



Slot Machines: The Fey Collection highlights machines designed by Charles August Fey. His most important invention, which he called the "Liberty Bell," was spring-loaded and had three reels bearing strips of symbols-bells, horseshoes, stars, and card suits. The player would put a nickel into a slot and pull a handle on the side to compress the springs. When released, the springs would expand to send the reels spinning until stopped by a separate mechanism. If the symbols matched, the player won a "jack pot"-a pot of money, or "jack."

The exhibit features 24 historic mechanical gaming machines dating from 1895-1937, including two Liberty Bells, the Klondike, Little Chief, Silver Dollar, and Three Cadets. These early slot machines are not only ingenious inventions, they are ornate works of art.

The three-reel Liberty Bell provided the basic design from which all future slot machines were based. Even today's slot machines, though completely different in the way they work, are still recognizable as descendents of the Liberty Bell.

The Fey family is placing the collection on loan to the Nevada State Museum for one year to allow time to raise funds for the purchase. The state of Nevada has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve a portion of the Fey legacy, which would otherwise be broken up and

sold at auction. The potential sale of this collection to out-of-state buyers represents a great loss to the state's history and heritage.

Charles August Fey's grandsons Marshall Fey and his brother Frank operated the Liberty Belle Restaurant and Saloon in Reno since it opened in 1958 where the full collection was originally displayed. The brothers named the establishment in honor of their grandfather's popular slot machine the Liberty Bell; however, they feminized the word "bell" by adding an "e" at the end, and the place became a landmark for decades.