifolium andersonii, *Aster a.*, *Astragalus a.*, *Lupinus a.*, *Crepis a.*, *Amsinckia a.*, *Allium a.*, *Cirsium a.*, *Ranunculus a.*, *Prunus a.*, *Lycium a.*, and *Delphinium a.*

Biography of Olga Reifschneider:

<https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/olga-a-wuertz-reifschneider>

This article is taken from Olga Reifschneider's book, **Biographies of Nevada Botanists**, and is used with the permission of the University of Nevada Press. This article originally appeared in Vol. 11, No. 6 of the NVNPS Newsletter which was published in July 1985.



Ranunculus andersonii (Anderson's buttercup).
Photo by James Morefield.

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