



# Mint Edition

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

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## A Capitol Idea Historic Quilt Comes Home

by Jan Loverin,  
Curator of Clothing & Textiles

After 25 years, the magnificent quilt made for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nevada's Statehood has come home. This quilt, made by Capitol Quilters, has been on display in the State Capitol since its completion in 1989. Curator of History, Bob Nylen, and I thought it was time to bring this gem to the museum and include it in our upcoming exhibition, *Nevada Stories*.

This textile masterpiece features 14 blocks illustrating historic buildings in Carson City, with the center medallion highlighting the Nevada State Capitol. Each block was adapted from original architectural drawings and sketches drawn by Thelma Calhoun, wife of long-time Museum Director, Jim Calhoun.



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*Title Bar Above:* Volunteers eager to learn and share knowledge gathered for NSM's 2013 Winter Tour Guide Training in January. Part of the training took the group to the Carson River for wildlife viewing and a discussion on water usage—a preview of the newest program being developed by Education volunteers.



The quilt construction includes a wide variety of fabric patterns, textures, and colors to represent each historic building. Twenty-one quilters worked approximately 500 hours on the design, assembly, and ornamentation of this quilt. We welcome home this stellar piece of Nevada history.

*Above:* Curator of Clothing and Textiles, Jan Loverin, next to the 125th Anniversary Quilt.

*Left:* The centerpiece of the quilt features the Nevada Capitol.

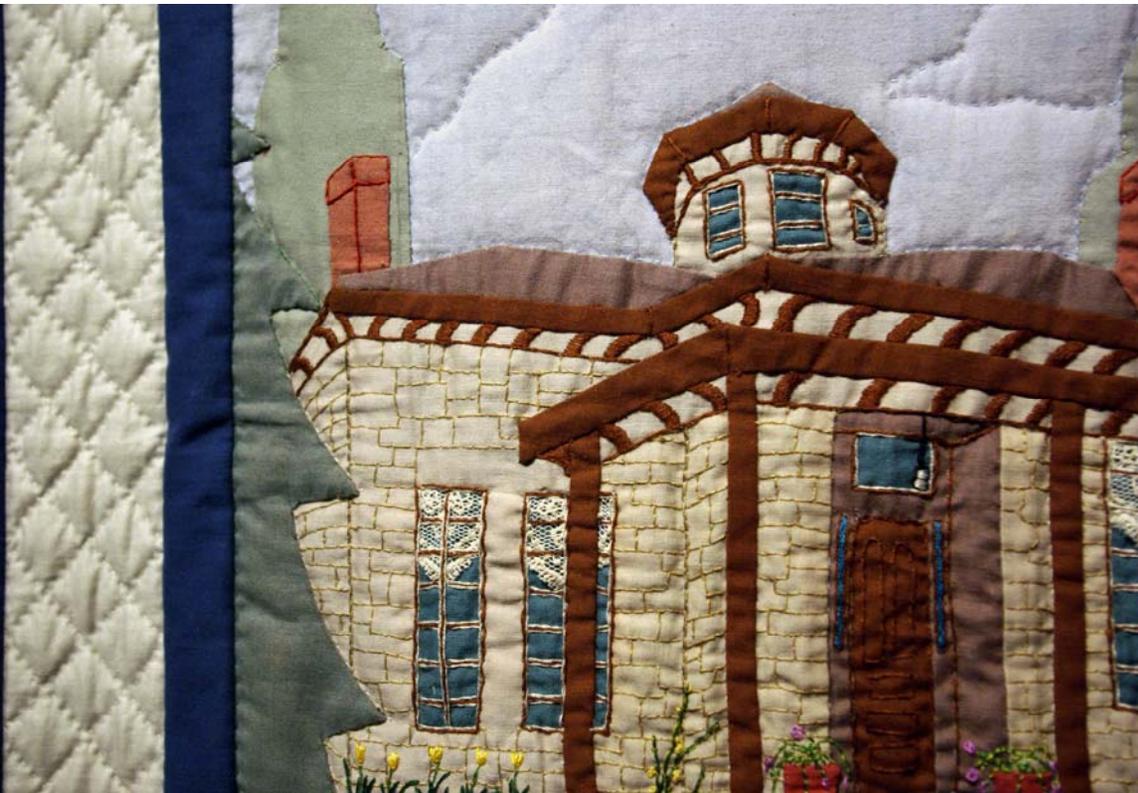
*Below:* Detail of the Abe Curry House block, showing lace curtains and flowers.

# Message from the Museum Director

by Jim Barmore

## Did you know?

- ◆ Nationally, museums rank among the **top three family destinations**.
- ◆ Nevada museums serve as **vital tourist attractions**, contributing to a **diverse and lasting tourism base**.
- ◆ Seventy-five percent of visitors to Carson City come from out of state, and thirty-five percent of these visit a museum while in town.
- ◆ Trips incorporating cultural and heritage activities account for over **23% of all domestic travel in the U.S.**
- ◆ **78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participate** in cultural or heritage activities.
- ◆ Museums **strengthen K-12 education** through onsite and outreach programs **tied to the school curriculum**.
- ◆ Museums inspire school children by offering the opportunity to experience the **wonder of real artifacts, documents, and specimens**.
- ◆ Audiences of **all ages and backgrounds attend and support** museums.
- ◆ Across America nearly **two out of three people visit a museum**, far more than the combined attendance of theme parks and major league sporting events.
- ◆ Museums **bring communities together** for greater understanding.
- ◆ Museums showcase Nevada's heritage, fostering a **sense of belonging, pride, and good citizenship**.
- ◆ Nevada museums are **trusted stewards** of several million irreplaceable artifacts, documents, and specimens, preserved for the benefit of those hundreds of years in the future.
- ◆ Nevada museums are one of the most **trusted sources of information**, serving as authorities on our state's natural and cultural heritage.
- ◆ Museums are **safe havens** for civic engagement and dialogue.



# Fire in a Bottle:

## Virgin Valley Black Fire Opal

### NSM Borrows a Unique Example of Nevada Geological Heritage

by George D. Baumgardner, Ph.D., Curator of Natural History

Last year Mr. and Mrs. Matt Bush contacted me to inquire if the museum would be interested in displaying a unique mineral specimen. The photo they sent depicted an excellent example of Virgin Valley Black Fire Opal. This piece is even more interesting because it formed from a pine cone (see next page). It was found in 2011 at Rainbow Ridge Mine, approximately 35 miles west of Denio, in far northwestern Nevada.

Matt and Barbara live in South Carolina. They appreciate the beauty of their find, but recognizing its uniqueness and value, want it to be enjoyed by the people of Nevada. After a series of communications, they agreed to loan us the piece.

This specimen is approximately four inches long and one inch in diameter. As you move, light hits it from different angles, and you may see fiery flashes of red, green, blue, and purple. If you look very closely you can see

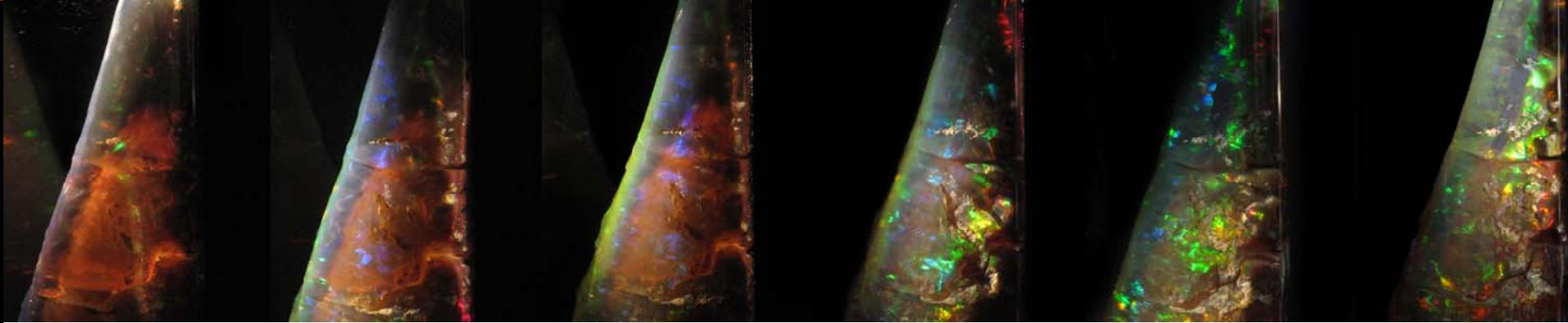
impressions of the cone's scales. This opal is stored in water to prevent it from drying out and cracking.

Timing of the Bush's discovery and loan offer proved to be excellent for the museum. Next year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Sesquicentennial) of Nevada's statehood. Part of this museum's celebration is an exhibit called *Nevada Stories* that will feature unique state items that have interesting tales. The Natural History Program offerings for this exhibit concentrate on some of Nevada's official symbols, such as this type of opal, designated as the Nevada State Precious Gemstone by our Legislature in 1987. The gallery that will exhibit this piece is being renovated. This specimen should be on display late this spring and will remain on view throughout 2014.

I thank Matt and Barbara Bush for their generous loan of this significant specimen.



Photo: Jeanette McGregor



Above: These six photos were taken by keeping the opal stationary, while moving the lights for each subsequent shot. Photo: Jeanette McGregor

## The Nevada State Capitol: A Model of Exquisite Detail

by Robert Nysten, Curator of History

Frontier Miniatures owner Norm Luke crafted this model depicting the Capitol building as it appeared when completed in the early 1870s. Having been on display many times over the past ten years, the model continues to intrigue visitors who are attracted to its meticulous detail. It took Norm nine months to complete the model which is built to 1/48 scale (1/4 inch = 1 foot). He built the most complex part first – the silver capitol dome. Norm worked closely with me, using resources from the museum’s collections: historic photographs, original architectural plans, and architect Joseph Gosling’s report. To better understand the building’s unique architectural features, Norm photographed the building from all different angles. The museum acquired the model in 2000, through a generous grant from the Bretzlaff Foundation.

The museum has three other incredible models crafted by Norm Luke: a Nevada Mercantile General Store, Nevada Mining and Assay Office, and for the ladies of the town, a Dress Makers shop. Norm’s work is amazing!

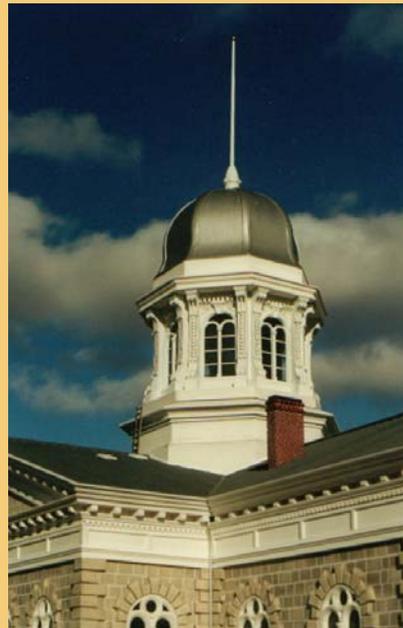


Photo of model : Frontier Miniatures

# Opal Formation

by George D. Baumgardner, Ph.D., Curator of Natural History

Opal is created when silica-rich fluids solidify in underground cavities to make nodules, veins, and masses. In other instances it forms when buried wood or bone disintegrates and their substance is replaced by water and silica. Much of the Virgin Valley opal formed during the Miocene (5 to 23 million years ago) in what is now northwestern Nevada. Wood fragments from surrounding forests became submerged in an ancient lake and covered by volcanic ash, soil, and gravel. Later, warm water from volcanic activity percolated through the silicon-rich sediment and formed opal.

These elements never form true crystal – rather they harden to a silica gel containing 3 to 21% water (usually 6 to 10%). Nevada opal is high in water content and has a reputation for cracking if it dries out. Various processes are used to dry out smaller pieces used in jewelry but large specimens are frequently stored and displayed in water.

Common opal appears opaque and is often milky or pearly in color and luster. Precious opal differs in that it is translucent and shows brilliant flashes of light known as “play of color.” This results from the microscopic spheres of the silica settling in an orderly network. As light passes through such opal its rays are bent and broken. Depending on size of the silica spheres, their geometric packing, and the angle at which the light strikes, a rainbow of colors can be produced. Precious opal can vary from clear through white, gray, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, magenta, rose, pink, slate, olive, brown, and black.

# World War II the Nevada Experience

Judge Chuck Weller came across the story of Washoe County's World War II gift of a saddle to Admiral William "Bull" Halsey while researching a book he is writing about Nevada during the war. Weller traveled to the U. S. Naval Academy Museum in Annapolis, Maryland, to see the saddle and to make preliminary inquiries. Would the Naval Academy permit the saddle to visit the Silver State for the first time since 1946? Weller worked closely with Kai Wallis, President of the Reno Chapter of the Navy League, and Peter Barton, Administrator of the Division of Museums and History, to bring the saddle home to Nevada.

In his museum lecture, Judge Weller will speak about Admiral Halsey's saddle, Japanese Balloon Bombs over Nevada, Nevada's navy, and other Nevada experiences during World War II. Doors open at 6 pm.



Photos: Jeanette McGregor

## IF YOU GO:

**WHAT:** *Frances Humphrey Lecture Series: Halsey's Saddle and Other Aspects of WWII in Nevada*

**WHEN:** April 25, 2013  
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

**ADMISSION:** \$8 adults, children 17 and under & museum members are FREE.

**CONTACT:** Deborah Stevenson:  
[dstevenson@nevadaculture.org](mailto:dstevenson@nevadaculture.org)



# SAVE THE DATES:

**WHAT:** *National Coin Week Celebration,  
Special Minting on Coin Press No. 1*

**WHEN:** April 26 – 27, 2013  
10:30 am – noon & 1:00 - 3:00 pm

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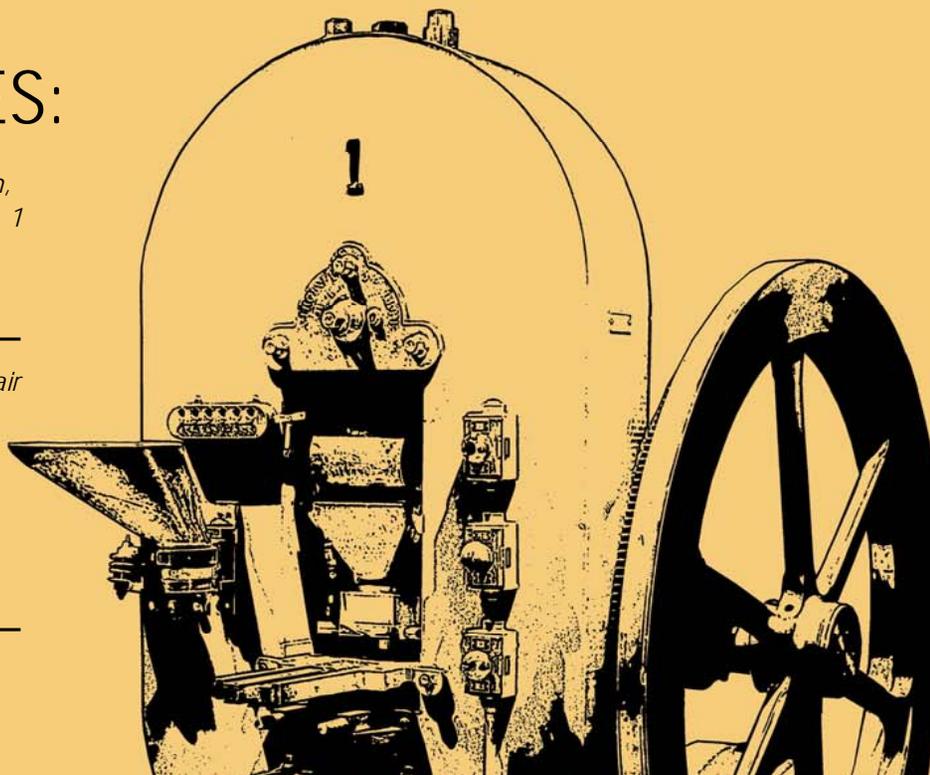
**WHAT:** *Carson City Mint Coin Show & Fair*

**WHEN:** August 23 – 24, 2013  
9:30 am – 4:30 pm Friday  
9:30 am – 4:00 pm Saturday

**WHERE:** Coin Show at Carson Nugget  
Coin Education Fair at NSM

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**CONTACT:** Deborah Stevenson:  
dstevenson@nevadaculture.org



NV150

by Peter Barton, Administrator, Division of Museums and History

NV 150, Nevada's Sesquicentennial celebrates 150 years of statehood and runs from Nevada Day 2013 to its culmination on Nevada Day, October 31, 2014.

NV 150 has a vision to promote the independent spirit of Nevada through education, tourism, and history: *Battle Born – Nevada Proud.*

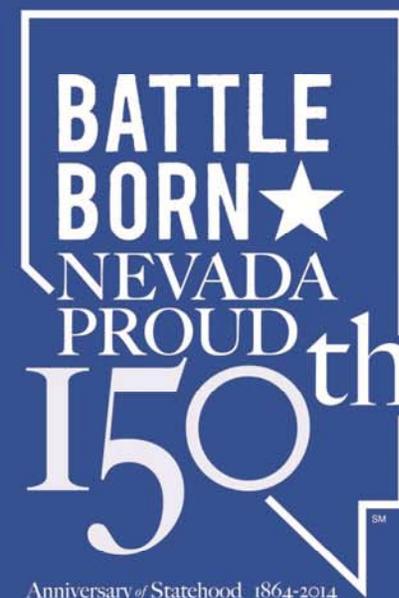
The year-long recognition provides opportunities for celebration and reflection as we come together statewide to commemorate our shared history and build a foundation of cultural appreciation for generations to come.

Signature events are planned along with the branding of many annual events as part of NV 150 in 2014.

Legacy projects, perhaps to include public art installations and updates to Nevada's wayside historical markers, will live on long after the Sesquicentennial year, 2014.

A major mobile museum will traverse the state throughout 2014, bringing Nevada's Sesquicentennial to the people while inspiring community celebrations.

Nevada's museums will participate in NV 150 with special exhibits, lectures, and publications.



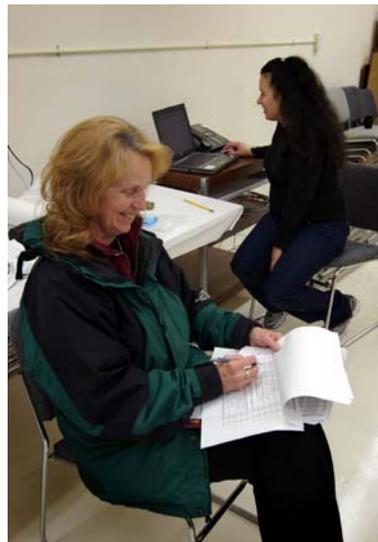
Anniversary of Statehood 1864-2014

For information visit: [www.Nevada150.org](http://www.Nevada150.org)



# Vault of Wonders

## Safe and Secure Basket Storage Completed



by Rachel Malloy, Anthropology Collections Manager

Over the past month, with the assistance of volunteers Pat Barker, Anna Camp, David Critchfield, Jeri DeJonge, and Peter Starren, we began moving baskets into the North Building Basket Vault. It has taken five years to prepare the vault to meet proper environmental requirements for permanent collection storage. Some of the upgrades to the vault include: installation of a dual activated dry pipe fire suppression system, tile floor removal and asbestos abatement, sealing the concrete floor with an epoxy coating, and installation of a fan and exhaust vents to improve circulation as well as regulate temperature and relative humidity.

After construction was completed, the volunteers spearheaded the vault layout and design as well as assembled the mobile shelving. The mobile shelving units and museum quality cabinets were purchased with donations to Anthropology's Collection Care Fund.



*Far left:* David Critchfield places a basket in a specially made cradle on one of the new mobile shelving units.

*Left:* Jeri DeJonge and Rachel Malloy keep detailed records of the baskets being moved.

*Above right:* Pat Barker carefully unpacks a large water bottle. Nitrile gloves protect the basket and the wearer.

*Below:* Before and after pictures of the vault.





# Two Rock Art Lectures Rock State Museum!

Recent survey work for the BLM Rock Art Survey, funded by the Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative, has made some interesting discoveries at the Mt. Irish, Pahroc Rock Art, and Shooting Gallery Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Among these are some newly identified rock art sites, patterns in prehistoric and historic site location, and an expansive, repeatedly used prehistoric site that contains artifacts dating back to at least early Holocene times. Mark Giambastiani, PhD, will present his findings at

the Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, Thursday, May 23 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm. The lecture celebrates Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Month.

Giambastiani has more than 25 years of experience as an archaeologist in the West. His career has centered on arid lands in California and Nevada and has focused on the study of prehistoric technologies, obsidian artifacts, and past land-use systems. He has been with ASM Affiliates, Inc. in Reno, Nevada for 8 years.

One of the principle ways that archaeologists tell time is through the use of time-sensitive projectile points; however, this practice has not been widely employed to date rock art sites. A unique style of rock art found in the northern Great Basin provides a useful data set with which to apply this approach as it

## IF YOU GO:

**WHAT:** *Frances Humphrey Lecture Series: Celebrating Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation*

**WHEN:** May 23 and June 27, 2013  
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

**ADMISSION:** \$8 adults, children 17 and under & museum members are FREE.

**CONTACT:** Deborah Stevenson:  
dstevenson@nevadaculture.org

appears stylistically different and significantly older than much of the rock art found elsewhere in the Great Basin. This style, termed Great Basin Carved Abstract has been found partially buried beneath a layer of volcanic ash nearly 7,000 years old which suggests that this style has great antiquity. Emily Middleton will present her research at the Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, Thursday, June 27.

Emily S. Middleton plans to earn her M.A. in Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) in May. Emily has served as a Research Assistant for the Great Basin Paleoindian Research Unit at UNR for the past two years where she has contributed to ongoing research and co-authored both published articles and technical reports. She is active with the Nevada Rock Art Foundation and other professional archaeological societies.



*Upper Left:* Big Horn Sheep rock art motif. Photo: ASM Affiliates.

*Left:* Great Basin Carved Abstract rock art on a basalt rim face in southcentral Oregon. Photo: Emily S. Middleton.

# Finding Frémont and More

by Gene Hattori, Phd., Curator of Anthropology

Our upcoming sesquicentennial exhibit, Finding Frémont: Pathfinder of the West, is continually accruing more objects related to John C. Frémont that we will be sharing with you in the coming months through the newsletter and Behind-the-Scenes Tours. We extend our apologies to the Exhibits Program for adding just one more item...



*Above:* Detail of the Charles Preuss map.

*Right:* John C. Frémont, Major General, U.S. Army (Photo ca. 1861 by M. Brady, published by F. Anthony).

The principal reason that we continually find Frémont-related objects is that there is a lot of contemporary and commemorative material associated with his diverse careers available in museums and private hands. Frémont was one of America's best known figures from 1845 to the 1880s. His notable accomplishments and careers included the following: U.S. Army topographical engineer, California

"first" territorial governor, California state senator, the Republican Party's first presidential candidate, Civil War major general and army commander, and Arizona's first territorial governor. As military officer and politician, however, his popularity was clouded by controversies and scandal.

Frémont's initial fame and lifelong nickname, "The Pathfinder," was largely earned on his Second Exploring Expedition of 1843-1844 from Oregon Territory into Alta California (present-day Nevada and California). Although this expedition is the focus of our upcoming exhibit, we will display objects associated with his other careers and accomplishments.





Our Museum Store carries an excellent selection of Nevada books, T-shirts, jewelry, and unique gift items.

**Just in: New Native American made Jewelry!**

## 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		\$60 family



[www.nevadaculture.org](http://www.nevadaculture.org)

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

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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 Bonnie Rieckhoff, Chair at 775/841-2108.

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](http://www.nevadaculture.org).

Museum members receive the *Mint Edition* as a benefit of membership if they provide an email address.

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