

# Mint Edition

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

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## New Exhibit Follows Footsteps from Mint to Museum



by Brett Fisher

The storied history of today's Nevada State Museum can be traced back all the way to the American Civil War when the Carson City Mint was just an appropriation on paper authorized by Congress. But from the moment the first coin was struck into circulation in February 1870 to when the museum's first visitors filed through the doors 71 years later on October 31, 1941, our iconic mint building has made an indelible mark on the legacy and culture of the Silver State.

A view of the completed *Mint to Museum* exhibit.  
Photo: Jeanette McGregor

The Nevada State Museum is proud to announce the opening of the new *Mint to Museum* exhibit on the second-floor landing of the historic Carson City Mint building. With compelling graphic displays along a visual timeline, the exhibit gives this Nevada icon its long-awaited due.

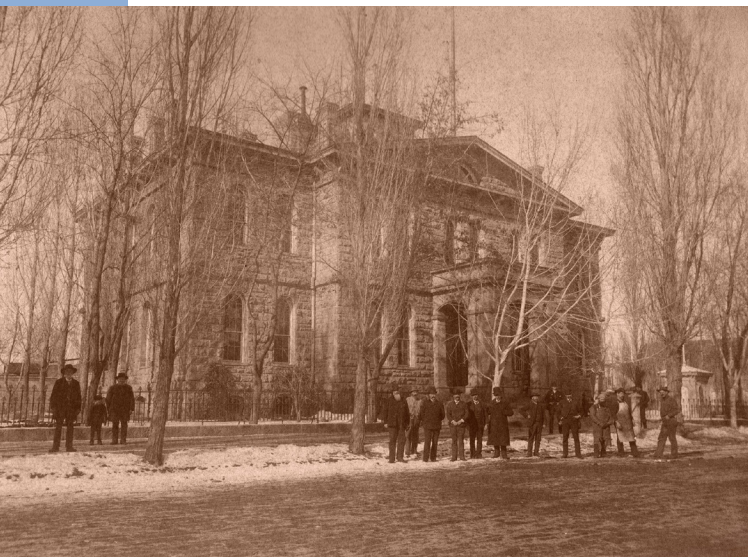
**top detail and right:** A promotional paper fan in the Museum's history galleries.

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A view of the Carson City Mint circa 1883. Courtesy Nevada State Museum

But what few know is the backstory of this new exhibit and the years of planning that went into it.

“We realized that there was no interpretation about the Mint itself anywhere in the museum,” said Exhibits Preparator Jeanette McGregor.

What the museum needed was the right space to tell that story. The second-floor landing of the Mint was envisioned as the ideal spot, so the antique collectibles that had been on display there were removed in 2019.

Over the next five years, the project had been planned out, staged, and constructed with the help of several staff members and volunteers, including Curators Emeritus Bob Nysten and Gene Hattori, Dr. George Baumgardner, Laurel Weil, Jeanette McGregor, David Ornellas, Sandy Bell, Suemi Atherton, Mary Covington, and Jim Grey.

“Everyone really did a fantastic job of bringing the story to life in a way that engages visitors,” Exhibits Manager Laurel Weil said.



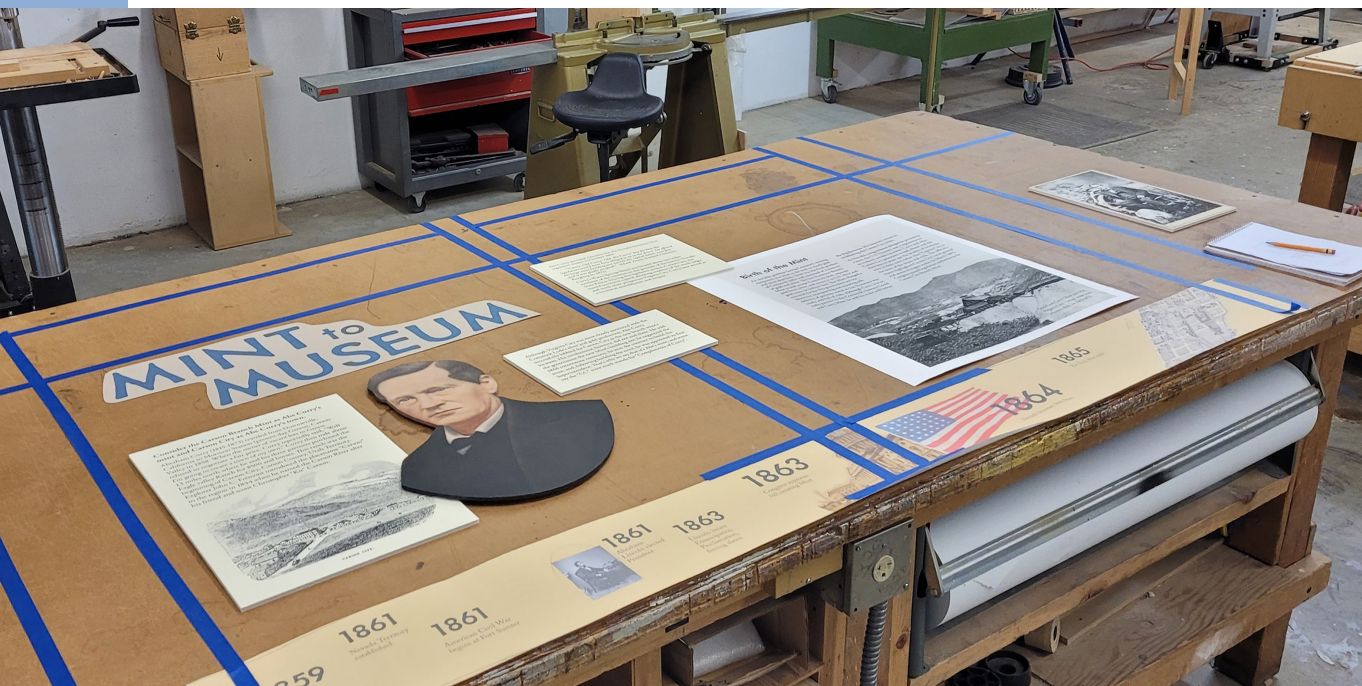
Eager to view the new museum on opening day, these visitors packed the stairwell and landing on Nevada Day, October 31, 1941. Courtesy Nevada State Museum

Spanning the length of the landing, the *Mint to Museum* exhibit takes visitors on a journey through time—from the building’s groundbreaking to the first museum visitors. The permanent exhibit space is also the first in the Nevada State Museum to offer fully accessible interpretation and translation using the latest QR code technology.

“This is a big step towards museum-wide translation, accessibility, and inclusion goals,” Weil said.

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**above:** The meticulous planning that goes into an exhibit is seen here in the development of the timeline and each exhibit panel. Photo: Laurel Weil



**right:** The final installation showing the title, timeline, and graphic storytelling. Photo: Jeanette McGregor



Exhibits preparator Jeanette McGregor installs a graphic panel with the help of volunteer, Sandy Bell. Photo: Laurel Weil

Near the end of the landing is a screen that plays “Architectural Secrets of the Mint,” an in-house video created to show visitors some of the exciting things that exist behind the scenes of the historic Carson City Mint building.

“During the filming and investigation into the building’s secrets, several new discoveries were made,” Weil explained. “The video production reignited a sense of wonder and curiosity about the building in which we work.”

With the *Mint to Museum* exhibit completed, the story of what has been home to the Nevada State Museum for over eight decades is now front and center at the top of the grand old staircase.

“It feels good to finally have the story of the Mint available to our patrons,” McGregor said. “Their reactions to *Mint to Museum* have been wonderful.”

The Nevada State Museum is planning a formal grand opening of the *Mint to Museum* exhibit, but no dates have been set. Stay tuned for updates on special events in upcoming issues of *Mint Edition*.



# Museum Accepts Donation of Cape Worn by Early Nevada Businesswoman

by Jan Loverin,  
Curator of Clothing and Textiles

Many of us are longtime Nevadans, and some claim to have a generational history here, but it is a rare opportunity to meet someone whose ancestors were founding residents of a well-established community. And so it was when I met Lloyd Chichester, a direct descendant of Mrs. Kate Smith Gage. Mrs. Gage's first husband was Cyrus Smith, who along with his brother, Timothy, were well-established stockmen. Coming from California, they settled in a valley with lush green grass, which ultimately became their namesake, Smith Valley.

Kate was born in Bath, England, and arrived in Nevada in 1880. She married Cyrus Smith in 1881. Unfortunately, he died 10 years later, leaving Kate with a large ranch to manage as well as properties in neighboring Topaz. Eight years later, in 1898, Kate Smith married Harrington Gage.

Mrs. Smith Gage was a very capable woman who not only raised five children, but also established herself as a successful and well-known businesswoman.

Mr. Chichester, on behalf of his aunt, Alice Myre, offered the Museum a beautiful black cape worn by Kate Smith Gage. The cape is black silk with a net overlay, which has been appliquéed with an elaborate floral pattern, further embellished and edged with beadwork. The center front and hem of the cape are finished with ruching and lace. This cape, fashionable in the 1880–90 era, is in excellent condition and could have been worn when Mrs. Gage was in mourning. The family also donated Mrs. Gage's black parasol.



Black silk cape and detail of lacework, ca. 1880–90.  
Photo: Jeanette McGregor





# Calendar of Events

Check [www.carsonnmuseum.org/events](http://www.carsonnmuseum.org/events) for more detailed information

## July 2024

### Saturday, July 6

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 6

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Self-guided Scavenger Hunt, Nevada State Museum and State Capitol, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 13

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 13

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Self-guided Scavenger Hunt, Nevada State Museum and State Capitol, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 20

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Battleship Virtual Reality Experience, Dema Guinn Concourse, 10 am–2 pm

### Saturday, July 20

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 20

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Self-guided Scavenger Hunt, Nevada State Museum and State Capitol, 11 am–3 pm

### Thursday, July 25

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, “USS Nevada Battleship Panel Discussion,” Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, July 27

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Battleship Virtual Reality Experience, Dema Guinn Concourse, 10 am–2 pm

### Saturday, July 27

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, July 27

USS Nevada 110th Anniversary Self-guided Scavenger Hunt, Nevada State Museum and State Capitol, 11 am–3 pm

## August 2024

### Saturday, August 3

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, August 10

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, August 17

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Thursday, August 22

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, TBD, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, August 24

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, August 31

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm



## September 2024

### Saturday, September 7

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, September 14

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Friday, September 20

Nevada State Museum Coin Show, co-hosted with Northern Nevada Coin, South Gallery, 10 am–4 pm

### Saturday, September 21

Nevada State Museum Coin Show, co-hosted with Northern Nevada Coin, South Gallery, 9 am–4 pm

### Saturday, September 21

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, September 21

*Tin Cup Roundup* fundraiser by the Friends of the Nevada State Museum, the Governor’s Mansion, 4–8 pm

### Thursday, September 26

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, TBD, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, September 28

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm





# Quest to Restore 1967 Chevrolet Stepside Pickup

by Brett Fisher

For years, the Nevada State Museum's 1967 Chevrolet Stepside Pickup had been parked at the Indian Hills Curatorial Center off Topsy Lane in Carson City, slowly succumbing to the decay of time. But this year, Museum staff and volunteers have taken the initiative to restore the classic vehicle to its former glory as a mobile ambassador for Nevada history and culture.

Thanks to connections with the Nevada Department of Corrections, Silver State Industries will be performing restoration work on the pickup. The Friends of the Nevada State Museum have taken the lead on fundraising. The inaugural Nevada State Museum Car Show and a White Elephant Rummage Sale were held June 29 and the Tin Cup Roundup takes place Saturday, September 21 at the Nevada Governor's Mansion.

Stay tuned for a more in-depth look into the pickup's history and the progress toward its full restoration coming up in the Fall 2024 *Mint Edition* Newsletter.



Nevada State Museum's 1967 Chevrolet Stepside Pickup before restoration. Photo: Albert Depew

# Field Trip to Fort Churchill State Park

by Brett Fisher

Nevada State Museum staff were invited out to Fort Churchill State Park and Buckland Station on March 8, 2024 to provide their input on an interpretive redesign of exhibit spaces at the site.

Exhibits Manager Laurel Weil said Museum staff advised State Parks personnel on a host of topics, including exhibits design and ADA compliance, care and handling of artifacts, interactive elements, museum best practices as well as common pitfalls and their solutions.

Representing the Nevada State Museum at Fort Churchill State Park and Buckland Station were Weil, Exhibits Preparator David Ornellas, Facilities Supervisor Albert Depew, Registrar Mary Covington, Curator of Natural History George Baumgardner, Curator of Anthropology Anna Camp, Anthropology Archives Manager April Van Wyke, Store Manager Cayce Weislow, Curator of Education Mahal Moon, and volunteers Samantha Motta and Rachael Griswold.



Nevada State Museum staff and volunteers pose for a photo with a State Parks ranger in front of Buckland Station. Photo: Nevada State Parks staff



Cayce Weislow, Albert Depew, David Ornellas, and Anna Camp listen to State Parks staff talk about Fort Churchill. Photo: Nevada State Parks staff

Later in the Spring, staff from the selected contractor attended the Frances Humphrey Lecture by Dr. Gene Hattori on historic Fort Churchill archaeology and also toured Fort Churchill artifacts at the Nevada State Museum.

"We will continue to be a resource for Fort Churchill staff as they see their project become a reality over the next year," Weil said.





## New Bee Hotel Now Accepting Residents

by Mahal Moon, Curator of Education

**T**he Nevada State Museum's bee hotel is now open! Visit our pollinator garden at Loftin Park and see if you can spot any of our buzzing friends searching for a place to stay!

Bee hotels are essential shelters for solitary bees. Unlike bumblebees and honeybees that live in colonies and share resources, solitary bees gather their own resources, build their own nests, and raise their young independently. These bees, without honey or a queen to protect, are excellent pollinators due to their gentle nature, making them ideal for public spaces like the museum.

Our bee hotel was constructed in three stages. First, Exhibits Preparator David Ornellas crafted the frame. Second, Family Fun Saturday participants lovingly hand-painted small terracotta pots, which now serve as individual "rooms" in the hotel. Third, with assistance from Exhibits volunteers, we carefully secured phragmite reeds into each pot to create safe, seasonal nesting spaces for solitary bees.

We continuously monitor the bee hotel to ensure it remains structurally sound for our solitary guests and to prevent any harmful species from taking residence. We encourage you to observe our bustling lodge during your next Museum visit and witness these industrious creatures in action.

**above:** Curator of Education Mahal Moon shows the finished bee hotel. Photo: Laurel Weil  
**far right:** Vintage Nugget cocktail napkin in the Museum's history galleries.

## Welcome to Our Newest Nevada State Museum Members!

### New Members

#### Benefactor

Teagan & Lauren Pacheco

#### Sustaining

Kenneth & Teri Graf-Pulvino

Tracy McCandless

Nathan Porter

Charles & Margaret Robertson

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Joleen Davis

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Chai & Daniel Nelson

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Mark Skovina

Judy Snight

Grace & Max Sosa &

Christine Moreno

Steven & Barbara Stearns

Lynna Walker & Bev Schroeder

Laura & Michael Weston

Deborah & Daryl Yee Litt

#### Individual

Marge Breister

Noreen Bronicki

Laurie Carey

Andrew Dewey

Matthew & Kathleen Feiertag

Sidney Goldblatt

Veatrice Jehangir

Kelsey Jouanicot

Kevan Lesch

Eulla Loftin

Kappy Mann

Jennifer Milstein

David Miner

Thomas Pepper

Steve R. Seltner

Cindy Thompson

Kathleen Walsh

Robert Wicks

John Zielinski & Jocelyn Turpin

### Renewed Enhanced

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#### Benefactor

Visit Carson City, David Peterson

#### Contributing

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Tim & Sandra McFarren

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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 Tourism & Cultural Affairs. The museum engages diverse audiences in understanding and celebrating Nevada's natural and cultural heritage.

**State of Nevada**  
Joe Lombardo, Governor

**Nevada Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs**  
Brenda Scolari, Director

**Division of Museums and History**  
Dan Thielen  
Division Administrator

The Friends of the Nevada State Museum, a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit organization, supports the museum through volunteer assistance, fundraising, and advocacy. For more information contact Jim Spain, Chair at [spainnopain@charter.net](mailto:spainnopain@charter.net)

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

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

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\$125 sustaining  
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