

Spring 2009
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Mint Edition

Newsletter of the Nevada State Museum, Carson City
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

Come Celebrate!

New Concourse Opens May 14th

by Jim Barmore, Museum Director

It's time to celebrate! The grand opening of the museum's new connecting concourse is set for Thursday, May 14, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Plan to attend the culmination of a shared vision that began a decade ago.

The concept of a structure linking museum buildings dates back to the late 1990s when the State of Nevada purchased the former FIB building just north of the museum. The building, now known as the North Building, currently houses the Under One Sky exhibit. The concept was founded on the clear advantages of creating an enclosed walkway between buildings. Such a structure would improve visitor safety, comfort, and access, while uniting the museum. The idea grew later into a larger vision, encompassing improvements for disabled access and the famous underground mine exhibit. The design of the structure took on the look of a stylized mine head frame, reflecting the mission of the museum and heritage of the state.

In time, the vision was embraced by all levels of government and it endured the arduous budget process. The perseverance and growth of a shared vision is a testament to the museum's broad support and value for the state. Funds were finalized in the spring of 2007, when economic conditions were very different from today. Construction commenced in October 2007.

The now completed concourse elevates the museum's standing as one of the best mid-sized museums in the country. The distinctive design is intriguing, creating an attraction for drawing visitors. The contemporary style suggests the museum is current and up to date. The structure unifies and completes the complex. Visitors now enjoy a single entry point, enhancing their introduction and orientation. The structure simplifies the flow

through galleries and buildings, reducing confusion. It provides new spaces for staging tour groups and exhibiting large artifacts not seen before. A ride down the elevator takes visitors on a tour of the underground mine exhibit, which remains otherwise unchanged. An expanded museum store appeals to shoppers of Nevada heritage merchandise.

With the addition of the concourse, the architecture of the museum complex more fully reflects our mission. The historic Carson City Mint represents the past. The

contemporary design of the concourse represents the present. We are about the past all the way up to the present. We make the past and present relevant to our future.

The opening of the concourse occurs at a time of economic hardship. In a sense, the concourse signifies our future and optimism in the museum's prevailing purpose. Please join us in celebrating the museum's enduring value and the culmination of a shared vision for the museum, Carson City, and Nevada.



Timbers to Glass:



Thank You Annual Appeal Donors

The Board of Museums and History, museum staff, and volunteers thank our Annual Appeal contributors for standing by the museum during these challenging economic times. Donations safeguard irreplaceable collections, produce engaging exhibits, and support inspiring education programs. Contributions also serve as valuable endorsements of the museum's role in educating residents, school children, and tourists about what makes Nevada unique from any other place in the world.

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Insights Into the Architect's Vision

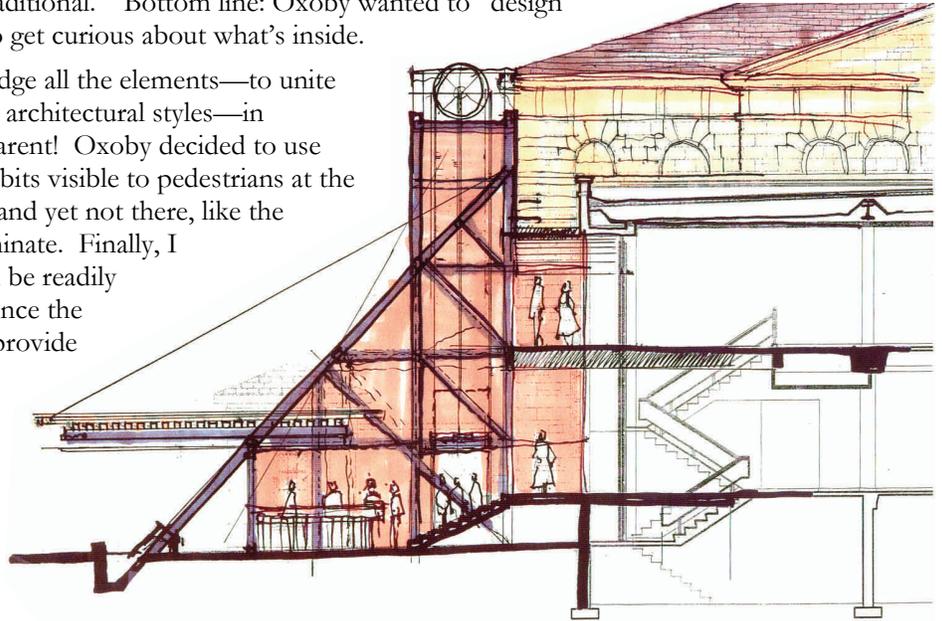
by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education

I had the privilege of interviewing Robbie Oxoby, Architect for the museum's new central concourse. I wanted to understand his vision, his passion, and how he overcame any challenges presented in the design and building of this impressive structure. Oxoby's face began to light up as he painted a picture of his dream: "to create a structure that is unique, minimalist, clear, straight-forward, yet relevant."

Oxoby's challenge was to design something that would grab the eye and command attention—the antithesis of "just another building, in the sense of being conventional or traditional." Bottom line: Oxoby wanted to "design something fun." He wanted people passing by to get curious about what's inside.

The greatest obstacle was figuring out how to bridge all the elements—to unite the buildings without overshadowing the existing architectural styles—in particular, the U.S. Mint. The answer was transparent! Oxoby decided to use glass to open up the courtyard and make the exhibits visible to pedestrians at the street level. "I wanted a structure that was there and yet not there, like the clear glaze over a painting—to unify but not dominate. Finally, I wanted something that would explain history and be readily identifiable as related to the story of Nevada—hence the mine frame to transport people to the mine and provide access to the upper floors."

Does it work? Voltaire once said, "History is a series of accumulated imaginative inventions." Time will tell if it speaks to you.



Right: One of Robbie Oxoby's original concept drawings for the NSM central concourse.



Headframe!

by Sue Ann Monteleone,
Museum Registrar

Photograph titled "Christening the Chicago Florence Mine, Goldfield, Nev. July 18th 1907" by P.E. Larson.

P. E. Larson was a professional photographer in Goldfield, Nevada from 1905 to 1908, during the heyday of the mining boom.

A headframe is the structural frame above an underground mine shaft. The wheels, gears and pulleys hoist ore buckets and cages built to carry workmen from the depths of the mine.

In this photo many of the townspeople including ladies and children of Goldfield are dressed up for a celebration of the new mine.



Shane Shafer of Artistic Wildlife Gallery Taxidermy, Dr. George Baumgardner, and the really big fish.

Museum "Catches" a Fish

THIS BIG

by Dr. George Baumgardner,
Curator of Natural History

In February the museum received donation of an exquisite replica of the world record for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, based upon a 39-inch specimen weighing 41 lbs. Mr. Johnny Skimmerhorn caught this amazing fish from Pyramid Lake in 1925. For many years, one could see this trout displayed in the window of a Reno business. The museum received the specimen in 1941 and placed it on display in the early 1950s. Owing to its age and the manner in which it was kept before we received it, this specimen appears discolored and its fins are chipped. Nevertheless, it remains a valuable biologic and historic specimen.

Because of its status as a world record, the "big fish" is the subject of information requests received by the museum. Last summer, Reno, Nevada resident Shane Shafer contacted the museum. Mr. Shafer works for Artistic Wildlife Gallery Taxidermy, owned by Mr. Ron Kelly and based in Rockwall,

Texas. The gallery produces fish replicas and specializes in world records. Shane wished to study our original mount to produce a more accurate replica. In exchange, Ron and Shane kindly offered to make a replica for the museum. Based upon this study, what is written on the animal, and their extensive knowledge of this species, Ron and Shane recreated what it would have looked like when caught. Mr. Fred Crosby of Crosby Lodge, Pyramid Lake, Sutcliffe, Nevada, commissioned the primary replica, which debuted at the lodge during its 2009 President's Day Fishing Derby. The "big fish" awed over 400 anglers!

Our new specimen should be on temporary display in the museum by the time you read this and will eventually become a prominent piece in our future permanent exhibits.

I wish to thank Artistic Wildlife Gallery very much for their kind donation. It is of very fine quality and I am confident it will contribute greatly to our exhibits.

Historical and Anthropological Views of Lake Tahoe's Cave Rock

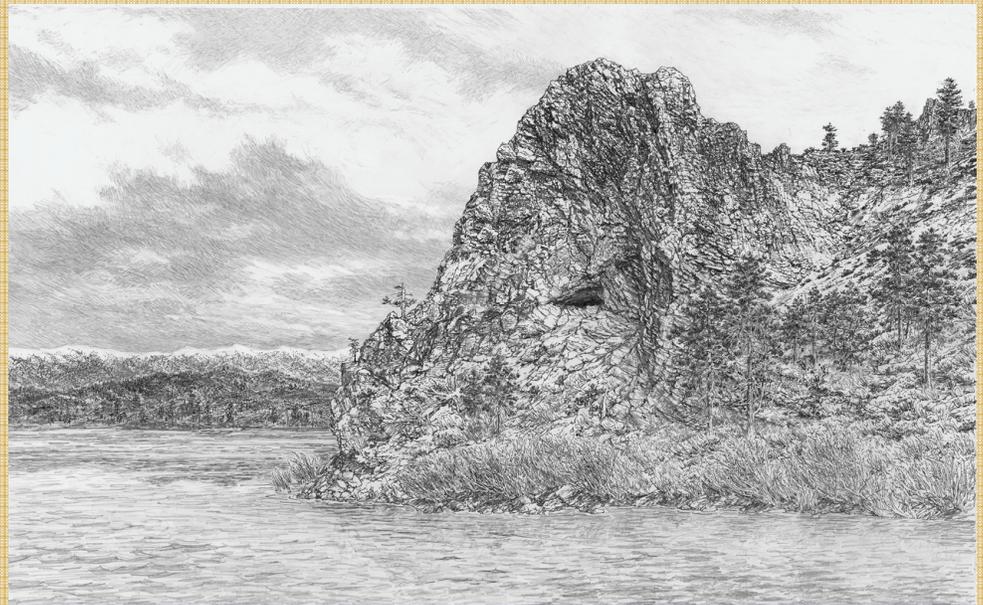
by Dr. Eugene Hattori,
Curator of Anthropology

Nevada State Museum Anthropological Paper Number 26 is titled "The Two Worlds of Lake Tahoe: A Report on Cave Rock" by noted anthropologist, Professor Warren L. d'Azevedo, University of Nevada, Reno, emeritus. This monograph chronicles differing perceptions of *De-ek Wadápús* ("rock standing gray") also known as Cave Rock. Traditional Washoe know that it was utilized by formidable "waterbabies" who lived beneath Lake Tahoe, and it was also a place of spiritual power. Cave Rock remains a very sacred place but best avoided by all, excepting Shamans who understand the rock's spiritual complexities.

Euroamerican tourists admired Cave Rock's imposing silhouette and the fanciful early-day stories attributed to the formation. Cave Rock also posed a barrier to landlocked tourists and teamsters. Euroamerican engineers, however, provided the following solutions: a wooden cantilever roadway on the Lake Bigler Toll Road perilously perched around the rock and above the lake; a 1931 highway tunnel through the rock; and a second bore in 1957. When expressed to Euroamericans, Washoe comments on these undertakings were ignored.

From the 1980s Cave Rock became a nationally renowned rock climbing site with routes initially marked by pitons, bolts and hangers, chalk stains, and, later, even a concrete floor. As a result of concerns expressed by the Washoe Tribe regarding the climbers' ever increasing

This agency acknowledges Cave Rock's importance to the Washoe Tribe and actively manages use of the area. NSM Anthropological Paper Number 26 is adapted from Professor d'Azevedo's contribution to the Forest Service management plan.



Cave Rock ca. 3000 B.C.
Illustration by Karen Beyers, © NSM.

use of the rock, and recreational hikers' complaints concerning litter, the US Forest Service eventually adopted a management plan for Cave Rock in 2003.

Grace Dangberg's "Washo Tales," *Nevada State Museum Occasional Paper Number 1*, is cited in the Cave Rock monograph. It contains a number of Washoe stories, including those mentioning Cave Rock and waterbabies. Both NSM publications are available in the Museum store.

REFRESH RENEW RESTORE in 2009!

Be a part of the expansion by volunteering in our brand new Museum Store! Receive a special discount of **25%** for contributing 20 hours or more per month. Choose your shift: 9:00 am – 12:45 pm or 12:45 pm to closing. For more details, contact Museum Store Manager, Charmain Phillips, at: 775/687-4810 ext. 244 or charmain@nevadaculture.org.

The Nevada State Museum in Carson City is an agency of the Division of Museums and History within the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. The museum engages diverse audiences in understanding and celebrating Nevada's natural and cultural heritage.

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The Friends of the Nevada State Museum, a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit organization, supports the museum through volunteer assistance, fundraising, and advocacy. For information contact Bonnie Rieckhoff, Chair at 775/841-2108.

The Nevada State Museum publishes the *Mint Edition* newsletter in collaboration with the Friends of the Nevada State Museum for the purpose of highlighting museum exhibits, education programs, special events, and collection activities. The publication is available on a quarterly basis in January, April, July, and October in print or online at nevadaculture.org. Museum members receive the *Mint Edition* as a benefit of membership.

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Tongue in Cheek vs. Foot in Mouth

by Scott Klette,
Captain Chaos here-

Every week I'm in direct contact with electricians, pipe fitters, carpenters, HVAC technicians, video surveillance, and fire alarm people- to name a few- all of them highly skilled in their professions. These folks are squarely planted in functionality, reality and *practicality*- it's their job to know "how" and "why" because they are "results" driven. Interestingly enough, all of them seem to express an intense interest in museums- especially ours. They sometimes ask me pointed questions about the "why", and this is *part* of what I can tell them...

It was 9 years ago this month that I had the daunting privilege of photographing every known species of butterfly (top and bottom) known to Nevada. Great fun for the first day- but for the *remaining* three weeks and the 1700+ butterfly-kabobs-on-a-stick- it was a **brutal** and time consuming chore. Frustrated and bored to the point of wishing I was home watching a weekend marathon of "Gilligan's Island" re-runs- I asked out loud: "Who give's a rat's "petutie" about these bugs anyway- aside from *you*?"

George Austin, a leading Lepidoptera expert, had been asked this question before. Calm and calculated, he explained that there is very little- if any- known fossil record of butterflies. They are an extremely fragile species, and are the proverbial "canary in a coal mine" indicator for when the environment is circling the drain; they are the first to go. Additionally, he said that there's a lot we can learn about camouflage from these insects as many of them have predator-type markings on the top and bottom of their wings to deter attacks from above *as well as* below...

Then there's the story about the crash-

helmet engineers studying ornithology collections- woodpecker skulls in particular- intent on designing safer helmets for everybody from motorcyclists, bicyclists, skateboarders and skiers to football players and NASCAR drivers. As weird as it sounds- it's comforting to know that some woodpecker gave his all to help keep my head intact when I flop my bike...

And Chris DeWitt, Restoration Supervisor for the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City once told me (relative to steam powered locomotives) that "if you have an ax and a bucket, you can go for a ride" ...now that's what **I call** an "alternative energy" source...

What about that famous Mint Mark "CC" twenty-cent piece...you know, the one that was only made for two years- 1875 and 1876? Was this coin's demise due to being a "quarter look-alike?" Most historians will tell you: "We study history so we can learn from our past." I guess the guys from the U.S Treasury missed that lesson when they started cranking out the "Susan B Anthony" dollar just 103 years later in 1979, '80, and '81- and then *again* in 1999, and **then they did it again** with the "Sacagawea Dollar" in 2000...and they **all still** look like quarters...the public acceptance of these coins- just like the short lived "CC" twenty-cent piece- was a failure.

The simple fact of the matter is that museums collect stuff, and then preserve it- theoretically, **forever**; historical, anthropological, geological and natural history artifacts and specimens...*then* we set upon the very complicated task of educating the public...

Don't let anybody try and tell you that we're searching for the secret to social harmony or a cure for cancer- those puzzles are to be assembled by others...but one thing's for sure: they can't put the puzzles together, **without all of the pieces**...

**Nevada
State
Museum**



www.nevadaculture.org



Celebrating 200 Years:

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Endorses NSM's Commemorative Lincoln Medallion

by Robert Nylen, Curator of History

February 12, 2009 marked the 200th birthday of President Abraham Lincoln. In 2007, Congress established the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC) to plan the nation's celebration to honor his memory. The Nevada State Museum applied to the commission and received its endorsement in support of the museum's commemorative Nevada Lincoln Bicentennial medallion. This special commemorative collector's piece is beautifully crafted making it a unique and wonderful memento of our nation and state's celebration in honor of President Lincoln. The Nevada Lincoln Bicentennial medallion will be minted in both .999 fine silver and copper. The copper medallion is designed to compliment the U.S. Mint's

new four Lincoln penny designs by leaving spaces on the medallion cardholder to place them with the museum's Lincoln medal. The Nevada Lincoln medallion will be minted for the first time on Saturday, April 25 at the Historic Carson City Mint on Coin Press No. 1.

The museum will take advanced orders after April 1st. The silver medallion will sell for \$55.00; the copper set for \$35.00. To place an order today, please call the museum store at 775/687-4810, ext. 234 or 244. The money raised from the sale of the Nevada Lincoln Bicentennial medallion goes to benefit the many programs of the Nevada State Museum. And to learn more about Abraham Lincoln and ALBC, please visit www.abrahamlincoln200.org.

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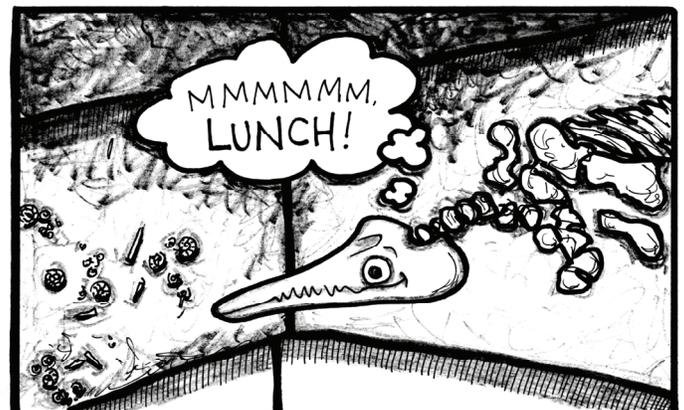
Bretzlaff History Resource Center
775/687-4810, ext. 239 or 240

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775/687-4810, ext. 236

Morgan of the Museum

The Touring Adventures of Morgan S. Dollar, Friend of the Nevada State Museum

by J.D. McGregor 2009





Nevada State Museum

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Visit the Museum

Open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Daily
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,
and New Years

Adults	\$5.00
Seniors (65+)	\$3.00
Children (under 18)	Free
Members	Free



In Honor of President Lincoln

For the COLLECTOR: The NEVADA LINCOLN Bicentennial Medallion.

For the HISTORY BUFF: *Great Speeches Abraham Lincoln.*

*A New Birth of Freedom 1809*2009.*

For the YOUNG STUDENT: The Abraham Lincoln coloring book and the
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Nevada State Museum Store

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