CARSON CITY, Nev. — Shepherds who roamed the Northern Nevada landscape in the 1900s left calling cards as clues to their life and times in carvings that survive today on Aspen trees. Artistic imprints that illustrate the unique tree carvings are on display at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno through April 7.

The new *Basque Aspen Art Rubbings* exhibit features wax-on-muslin rubbings that reflect the art of the Basque shepherds. The words and images left behind are called arborglyphs, many of which illustrated the lives the shepherds left in France and the Pyrenees in Spain.

The husband and wife team of Phillip and Jean Earl captured the work when they began exploring the Aspen groves in 1969. They assembled a collection of more than 130 rubbings and preserved carvings that would otherwise have been lost and vulnerable to the environment. *Basque Aspen Art of the Sierra Nevada* is the book they created in the process.

“The Basque aspen carvings are unique to the mountains of the American West, made by solitary men whose lives and thoughts were recorded on the living bark of trees,” said Sheryln Hayes-Zorn, NHS acting director.

Rubbings of cowboys, women, animals, moons and dates, and an actual carving preserved on an aspen stump are just a few of the items in the new exhibit on display. The Nevada Historical Society is open Wednesday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1650 N. Virginia Street adjacent to the University of Nevada, Reno and the Fleischman planetarium. For more information, contact (775) 688-1190 x0 or visit www.nevadaculture.org.

--Priest image carved into Nevada Aspen tree by Basque Shepherds in the 1900s