

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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Capital Improvements Begin

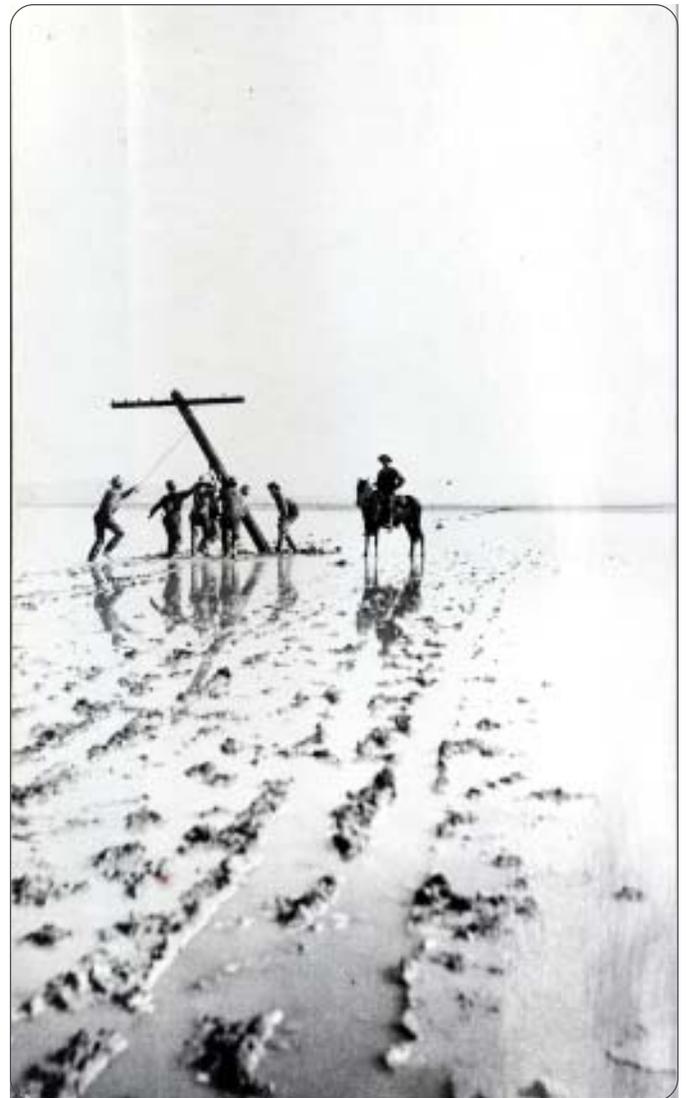
The new year marks the beginning of renovations at the Nevada State Museum, culminating two years of planning and fundraising. The legislature approved approximately two million dollars for facility improvements. These funds address critical needs for new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment; asbestos abatement; new floor coverings; fire sprinklers; exterior improvements; and restoration of the historic mint. Funds also cover the cost of planning a new entrance on the north side of the main building to improve access for visitors, including those with disabilities.

Construction initially impacts a portion of the first and second floors of the main building, representing approximately 20 percent of the museum's total exhibits. Exhibits closed for renovation include "Regional Geology" and long-term anthropology exhibits on the second floor. Most exhibits including "Under One Sky," the mine, coin press, ghost town, weapons, *USS Nevada* silver service, natural history, and others, are not effected by initial construction. Eighty percent of exhibits remain open, and the museum maintains regular hours throughout construction.

The geology exhibit re-opens June 2004. Portions of the anthropology exhibits reappear in "Under One Sky" in the future. Internationally recognized Dat So La Lee baskets receive high priority for public viewing. These find a new prominent location in "Under One Sky" in June 2004.

Capital improvements funded by this appropriation all conclude by June 2005. Over the next one and a half years, the museum faces a tremendous task, accommodating construction and raising funds for exhibits. But, the work addresses critical needs, which is exciting for the State of Nevada. In the end, visitors will enjoy a more accessible, up to date, and attractive museum.

What's Happening?



See page 5
for the story of the transcontinental
telephone line completion.

—Photo courtesy Nevada Historical Society



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The museum is an agency of the
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Become a member and support the Nevada State Museum. Membership includes free admission to all seven state museums, a 15% discount in all museum stores, the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, newsletters, and selected invitations to exhibit openings, educational programs, and events.

- Individual \$35
- Family \$50
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- Contributing \$250
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- For seniors 65+ who simply want free admission and a 15% discount and not the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, a special senior membership is available at only ... \$20

Other facilities included in your membership are:

- Nevada State Historical Society, Reno
- Nevada State Museum & Historical Society, Las Vegas
- Lost City Museum, Overton
- Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City

Views of the Past



Two Navy Waves inspect the silver dollars in the *USS Nevada* Magnesium chest before it is flown to the ship from N.A.S. Alameda, California in October, 1944.

U.S.S. Nevada Magnesium Chest To Go On Display

—See adjoining story on Page Three

'USS Nevada Hits the Jackpot!'

By ROBERT NYLEN
Nevada State Museum Curator of History

The unique *U.S.S. Nevada* battleship magnesium chest will go on display in the museum's history gallery this year. The chest made in 1944 at Basic Magnesium in Henderson was made to hold over 2,000 silver dollars to be presented to the crew of the ship. Each member of the ship was formally presented with a souvenir "cartwheel" at the Silver Dollar Ceremony.

Some of the dollars were minted at the Carson City Mint. The chest and the silver dollars were a gift from the Governor of Nevada E.P. Carville and the citizens of the state to show the *Nevada* and her men how proud the state was of her combat accomplishments in the European Theater of action and particularly of her actions at the Normandy Landings. The chest was sent to Captain H.L. Grosskopf on November 19, 1944 by Carville. After the chest was emptied it became a permanent decoration of the wardroom.

The silver dollars awarded as souvenirs were mounted by the men themselves, on belt buckles, on plaques, on necklaces, and watch chains.

The chest was returned to the state after the war in 1946 by the U.S. Navy.



Stephanie Painter

Anthropology's Summer Intern

Stephanie Painter came to work last summer as an intern in the Anthropology Program through the California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc., Youth Opportunity Grant Project and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. This was Stephanie's first job, and, with supervision from Roz Works and Gene Hattori, she proved herself a quick learner and a big help, with her computer skills and hard work. A very bright and personable young lady, entering her first year at Carson High School, she should do very well. She is missed by the Anthropology staff..



Centennial coin members from the TCID are Lyman McConnell, Ray Peterson, Ernest Schank, Richard Harriman, and Jerry Blodget. In the background is Ken Hopple, NSM coin press operator.

Centennial Coin Minted at NSM

A beautiful silver coin will be one of the lasting mementoes of the Newland Project Centennial celebration, recently minted in Carson City at the old Federal Mint.

The front of the coin is a depiction of the dam at Lahontan Reservoir and was designed by architect Frank Woodliff, III. The back of the coin is a beautifully detailed rendition of the old State of Nevada seal, with the smoke from the factory and the smoke from the train going in opposite directions.

The coins cost \$30.00 and are available from the TCID offices in Fallon by calling 775-423-2141.

Coming Events

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM

February 24: *Where the Heck is Mormon Station?* by Jeff Kintop, Nevada State Library and Archives.

March 23: *Victorian Fashion* by Jan Loverin, Curator of Clothing and Textiles at the NSM Marjorie Russell Center.

April 27: To be announced.

May 25: *Lovelock Chinatown Gold Coins*, by Eugene Hattori, Ph.D. Curator of Anthropology at the Nevada State Museum.

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.

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

February 11: Railroad songs sung by Fremont Elementary Students.

March 10: To be announced.

April 14: To be announced.

Programs at the Nevada State Railroad Museum are held in the Interpretive Center at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, and are sponsored by the Friends of the Museum. Admission is free.

Museum Past Pages

NSM Helps Restore Jarbidge Community Theater Curtain



Peter Herlan, acting director of the Museum, and Docent Thelma Calhoun admire the restored curtain. —(Photo taken in July 1974)

The center of the community in almost every boom town in Nevada's bonanza mining days was a theater.

Since the rich ore strikes invariably took place in the remote and often nearly impossible reaches of the state, the shows which came into the area provided the chief contact with big-city civilization. That contact was especially appreciated because the mining camps attracted the same big names who gave the professional performances they put on in the cities.

Like the towns they served, the theaters were generally abandoned after the boom, leaving only their skeletons as reminders of the earlier exciting days.

A partial exception to that rule was Jarbidge. Near the Idaho border in northwestern Nevada, Jarbidge had been a roaring gold-mining community between 1909 and 1918. After the boom, the theater fell silent. But before it became victimized entirely by neglect, someone rolled up the canvas curtain and stored it at the back of the stage. In 1963 the curtain was discovered. When it

was unrolled, it was found to have many holes in it, some from cigarette burns. The once-bright colors had faded.

Thelma Calhoun, Carson City artist and wife of the now retired director of the Nevada State Museum, James W. Calhoun, suggested it be restored. The people of Jarbidge agreed—"and I got stuck with the job," Thelma said.

The curtain, produced by an unknown itinerant painter, was brought to the museum. "Aside from the holes," said Mrs. Calhoun, "the curtain had badly frayed edges. The only way I could handle the job was to lay the whole thing flat on the floor and mend it with a portable sewing machine."

After the repair work was done, Mrs. Calhoun restored the painting on the curtain, carefully following the original style and design of the unknown painter.

Last week July 2, 1974, the curtain was taken to its home in Jarbidge, where the community hall also has been restored.

(This article appeared in the *Nevada Appeal* in July, 1974.)

New in the History Gallery

Transcontinental Telephone Line 1915

“Mr. Watson — Come Here — I Want to See You”

In the winter of 1913-14 construction began on the Transcontinental Telephone Line across northern Nevada. Fluctuations in weather and the irregular landscape made this a tremendous challenge. After months of grueling labor the final pole needed to connect the line was installed on June 17, 1914 at Wendover, on the border between Nevada and Utah. The completion of this line was one of the great technological achievements of the era.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, was invited to take part in the first transcontinental telephone call on January 15, 1915. Bell was on the line in New York and used a duplicate of his original 1876 telephone to speak to his former assistant Thomas Watson in 1876, “Mr. Watson — come here — I want to see you.” Watson replied that it would take a bit longer this time to comply.

This section of the Transcontinental Telephone line can be found in the second floor history gallery.

Photo right: The celebration that took place when the telephone line was completed at the border of Nevada and Utah near Wendover.

Photo below: Taking supplies, and we assume, the chow to the workers in the field stringing the telephone line across the barren portions of Nevada.

—Photos are from the Nevada Historical Society



We Receive a Letter

Kathi Baker
Nevada State Museum
Carson City, NV 89701
Dear Ms. Baker:

Please accept our sincere thank you for the wonderful Carson City Mint photograph and wonderful Carson City silver dollar and commemorative coins. We were very pleasantly surprised to receive your Sunday afternoon September 7th phone call at the big coin show weekend. It has become a family tradition to visit the museum every spring to view the Carson City silver dollar collection, and other beautiful treasures at the museum. Not in our wildest imaginings did we believe we would receive the phone call from you telling us we had won the grand prize. I remember admiring it in the lobby that day, and bought tickets with the sole purpose of supporting a place we have come to love very much.

The photograph sits on our mantel and we see something different every day in it. We think about the people who were in the photo that day, and hope their lives were good. The mint stands proud, and I look at the trees and admire them when we visit. For us, the museum is a happy place to visit.

It was a cold, snowy April day when I bought those tickets, and in early September your call brought back spring memories. We hold a special place in our heart for Carson City.

Please extend our thank you to the people associated with creating this gift, and the wonderful carpenters who carefully created the shipping box which is beautifully made. We have saved it as well. We will treasure your gift and pass it down in our family and continue the tradition of remembering the Mint, and the people attached to it.

Wishing you a wonderful winter season, a blessed Thanksgiving and joyous holiday season.

Sincerely, Robert and Marsha Anderson Landau,
Alamo, California

New Book Takes Fresh Look At Historic Carson City Mint

Nevada author Rusty Goe shares his fascination and love for the Carson City Mint and the 111 coin issues minted between 1870 and 1893 in a new book called *The Mint on Carson Street: A Tribute to the Carson City Mint & A Guide to a Complete Set of "CC" Coins*.

Goe's book takes the reader back to the days of the Comstock Lode. The Carson City Mint's story is told in perspective with events taking place in San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and other locations around the world that impacted the life and eventual demise of the mint on Carson Street. Readers will meet other people such as mint founder Abe Curry, mint employees, politicians, bankers, and other citizens who were vital to the mint.

This excellent work is available at the museum store for \$69.95.

Message From Our Director, Jim Barmore

Thanks for contributing to the *Annual Appeal 2003!* The fund drive raises critical support for programs and services in this time of need. This year we're focusing on our education program. We're hiring the museum's first curator of education to lead the program, but no budget exists for school tour supplies and outreach materials for use in classrooms. Donations are steadily arriving, but we're short of meeting our goal of \$8,000. You can still make a contribution. If you need more information, please contact me at 687-4810, ext. 226.



Ray Geiser spoke to the Friends of the Museum at a recent meeting and took them for a tour through the changes in the galleries.

History Gallery Nears Completion

By RAY GEISER

Nevada State Museum Exhibits Manager

The Exhibit Program has been had at work completing the final details on the history gallery. Additional artifacts and photographs are being placed in exhibit cases and the gallery walls to tell some of the stories that make up Nevada's history. Some of the original graphic panels have been removed to new locations where they can be more easily read. This has also alleviated some of the congestion in areas where space is tight.

Every effort has been made to bring the exhibit into compliance with the American Disabilities Act. Text has been lowered and light levels improved. Some of the original cases have been modified to meet these standards. Knee high railings will replace the 'Please Keep Off' signs on the various pedestals and platforms.

A prototype bench is being built by Silver State Industries that will be the predecessor for new benches used throughout the entire museum. The first one will be appearing in the history gallery, providing seating for visitors next to the exhibit on transportation and communication at the turn of the century.

The Exhibits Program wishes to thank everyone involved with this project for their time, commitment and input to help bring the history gallery to completion.

The Story Behind the Beginning of the NSM Docent Council

The following is a letter written by Mimi Rodden on the start of the Nevada State Museum Docent Council at the request of Jack Gibson, editor of this Newsletter.

About the Docent Council¹ as we used to call it, when I moved to Carson City (from Reno) I was active in Republican politics. That same year Governor Paul Laxalt² asked me if I could give some time to helping the Nevada State Museum. Perhaps start a guild or support group of some kind. I felt the Nevada State Museum needed help. These were the days prior to state financial help. The Carson City Mint facility was the sole state museum and Carson City was beginning to grow. After meeting with several people with strong ties to the converted U.S. Mint and reviewing the Museum Board of Directors goals we had an exploratory meeting _____³ five ladies plus Jim Calhoun. Tom Watson and Jim Calhoun were the only men giving counsel to the fledgling group. We had strong support from most of the state board members, total support from Acting Director Jim Calhoun, and good support from the remaining members of the Guild family.

At our first meeting it was argued that the group needed some formal training, volunteer a reasonable number of hours and include men.

With these three simple goals in mind the group was begun. Mimi Rodden was elected temporary chairman. General election to be held in approximately six months, start training programs, work with Nevada State Museum Board and develop by laws. Establish reasonable programs to support and expand the museum's role both on site and off site. Kits to again be taken into the schools, special programs for expanded membership, help with the various in-house departments all done with serious training with most teachers coming from outside the museum and specialists in chosen fields. Staffing the gift shop was a task readily absorbed, and keeping better archives for the NSM.

As I remember, the original group was Gloria Gunn, Alice List, Mimi Rodden, Thelma Calhoun (to design docent logo and pin). Our next step was to enlist the support of potential docents. Bill Crowell worked with us on by-laws. The fledgling group expanded and many of the original docents were either old time Nevadans or people who had demonstrated a great interest in Nevada history. Details of the growth of the docent program would make a wonderful story by itself. We started with such a relish and began to do so much that the state board really didn't know what to do with us. To the best of my ability most of the following names were involved in becoming docents near the beginning of the program. I may have omitted some important founding members, but the original group I feel is complete: Marge Cordain, Seville Lee, Ellen Couch, Carolyn Opitz, Herb and Norma Splatt, Jack and Margie Gibson, Mary Guild, MaryKatherine Johnston, June Miller, Mary Parish, Bill and Hope LaComb, Marion Arkel and Marion Wells.

As the years passed membership expanded and a few dropped out as usually happens with the core area extremely dedicated. The silver docent pins were awarded for the first one hundred hours and the turquoise stones added each year

represented an additional one hundred volunteer hours. I have no idea how many hours have been given on behalf of the docent program but that would be an interesting figure if the figures can be found.

¹ *The Docent Council was renamed Friends of the Museum recently to meet federal requirements for income tax exemption.*

² *Paul Laxalt was governor from 1967 to 1970.*

³ *The actual dates have escaped the memory of the author.*

Meet the Chairwoman of the Friends of the Museum



Pat Puchert

I was born in San Francisco. My father had immigrated when he was 16 from Canada and was with the San Francisco police department. My mother's family had immigrated from Ireland in the mid-1800s and settled in Benicia, the first capital of American California. My mother was born and raised there, moving to San Francisco as a young woman.

I graduated from Cal State San Francisco with both a BA and an MA. I later took a second graduate course at the College of Notre Dame. I taught for a suburban school district on the coast for 22 years. I took two years off and taught in Japan in 1963. I married my husband Serge in 1968 and our son was born in 1971.

In 1971 we also bought a house in Incline Village and began to realize we wanted to live in Nevada. In 1980 we bought our home in Carson City and Serge took an early retirement. I taught at TMCC for 12 years after we moved here.

I had thyroid surgery in 1976 and decided to retire afterwards. We had moved to Reno for 15 years previously, but in 2001 we moved back to our house here in Carson City.

I love the Nevada State Museum. Many an afternoon I spent with my son visiting the museum when he was growing up here.

I look forward to the remodeling and the new changes in our museum.



MARCH: WOMEN'S MONTH



The Nevada State Museum pays tribute to those courageous women who were instrumental in settling the West

On the shelves of the museum store a host of books provide insight into the impact of women on western history. Among these are:

- Covered Wagon Women, Volumes 1 through 11
 - A Mine of Her Own • Pioneer Women
- Twenty Miles From a Match • Golden Gravel • Ten Years in Nevada
- Comstock Women • Sarah Winnemucca • Dressed for the Photographer

ALSO AVAILABLE:

- Native American Jewelry • Wildflower Jewelry • T-Shirts

Nevada State Museum

600 N. Carson St. • Carson City, NV 89701 • (775) 687-4810

Museum open daily 8:30 am - 4:30 pm • Museum Store open daily 9:00 am - 4:30 pm • Eleanor Phillips, Store Mgr.

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM
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