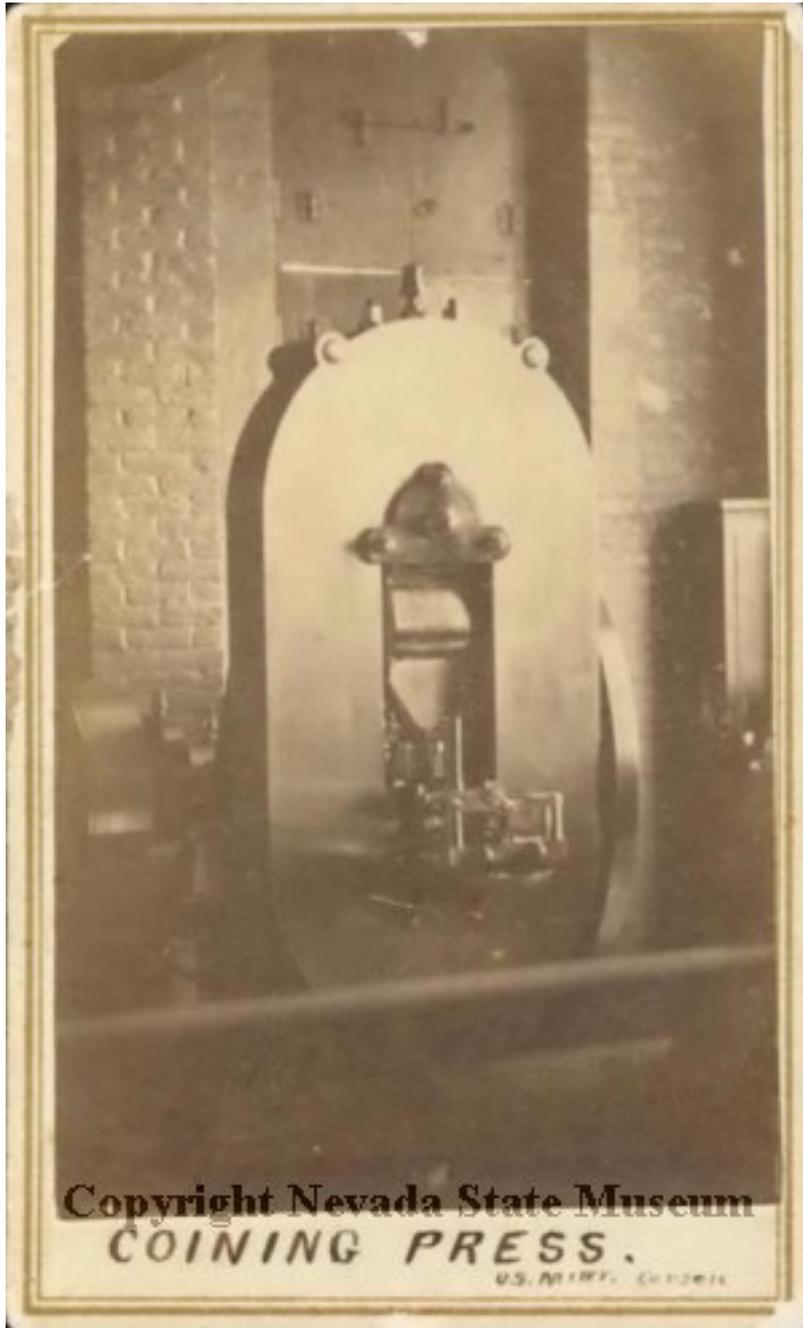


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Although legislation authorizing the creation of the US Mint at Carson City was passed by both houses of Congress on March 3, 1863, actual construction did not begin until three years later. Work proceeded so slowly that three more years passed before coining machinery arrived.

Manufactured by Morgan & Orr in Philadelphia, who created many of the steam-powered coining presses then in use throughout the world, the first six-ton press arrived at the Carson Mint in 1869. As was the custom of the day, it was painted with a large "1" to signify the first press located in the coiner's department.

On February 11, 1870, this press struck the first coin bearing the soon-to-be-famous CC mintmark, a Seated Liberty dollar.

For nearly a quarter of a century it was used to strike most of the larger denomination pieces produced during the years the mint actually produced coins, from 1870 to 1885 and again from 1889 to 1893.

When the press suffered a cracked arch in 1878, it was repaired at the local shop of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. Proud of their handiwork, V&T machinists replaced the original brass Morgan & Orr plate with one bearing the name of their famous railroad.

The Carson City Mint ceased coining operations in 1893 and the presses were removed in 1899, along with all other machinery in the coiner's department. [Press No. 1](#) was moved to the Philadelphia Mint, where it was remodeled in 1930 to operate with electric power. In 1945, it was transferred to the "new" San Francisco Mint and renumbered "5" to correspond with its place in the coining department there. Finally, when all coin production was temporarily halted at San Francisco in 1955, the old press was due to be scrapped.

Through the efforts of Judge Clark J. Guild and other local businessmen, the antique press was purchased by the state of Nevada for \$225 and arrived back in Carson City in 1958. After a thorough cleaning and painting, it quickly became one of the favorite attractions in the Nevada State Museum, now housed in the original mint building.

However, when US Mint Director Eva Adams, who was herself a native Nevadan, was faced with a severe coin shortage in 1964, she requested the loan of the venerable press. It was soon trucked to the Denver Mint and placed in operation, striking more than 188 million coins during the next three years.

Once again returned to the Carson City museum in 1967, press No. 1 was converted to a much slower electric drive. In 1976, it was used to strike Nevada Bicentennial medals in gold, silver, copper and bronze, and in following years created some of the medallion pieces in a lengthy series produced by the Nevada State Museum.

Don Schmitz, owner of the Nevada City Mint in California, began operating the press for the state of Nevada on a limited basis from 1977 to 2001. Coin Press No. 1 is currently being operated and maintained by museum volunteers Ken and Karen Hopple of Reno for the State Museum. Under their supervision, the press is minting the last Friday of each month.

Since Morgan & Orr presses manufactured in the 1860s and 1870s are harder to find all the time, Carson City's press No. 1 may well be one of the last operating presses from that time period.

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### COIN PRESS NO. 1

Built: 1869

Maker: Morgan & Orr, Philadelphia, PA

Weight: 12,000 pounds

Production capability: 1869 - 1,500 coins per hour

Today: 1 medal takes 10 seconds to strike

Striking pressure: 1869 - 200 tons

Today: 200 tons

Additional sources of information: "CC" Mint Mark, by Howard Hickson and "The Carson City Mint" video produced by Nevada Bell.

Available for purchase at the Nevada State Museum Store.

Coin Press No. 1 is located in the Carson City Mint Building portion of the Nevada State Museum,

600 N. Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701

Open Wednesday - Saturday from 8:30 to 4:30

Text written by Douglas McDonald