

Mint Edition

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

Summer 2011
Vol. XLI, No. 1

Coming Soon! *My Nevada II* John King's Nature Photography

by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education

"Wildlife or wild scenery—how can you not love it all?" Nevada native, John W. King, certainly does! John and his wife Pat are avid naturalists and museum supporters. Watch for King's upcoming exhibit, *My Nevada II*. His photos portray an intimate glimpse into the life (and personality) of Nevada's wildlife, especially birds. Looking into the eyes of a juvenile Great Horned Owl, one sees a keen predator, alert and aware of the tiniest movement, yet surprisingly cute.

From woodpeckers and hummingbirds to wild horses, King's artistic images invite curiosity into the secret world of Nevada's wildlife and lure visitors into the adjacent Natural History Gallery on the second floor of the museum. This space, referred to as the "Compass Gallery," complements the taxidermy specimens in the Upper Middle Gallery that are a favorite of the younger set. Plans are underway for future development (funding permitting) of the museum's plant and animal exhibits. Stay tuned!



Message from the Director

by Jim Barmore

Comments from visitors describe the museum as “great,” “the best,” or “world-class.” We often hear the phrase, “The best kept secret.” Comments imply that experiences exceeded expectations or that the quality of the museum was a surprise.

Of course, staff would prefer if visitors weren’t surprised—that they already knew of the museum’s high caliber and that awareness and reputation preceded experiences. If more locals and tourists were aware, more visitors would come.

Perhaps, now the public will gain broader awareness of the museum. Budget reductions have brought consolidation of departments in state government. The Department of Cultural Affairs was eliminated. A new department was created, the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. The Division of Museums and History, the Nevada Arts Council, and Nevada Commission on Tourism will merge into one.

Combining the museum with Tourism should help address a critical need for more marketing, particularly to tourists. Usually, we can reach local audiences through press releases to area media. Occasionally, we can raise funds for local advertising. Seldom do we have opportunities to reach tourist audiences, and most museum visitors are tourists.

Budget challenges have brought new opportunities, which I hope will put an end to “the best kept secret.”

Annual Appeal Contributors Give Record Amount

by Jim Barmore, Museum Director

The museum relies on donations to meet basic expenses for education programs, exhibits, and collections—now more than ever before. The Annual Appeal fund drive this last winter was a call for help. The community responded in a big way. Donors dug deep, giving by far the highest amount since the fund drive began more than ten years ago. Thank you for helping the museum to survive these hard times.

Gold Donors \$1,000 & Up

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Luetta Bergevin
Black Rock City
Cliff Dunseth & Bonnie Parnell
Senator Bill Raggio
Northern Nevada Coin

Silver Donors \$500 - \$999

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Beth Miramon
Bud & Bonnie Rieckhoff
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith
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Donors Up to \$499

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Dr. Linda Miller Presents *Helen Stewart Chautauqua July 28*

Helen Jane Wiser Stewart (1854-1926) was a well educated woman of remarkable character. When her husband Archibald, who was 20 years her senior, died of a gunshot wound, she managed the isolated Las Vegas Ranch and her growing family on her own. Helen was pregnant with her fifth child at the time! An astute businesswoman, Helen sold the ranch in 1902 for \$55,000, a move that laid the tracks for the budding railroad town of Las Vegas. Considered to be the “Mother of Las Vegas,” Helen was also an activist for women and the Southern Paiute people.

Dr. Linda Miller presents a costumed Chautauqua interpretation, *Reflections of Early Las Vegas as told by Helen J. Stewart*, at the Nevada State Museum, Thursday, July 28, 2011, from 7:00 – 8:00 pm. Miller’s highly accurate presentation of Helen Stewart is based upon

meticulous research from primary sources. Helen was a “spunky lady,” explains Miller. “Everything I say is from Helen’s own words, which are often funny and quite poetic. Her letters to her daughter in Kansas City give us a detailed picture of society at that time.” The program culminates with a short video clip about Helen’s life and PowerPoint presentation showing Benjamin Victor’s work on the Helen Stewart sculpture to be placed at the Old Mormon Fort in December 2011.

Doors open at 6:00 pm for exhibit viewing in the main building and an opportunity to chat with “Helen Stewart.” **Museum members and children 17 and under are free**; non-member adult admission: \$8.

For more information, contact Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education: dstevenson@nevadaculture.org or 775/687-4810, ext. 237.

Mark Your Calendars for the next speakers in our Francis Humphrey Lecture Series

Doors open at 6 pm for book signing and exhibit viewing in the main building. Lecture at 7 pm.



August 18:
Fred Holabird presents:
*Coins of the Comstock: The
Pioneer Minor Coinage of
Virginia City and the
Comstock*



September 22:
Sue Fawn Chung presents:
The Chinese in Nevada.
Visit Arcadia Publishing
online to learn more about
her [new book](#).



THE NEVADA STATE MUSEUM STORE WANTS YOU AS A VOLUNTEER

Store volunteers receive a 20% discount!

For more information, contact Museum
Store Manager, Charmain Phillips at
775/687-4810 ext. 244 or
charmain@nevadaculture.org

Book Your Merci Train Tour Today! Visit Post-war France without leaving Nevada

by Sue Ann Monteleone, Museum Registrar

Over the past two years, museum staff and volunteers have been researching and improving storage for the Merci Train Collection, an assemblage of gifts sent to Nevada from the citizens of France in 1949. We received a very generous gift of two glass-front steel cabinets from the Nauman Foundation to create a storage display of some of the exquisite artifacts. These cabinets have allowed us to begin a Behind-the-Scenes tour program for small classes and interest groups to see the gifts and learn the story of *La Train de la Reconnaissance*.

Jan Loverin, Curator of our Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center, used some of the Center's funds to have a mannequin specially made to fit a lovely designer wedding dress, received as one of the Merci Train gifts.

NSM received a grant from the Nevada Arts Council enabling Mary Covington, with the help of Exhibits Preparator Jeanette McGregor, to compile a portfolio of some of the beautiful fine art and folk art in the Merci Collection.

Among the artworks is a set of 25 French Railway travel posters that had been rolled and stored for 60 years. Jeff Kintop of Nevada State Library and Archives generously assisted Mary to humidify, unroll, and flatten the posters, and then further had them all scanned by the Archive's Micrographics Department. Now we need a \$2,500 contribution for archival framing materials so that our exhibits department can build frames. Framing the posters with archival materials and Plexiglas both conserves them and allows them to be exhibited. The museum's South Changing Gallery would serve as an ideal exhibition space for the posters; the exhibit could easily travel throughout the state, just as the Merci Train once did.



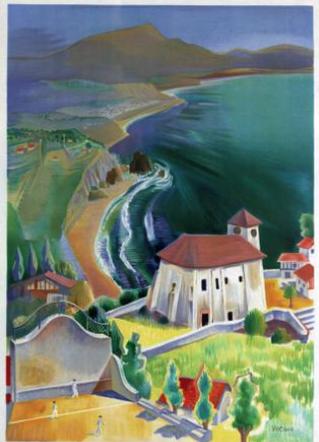
To donate to the Merci Train Project or schedule a Behind-the-Scenes tour, please call Sue Ann Monteleone at 775/687-4810 ext. 240 or email SueAnn.Monteleone@nevadaculture.org.

To view our virtual exhibit about the Merci Train click [HERE](#).



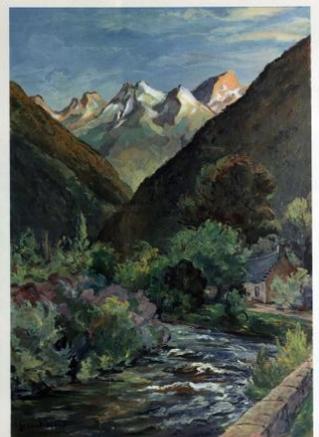
BRETAGNE

SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER FRANÇAIS



CÔTE BASQUE

SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER FRANÇAIS



PYRÉNÉES

SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER FRANÇAIS

AASLH Workshop Learning How to Fall for Fiber

by Jan Loverin, Curator, Marjorie Russell Clothing & Textile Research Center

This past May, the Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Center hosted a three-day Costume and Textile Camp, sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History. AASLH faculty member, Dr. Vicki Berger, proposed using the Center as the location for this event over a year ago. Dr. Berger is retired Curator of Costumes from the Museum of North Carolina; she and I share a history of collaboration, so I was excited to work with her again and proud to showcase our NSM facility.

Twenty-four participants traveled to the Center from as far away as Texas, Idaho, Florida, and Hawaii. Most of the attendees are part of a curatorial staff and needed to learn specifically how to care for their textile collections.

Participants are really burnin' it up!

Burning sample fibers and observing their characteristics can help curators identify the composition of fashion fabrics.



On the first day, Vicki and I led a discussion about the basic element in any fabric—fiber—silk, wool, cotton, linen, plus rayon and other synthetics. Traditional fiber identification involves burning a small piece of fabric, e.g. muslin, and noticing its characteristics. Workshop participants tested 15 different samples, including such unusual fibers as bamboo, fiberglass, camel hair, alpaca, llama, and raw wool. We all enjoyed visibly witnessing the differences between these everyday and extraordinary textile fibers. The afternoon included a weaving demonstration by noted Carson City weaver, Hazel Ryland.

The second day featured a discussion about the importance of fashion in our daily lives. Fashion has historic value because stylistic silhouettes and construction details can be dated. I enjoyed giving participants a “behind-the-scenes” look inside various cabinets while I discussed the creative storage units here at the Center. Vicki talked about the importance of looking at ethnic dress, and we concluded the morning with a brief demonstration of how to dress a mannequin. We finished up in the afternoon with a tour of the main Nevada State Museum complex.

On Saturday, the final day, David Tatum presented a program on various aspects of the museum environment, specifically temperature, lighting, pests, and pollutants. Participants came to the workshop with the intent of becoming better collections’ caretakers. In the end, it was clear that they had fallen in love with fiber.



NSM and Frémont's Lost Cannon

by Eugene M. Hattori, PhD, Curator of Anthropology

Returning visitors to the museum may have noticed that our bronze mountain howitzer barrel is missing from its stand in the Firearms Gallery. Our barrel is presently on loan and displayed by the Deschutes County Historical Society in Bend, Oregon, for a temporary exhibit on John C. Frémont.

Frémont brought a mountain howitzer on his 1843-1844 Oregon to California expedition, and, due to the expedition's dire straits, he left his cannon "for the time" somewhere between Topaz Lake and Bridgeport on January 29, 1844. Our Model 1835 12-pound mountain howitzer barrel is a candidate for Frémont's "lost" cannon with its share of supporters and detractors. Only 13 M-1835 mountain howitzers were produced before the M-1851 mountain howitzer went into production.

We are presently working with the Deschutes County Historical Society, Lakeview Resource Area (Oregon) BLM, Nevada State Office BLM, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and Fremont-Winema National Forest (Oregon) to create a traveling exhibit covering Frémont's Oregon to California expedition. Expect the exhibit here sometime in mid-2012. When the barrel returns, it will be mounted on a replica M-1851 pack carriage made by Lonny Johnson, a Deschutes County Historical Society volunteer. He is honored that his carriage will remain with our barrel after the exhibition; thanks also go out to the Lakeview BLM for arranging this coupling. Current exhibit sponsors include the Lakeview Resource Area BLM and the Nevada State Office BLM.



Photo by Loren Irving, Deschutes County Historical Society volunteer

Left: Lonny Johnson, Deschutes County Historical Society volunteer, with the NSM Howitzer barrel mounted on its "new" cannon carriage. Lonny made this carriage from 19th century US Army plans.

Lower left: John C. Frémont circa 1860.

Below: The NSM Howitzer barrel mounted on its "new" cannon carriage.

For more info on the Deschutes County Historical Society, click [HERE](#).



Photo by Loren Irving, Deschutes County Historical Society volunteer

\$8 adults, children 17
& under and museum
members FREE
8:30am - 4:30pm
FRIDAY & SATURDAY

Carson City Mint COIN SHOW

at the Nevada State Museum
August 26 - 27, 2011

24 dealers, free appraisals, raffle prizes, music, gold panning, and kid's treasure chest. See Coin Press No. 1 in operation and get your commemorative medallions!

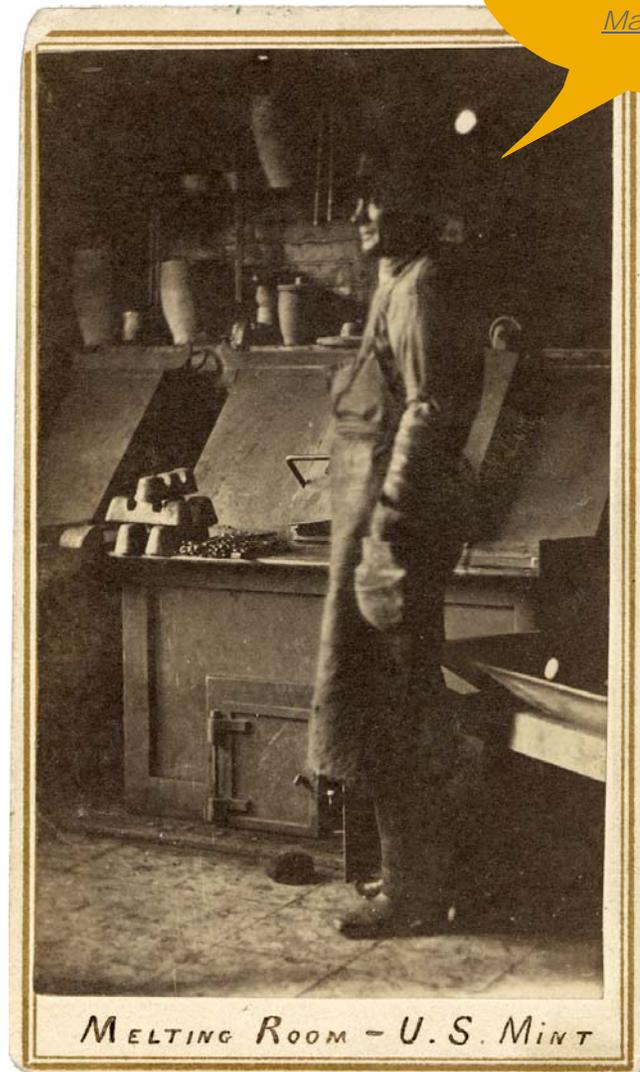


600 N. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada

For more info: www.nevadaculture.org • (775)687-4810



Thanks for voting us "Best of Nevada!" For this year's winners, check out [Nevada Magazine](#) online!



© Nevada State Museum

Right: A rare glimpse into the everyday operations here at the U.S. Mint in Carson City. This photo of a worker in the melting room was taken circa 1880s and was part of a series of souvenir cards available at the time. To see more images like this, visit the Mint History Gallery and check out our great online exhibits [HERE](#).

Funky Fungi: Spores and More!

Our Newest Natural History Program

by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education

“Fungus, yuck!” you might say, but think again. An innovative team of docent scientists, Pat King and Dian Teigler, are proving that fungi can be fun, funky, and fabulous. Consider the facts: Fungi are neither plants nor animals; they comprise their own Kingdom. Fungi can be harmful or beneficial. Fungi are powerful decomposers that help recycle nutrients back into the life cycle. No wonder schools are already signing up to participate in this fall’s newest Exploration for Young Naturalists, *Funky Fungi: Spores and More!*

The goals of *Funky Fungi* are as follows:

1. To help students understand the importance of fungi in the natural world.
2. To demonstrate that what is perceived as “yucky” is not always bad.
3. To show students the diversity of fungi forms.
4. To illustrate the importance of fungi to humans.

Objectives:

After participating in the *Funky Fungi* program, students will be able to do the following:

1. Explain the importance of the nutrient cycle and the role played by fungi.
2. Name two benefits of fungi and two ways they cause harm.
3. Name the class of fungi that causes bread to mold and the one that includes yeast for making bread rise.
4. Tell how *mycorrhizae* (Greek for “fungus roots”) help plant growth (organic farming, composting).

Like other programs in the Young Naturalist series, *Funky Fungi* will include a PowerPoint presentation (Dian’s specialty), Discovery Lab activity, and art project. NMS is grateful to Pat King for her brainstorming and research and to Dian Teigler for her creativity and collaborative efforts in designing the PowerPoint. Both Dian and Pat have advanced degrees in botany and a thorough understanding of the scientific method. Most amazing is their gift to make science “wild and crazy,” authentic and fun. Makes me want to be a kid again!

Below: Trichaptum abietinus, commonly known as “Turkey Tail.” This specimen was found in Washoe Valley on a dead Jeffrey Pine stump.

Background: common bread mold



Photo: Jeanette McGregor, Nevada State Museum

Ready, Set, Go Volunteer!

Get ready to fire up those brain cells! Mark your calendars for September 13-14 and 20-21—four fun-packed days of Volunteer Tour Guide Training. No prior experience necessary. Materials and training provided free of charge for ages 15-99. Topics include *The History of Coin Presses*, *Early Automobiles in the 20th Century*, *The Merce Train Project*, interpreting Native American culture, *Dinosaurs in Nevada*, and new nature program, *Funky Fungi*. For a complete agenda or to register, contact Deborah Stevenson: dstevenson@nevadaculture.org or 775/687-4810, ext. 237.

Museum volunteer, Alyce Dickson, practices her scientific illustration at last fall's Tour Guide Training



Visit the Museum

600 North Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4004

Open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Wednesday through Saturday
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years

Members	Free	Memberships:	\$20 senior
Children (17 & under)	Free		\$35 individual
Adults	\$ 8.00		\$50 family



www.nevadaculture.org

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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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Governor

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Affairs
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Department Director

Division of Museums and History
Peter Barton
Acting Division Administrator

Nevada State Museum
Jim Barmore
Museum Director

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 Cliff Dunseth, Chair at 775/887-1290.

The Nevada State Museum publishes the *Mint Edition* newsletter for the purpose of highlighting museum exhibits, education programs, special events, and collection activities.

The publication is available online at www.nevadaculture.org.

Museum members receive the *Mint Edition* as a benefit of membership.

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