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NEVADA STATE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XXVIII, NUMBER 4

JULY / AUGUST 2000

New Museum Director . . .

Jim Barmore Comes From Washington

The new Director of the Nevada State Museum, Jim Barmore, commenced working on May 31.

He has enjoyed working in museums for over eighteen years. During this time he has gained a deep appreciation for the value of museums for us as individuals, families, and communities. Museums broaden understanding, serve as sources of identity and pride, offer a sense of belonging, and bring communities together.

Before joining the Nevada State Museum, he worked for nine years as Director of the Skagit County Historical Museum, a growing museum in the north Puget Sound region of Washington State. The museum exemplified strong community involvement and support. At the same time, Barmore facilitated the formation of the Greater Skagit Museum Association, assisting communication and collaboration among area museums. He also served on the board of the Washington Museum Association and was president for the past two years. The Association promoted professional development, networking, and advocacy for more than four hundred museums in Washington.

Previously, he worked for over four years as Curator of Collections at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, and was responsible for managing the general artifact collections and developing local and regional history exhibits. Before moving to the Northwest, Barmore was the Curator of Museum Collections at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis for three years, and he managed collections relating to the history of Missouri and the American West. His greatest emphasis was on exhibit development.

Following graduate school, Barmore enjoyed an adventurous year in Alaska. He completed an internship at Denali National Park and Preserve, and then worked as a contract Historic Preservation Officer for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough of Palmer, Alaska. His museum career began while attending graduate school at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, working as a Curatorial Assistant in the history department at the University Museum.

In 1983, he received his master's degree in Museum



NEW MUSEUM DIRECTOR JIM BARMORE

STATE PUBLICATIONS

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Science with an emphasis in Western American history. His bachelor's degree in history with a museum work emphasis was received from Western State College of Colorado in 1979.

He traces his interest in natural and cultural history to growing up with the National Park Service in Northwest Wyoming. He has family living from Wyoming to New Mexico and California. The foremost joy in his life is spending time with Linda, his wife of nineteen years, and their two sons, Garrett and Kaden, ages eleven and four years.

Jim Barmore is honored and excited about serving as director of the Nevada State Museum, and looks forward to getting acquainted and working with all the people in the Museum's community.

Views of the Past



This unique photograph of the *Battleship Nevada* was taken off of San Diego, California, in April, 1925. It was one of a series of stereograph¹ views on the ships of the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet. The *Nevada* (BB-36), a 583-foot, 27,500-ton battleship, began her long and distinguished career in 1916. She entered World War I at Norfolk, Virginia as a training ship for the crews of "four-stacker" destroyers and as a gunnery training ship for men who would be the armed guards on merchant ships. In 1918, *Nevada* (BB-36) joined *Oklahoma* (BB-37) and *Utah* (BB-31) as part of a deterrent squadron to prevent German battlecruisers from breaking out of the North Sea and attacking North Atlantic convoys. The super dreadnaught was a menace to the enemy without firing a shot. Between wars, *Nevada* conducted two diplomatic South American cruises and in 1922 became part of the Pacific Fleet.

December 7, 1941, found *Nevada* moored at the east end of "battleship" row in Pearl Harbor. Perhaps because she was singly moored, *Nevada* was the only battleship able to get underway during the Japanese attack. Severely damaged from multiple torpedo and bomb explosions, she was beached to prevent being sunk in the channel, blocking the harbor entrance.

Refloated in 1942, *Nevada* went on to provide fire support in the capture of Attu Island in the Aleutians. *Nevada* then

sailed south, through the Panama Canal to participate in the Allied invasion of France. For 12 days she roamed the coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula, building the legend of her incredibly accurate firepower by placing her huge 14-inch shells within 600 yards of the Allies front lines. Once the Atlantic coast was secure, *Nevada* proceeded through Gibraltar to support the invasion of the French Mediterranean coast.

Her duty in the Mediterranean completed, *Nevada* sailed again for the Pacific and the closing engagements of the war. At Iwo Jima she moved in 600 yards from shore to provide maximum fire power allowing the U.S. Marine Corps to advance and capture the island. At Okinawa, though damaged by a Kamikaze (suicide plane) attack, *Nevada* survived to fight again. She received seven battle stars for her distinguished WWII service.

After the war, *Nevada* returned to Pearl Harbor where she was declared incapable of further service. The Battleship *Nevada* was finally sunk on July 31, 1948. She was sunk by Navy dive-bombers about 65 miles southwest of Pearl Harbor.

[The history of the Battleship *Nevada* was reprinted from the program for the Commissioning of *USS Nevada* SSBN, August 16, 1986.]

¹ A stereograph is a pair of photographic prints of the same scene mounted adjacent to each other on a 3-1/2"x7" card.

Young Kids Find Mystery Tooth in Back Yard

By DOROTHY NYLEN
Exhibit Preparator II

Kids have and are continuing to make important discoveries relating to the prehistory of Nevada. The find of a three million-year-old mastodon south of Gardnerville by two boys on dirt bikes this spring is not that surprising. Youth are tremendously inquisitive and often look at the earth with wonder.

In late April two surprisingly young children visited the Nevada State Museum with a find of their own. Sam and Lindsey Blei, ages 5 and 8 respectively, brought in a very interesting old tooth they had found while digging in their back yard in Carson City. They were unsure about how deep they had been digging when they found the tooth, but it may have been as much as three feet down. No study was conducted regarding its exact location in the stratigraphy of the soil.

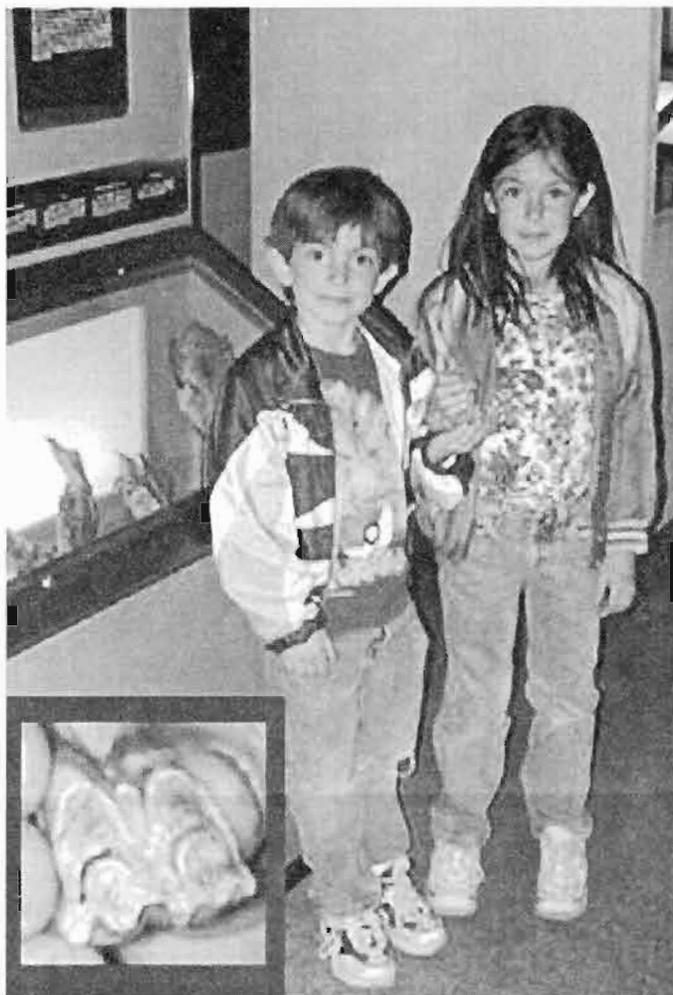
Although retired from NSM, Amy Dansie, our former expert on these matters, happened to visit the museum, examined the tooth, and pronounced it was the milk tooth (baby tooth) from some kind of calf. The tooth was either from a domesticated species of cattle and thus fairly recent (40-150 years old), or it was from a buffalo, which would mean that it could even be thousands of years old.

NSM's mammalogist Dr. George Baumgardner, has tooth identification books in his library and after studying the tooth and taking measurements he came to pretty much the same conclusion. The museum also has an ancient adult bison jaw on display that contained a bigger tooth very much like Sam and Lindsey's. What we lacked was a modern cow skull with teeth.

George decided to call upon a friend at Texas A & M University, Dr. Gentry Steele. Dr. Steele is a well known archeologist who has published on excavations of old bison "kill sites," places where people killed and butchered bison in the process of getting food for their families. He has also studied the difference between the teeth of domesticated cattle and bison. Dr. Steele agreed that an upper second molar, the type of tooth found, is virtually indistinguishable between the two species. Carbon dating the tooth to discover its age proved to be too costly in this case. A milk tooth, it probably would have just fallen out when the little guy was grazing, and thus there would not likely be any associated bones. The true story of the tooth thus remains unknown.

Whenever I find myself talking to school kids in this state I like to tell them that they could discover an exciting fossil or very special old bone in their own back yard, even in the middle of town. I am just tickled that Sam and Lindsey may have done exactly that.

Buffalo were in Nevada for a long time, though they had disappeared by the time Euro-Americans came west. In Nevada's dry climate bones and teeth thousands of years old can just look and feel like more recently buried bones and teeth. It is when we find parts of animals that are now extinct that we realize how close to earlier times we are. The first cheetah skull found in North America was found in Nevada and now they have been found in other places as well. No one would have guessed they lived here. We thank Sam and Lindsey for showing us their mystery tooth.



Sam and Lindsey Blei stand next to NSM's fossil jaw exhibit. Inset shows close-up of the molar grinding surface of the mystery tooth.—Photo by Sue Ann Monteleone, NSM Registrar

Coming Events

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM

July 25, 2000—*The Donner Party: The Tragedy of a Doomed Wagon Train*, by Frank Mullen, Jr., Nevada Humanities Scholar, program funded by Nevada Humanities Committee and The Bretzlaff Foundation.

August 22, 2000—*Thaddeus Dunkley, Black Cowboy*, Chautauqua Presentation by James Armstead, Nevada Humanities Scholar, program funded by Nevada Humanities Committee.

These programs are part of the Museum's Frances Humphrey evening lecture series held on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. There is no charge for the programs. The Loftin Park entrance on the north side of the museum complex will be used for all programs. For more information call 687-4810, ext. 239.

Check Out Those Wildflowers!

By ANN PINZL
NSM Curator of Natural History

Now you can plan your wildflower viewing at home, from the comfort of your seat in front of the computer. The Nevada Natural Heritage Program or NNHP (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) has initiated the webpage: Nevada Wildflower Reports on-Line. Here you'll find reports on what's blooming where and what's not, with an occasional note as to why flowers are or are not out. There's also a link to the Northern Nevada Native Plant Society, with a schedule of field trips you might want to go on to see the flowers up close and personal (and on such trips with others you're likely to see more of them than you would on your own). And if you're really interested in the natural world, whether to understand more about it or to learn about some of its rare and/or threatened members and what's being done to help them, the NNHP home page is a place you should check out. The URL for Nevada wildflowers is:

<http://www.state.nv.us/nvnhp/wildflow.htm>

This wildflower web page is a great idea, and I am very appreciative of NNHP starting it up. I often get inquiries about where wildflowers might be blooming in any month or year—now, I can refer them to this resource, which is a collaborative effort of many observers and more informative than just my own experience. And on the other hand, I have a place to report my flower findings to the public directly. The main focus of my field work throughout the state is to collect plant specimens for the herbarium collection here at the museum—providing the fruits, or should I say flowers of my labor, in terms of up-to-date popular information has been dependent on people asking individually, and now, any and everyone can get the information on their own via the web.

New Officers Installed for Museum's Docent Council

By PEG COURTNEY
NSM Docent Publicity Chairman

The annual luncheon and installation of officers of the Nevada State Museum Docent Council was held on May 23 at the Pinion Plaza. Robert Nylen, Curator of History at the museum, conducted the installation. The new officers are: Jack Gibson, Chairman; Treva Jewkes, Vice Chairman; Thelma Williams, Recording Secretary and Treasurer, and Joan Bird, Corresponding Secretary. The following are board members: Mary Ann O'Donnell, Pat Lawrence, Phyl Stewart, Harold Werbel, Dorothy Lusty, and Peg Courtney.

We were honored to have Michael Hillerby, new director of the Nevada State Department of Museums, Library and Arts, as our guest speaker. Peter Bandurraga, who was temporarily filling in as the Nevada State Museum director, was also a guest.

Mary Ann O'Donnell, retiring chairman, gave her report on what was accomplished by the docents this past year; they volunteered 5460 hours. The year 1999 was a difficult year as we lost many docents to honorary status, leaving the council short of help. If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the docent council, please contact the museum.

Jan's Boutique . . .

Historic Costume Year 2000 Calendar Wins Gold Award

By JAN LOVERIN
NSM Curator of Clothing and Textiles

As many of you are aware, the Marjorie Russell Textile Center was featured in the Historic Costume Calendar 2000. This calendar features costumes from different museums throughout the United States and Canada. The publisher, Sally Queen, is relatively new at publishing as this year's edition is only the third historic costume calendar she has produced. Last year the calendar won the National Calendar Association's Silver Award for most Educational Wall Calendar . . . and this year, (the year of our participation) the calendar has been awarded the Gold Award by the same organization for same honor! This is a fabulous honor and I am very pleased to have been associated with such a fine publication. The calendar is still for sale in our gift shop, the Nevada Historical Society's gift shop, and bookstores in Reno.

As a by-product of this calendar, we have been asked by a national textbook company to use the bathing suit photographs in their new publication, *Clothes and Appearance*, a text for high school students. When I spoke to the editor, she said she had been given the Historic Costume calendar as a gift and loved it. She contacted Sally Queen who referred her to all of the calendar participants. Unfortunately she was unable to use all of the photos and so she selected only 10 and we are among those! Doing fashion photography can be quite difficult, as it is not easy to mount a bifurcated garment on an inanimate, ill-sized mannequin, get the correct hair, and make up style, to say nothing of the art of the photography, but when we get double the mileage, it is, oh so sweet.

Movies in the Park Set to Begin

Set for the first showing on Wednesday, July 12, Movies in the Park is again a summer feature at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Attendance is free and the entire family is encouraged to attend, bringing a picnic dinner, lawn chairs, or blankets to lay on. Screening will begin as darkness descends on the Slim Gibson Memorial Park. Information on coming shows can be obtained by calling 687-6953. Dates are July 12, July 19, July 26, Aug. 2, Aug. 9, Aug. 16, and Aug. 23.

A 'Thank You' Letter Received

April 21, 2000

Dear Mr. Nylen,

Thank you for taking the time to give us a tour of the capitol and the mint. Also, I appreciate your arranging for Norm Luke to join us. My students and I enjoyed hearing stories about Carson City's historical buildings. I'm inspired to learn more about our local history. Thanks again, and I hope you'll be willing to give another tour sometime (maybe next year?).

Sincerely,

Krista Benjamin,
Gifted and Talented Teacher,
Gardnerville Elementary School



Nevada's Governor Charles H. Russell (right) presenting the State of Nevada Seal to the founder of the Nevada State Museum, Clark J. Guild in 1951. —Nevada State Museum file photo

Museum Past Pages . . . Nevada State Seal - 1951

"In 1867 a hand-painted, stained-glass replica of the State Seal of Nevada was built into the skylight of the House of Representatives chamber in the U.S. Capitol, along with those of other States. Upon the chamber's renovation in 1949, the Seal was presented to Governor Charles H. Russell by David Lynn, Capitol architect. Governor Russell in turn presented it to the Nevada State Museum for safe-keeping. The 21-inch diameter replica now serves as a focal point in the State Museum entrance hall, having been installed in a prominent position and equipped with back lighting to bring out its design and coloring. It is a handsome and fitting addition to Museum displays."

Biennial Report of the Directors of the Nevada State Museum To the Governor of the State of Nevada, For the Period July 1, 1950, to June 30, 1952, page 9.

(Editor's Note: The hand-painted, stained glass State Seal of Nevada is still today exhibited in a prominent place in the entrance of the Museum.)

History Department Sponsors Nevada History Day Award

The Nevada State Museum's History Department sponsored The Frances Humphrey History Day Award for the second year. The Nevada History Day competitions were held on April 1, 2000 at the Nevada State Library and Archives in Carson City. This year the \$200 prize was shared by two entries.

Katherine Buffington of Eureka County High School with her exhibit *Nevada—Prosperity and Statehood* was one of the winners. The award also went to Adeline Callaghan and Julie Etchegaray of Eureka County High School for their exhibit on *The Great Depression*. These two winners will be going on to the national competition at the University of Maryland in early June.

Nevada History Day is sponsored by the Nevada Humanities Committee and individuals or organizations interested in sponsoring a prize can contact them at (775) 784-6587.

Support Your State Museum

Buy a membership for yourself or a friend.

CATEGORIES

Student & Senior Citizen — \$15.00

NSM Newsletter, 15% Museum Store discount, free admission to all Division of Museums and History facilities statewide, invitations to previews, receptions and other NSM sponsored events

Regular — \$25.00

Regular and all of the following categories receive Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, NSM Newsletter, 15% Museum Store discounts, free admission to all Division of Museums and History facilities statewide, invitations to previews, receptions and other NSM events

Family — \$35.00

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Contributing — \$100.00

Department Fellow — \$250.00

Patron — \$500

Benefactor — \$1000.00

CORPORATE

Regular — \$250.00

Sustaining — \$500.00

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIPS will be awarded to individuals or organizations that have made substantial contributions to the department or one of its agencies.

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NSM NEWSLETTER

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dmla.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/dmla/newsletters/mus.htm

Nevada State Museum's Present-Future Known Loans

(Editor's note: Following our last issue of the *Newsletter's* article on where we have placed traveling exhibits, we also have artifacts and natural history materials curated by the Nevada State Museum in Carson City presently on loan as of May 1, 2000 and later (all items listed are in Nevada except as noted) at:

Attorney General's Office, Carson City
B&O Railroad Museum, Baltimore, Maryland
Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Gardnerville
Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah
Churchill County Museum and Archives, Fallon
City of Reno, City Hall, Reno
Comstock Hotel & Casino, Reno
Dayton School Museum, Dayton
East Ely Depot Museum, Ely
Eureka Sentinel Museum
Fort Churchill State Park, Lyon County
Fourth Ward School Museum, Virginia City
Galena Park, Washoe County Parks
Genoa Court House Museum, Genoa
Governor's Mansion, Carson City
Governor's Office, Carson City
Humboldt County Museum, Winnemucca
Legislative Council Bureau, Carson City (2 locations within)
Lt. Governor's Office, Carson City
Lyon County Museum, Yerington
Marzen House Museum, Lovelock
Mineral County Museum, Hawthorne
Mormon Station State Historic Park, Genoa
Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko
Nevada Historical Society, Reno
Nevada State Library & Archives, Carson City
Nevada State Museum & Historical Society, Las Vegas
Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City
Nevada Supreme Court Clerk's Office, Carson City
Oakland Museum, Oakland, California
Pyramid Lake Visitors Center
Robert's House Museum, Carson City
Secretary of State's Office, Carson City
State of Nevada Building and Grounds Department
State Treasurer's Office, Carson City
Storey County Volunteer Fire Department, Storey County
The Way It Was Museum, Virginia City
Tonopah Mining Park, Tonopah
United States Department of Treasury—U.S. Mint, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
USS Nevada Submarine
Warren (fire) Engine Company Museum, Carson City
Washoe County Parks & Recreation Rancho San Rafael Park
White Pine County Museum, Ely

Next Newsletter Deadline

The next deadline for the *Nevada State Museum Newsletter* will be Friday, August 4, for the September/October issue. Mailing will be made for delivery by June 30. Please address all communications to Newsletter, Nevada State Museum, 600 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701.

Summer Reading to Challenge the TV

Books in the Museum Store are also available by phone or mail from the Nevada State Museum, 600 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701. Visa, MasterCard, Discover and Am Ex are accepted in telephone orders at (775) 687-3810. Postage and handling is \$3.00 for each book ordered. Membership discount of 15% applies.

Reviewed by MARION VOGLER
Nevada State Museum Docent

A PIECE OF BAILING WIRE: HOMESTEADING IN THE DESERT by Grace Loomis Odell. The Loomis family lived three years (1914-1917) in the Mojave Desert developing the Circle-7 ranch just north of their own homestead. The primary goal was experimenting with crops that would thrive in the desert helped by the assets of underground water and long growing seasons. An equally compelling goal was the promise of strengthening family unity through working together and depending upon one another.

This volume is autobiographical in that the author is Grace, the middle daughter of five. What emerges is a compassionate exploration of the memory of childhood—funny, vulnerable, sympathetic—and the precise documentation of the makeup of a desert community.

Ira Kingsley, the father, needed to "prove up" on a desert claim five miles east of Daggett near the Mojave River or lose the claim altogether. In addition, his correspondence with the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., prompted him to try growing select crops in desert conditions.

Flo, the step-mother (whose marriage to Ira within a year of his wife's death shocked the locals and family members) was content to raise her newly acquired five daughters in the familiar environs of Los Angeles along with all the comforts and conveniences. Flo endures three years of rural drudgery, but her longing for home predominates and her sense of dislocation is ever present. Nevertheless, she does not falter in devotion to her husband or in absolute focus on what is best for each of the children. She is an admirable human being whose moral stature expands throughout the story.

This book serves as a time capsule for the primitive majesty and eternal rhythm of desert life and for people wanting very much to make something out of nothing through planning and hard work. Beautifully textured family life, dearly loved animals, enterprising and interesting people, the highs and lows of human nature—all are here. *A Piece of Baling Wire* adds to the treasury of our history.

Photos of family, ranch, and the desert community are excellent. Grace Loomis Odell's Epilogue details family history and gives a summary of each sister's adult life. As readers, we have come to appreciate this family, and we hate to lose sight of them.

Odell, an archaeologist, has excavated prehistoric sites, travelled extensively, and has contributed articles and photography to such publications as *Natural History* and *National Geographic*. She has worked at many museums including the Nevada State Museum. What a pleasure it would be to read further in her life beyond this book.

The appendices include documents from Barstow Union High School, Minneola School District, Willis Well, and various letters. The Index is comprehensive.

180 pages \$13.00

NEVADA'S PAUL LAXALT—A MEMOIR by Paul Laxalt. Born in Reno, Nevada, in 1922, Paul Laxalt grew up in Carson City, the smallest capital city in the country. He enjoyed a stable and consistent educational environment in high school and excelled in sports. He enlisted in the Army after the third year at Santa Clara University and soon entered combat in the Philippines. When WWII ended, Laxalt completed law school at Denver University.

Paul Laxalt began public service in 1954 as District Attorney for Ormsby County, Nevada. He was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1962, Governor in 1966, and United States Senator in 1974 and 1980. As General Chairman of the National Republican Party in 1983, he continued his friendship with, and work for, Ronald Reagan. Laxalt's efforts in negotiating with President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines were recognized by a grateful President Reagan.

A clarity of purpose permeates this book. The memoir progresses from Laxalt's modest beginnings within an immigrant Basque family in Carson City to working among the politically powerful in Washington, D.C. Questions about who and what are important in his life are explored. The first half of the book covers his personal and professional lives including governorship and running for the U.S. Senate. The second half emphasizes the Reagan years and Laxalt's role as "First Friend of the President."

There are photos of family and friends throughout, but the ones of Senator Laxalt with President Reagan are of particular interest.

The writing is earnest and upbeat. While telling his story, Senator Laxalt documents a few decades of the national experience.

393 pages \$27.50

Check the Museum's Store for more books
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SEARCHLIGHT

GOLD IN THEM HILLS

ROMANCING NEVADA'S PAST

PRESERVING THE GLORY DAYS

FROZEN IN SILVER

GEORGE WINGFIELD

A HISTORY OF BEATTY NEVADA



TONOPAHA'S JIM BUTLER

Nevada State Museum

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Museum open daily 8:30 am - 4:30 pm • Museum Store open daily 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

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