

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUTHOR SHARES COMPELLING STORIES FROM 120 YEARS OF FAMILY LETTERS DESCRIBING WESTWARD MIGRATION AND FRONTIER LIFE IN LAKE TAHOE/RENO REGIONS

RENO, Nev. / July 7 -- What was the untamed West *really* like? Join author Mary Jo Sonntag for storytelling and readings from her book, ***Write, If You Live to Get There***, the true story of her ancestor's westward migration from Vermont to northern California, told through a series of letters written by members of the Phillips family. The collection of correspondence, spanning more than 120 years, paints a rich and detailed portrait of life on the America frontier—including the Lake Tahoe region—in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

By reading selected letters, displaying vintage family photographs, and using her own captivating storytelling ability, Mary Jo will introduce audiences to the daily thoughts and activities of the intrepid Phillips clan and chronicle how they combined their entrepreneurial skills and hospitable instincts to build prominent resorts in the Lake Tahoe region at Phillips Station, Rubicon Springs, and Meeks Bay, some of which existed until 1953 when the snows collapsed the buildings.

"I'll be sharing tales about ancestors like JWD Phillips, who ran for State Assembly twice as an independent and lost both times by a narrow margin. Superintendent of mines, this fascinating man developed several patents for mining equipment," says Mary Jo. "You'll also learn about Mehitable Jane Ball Phillips, who taught the Indians a lesson about manners after they startled her awake by peering through her bedroom window, and about the legendary Snow Shoe Thompson, who used Norwegian "snow shoes" to deliver mail throughout the Sierra Nevada's for twenty years, even though he was never paid a nickel."

Author Mary Jo Sonntag's presentations will be open to the public and free of charge.

- Tuesday, August 5 5:30 – 6:30 pm **Spanish Springs Library** 775-424-1800
7100A Pyramid Lake Highway, Sparks, NV
- Weds., August 6 1:00 – 3:00 pm **Placerville Library** 530-621-5540
345 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA
- Saturday, August 9 6:00 – 7:30 pm **Kings Beach Library** 530-546-2021
301 Secline St., Kings Beach, CA
- Tuesday, August 12 5:00 – 6:00 pm **Sparks Library** 775-352-3200
1125 12th Street, Sparks, NV
- Weds., August 13 6:00 – 7:00 pm **South Lake Tahoe Library** 530-573-3185
1000 Rufus Allen Blvd, S. Lake Tahoe, CA
- Weds., August 20 11:00 am – Noon **Northwest Reno Library** 775-787-4100
2325 Robb Drive, Reno, NV
- Weds., August 20 6:00 – 7:00 pm **South Valleys Library** 775-851-5190
15650A Wedge Parkway, Reno, NV
- Friday, August 22 6:30 – 7:30 pm **Incline Village Library** 775-832-4130
845 Alder Ave., Incline Village, NV

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: FAMILY HISTORIAN MARY JO SONNTAG



Mary Jo Sonntag was born to wander, just like her ancestors. Her spirit of adventure was ignited when she was 16 and spent the summer studying French in Switzerland. Since then she has traveled the world. An avid storyteller, Mary Jo delights friends and family with stories of her adventures. She also enjoys hiking, biking, gardening, and cooking.

Mary Jo lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and holds degrees from Seton Hill University and The Pennsylvania State University. In her professional life, she coaches leaders worldwide to successfully execute their roles and achieve their potential.

**For a goldmine of information about the remarkable Phillips clan,
follow Mary Jo Sonntag on Twitter @MaryJoSonntag, Facebook,
<https://www.facebook.com/mjsonntag>, and www.writeifyoulivetogetthere.com.**