



Miss Fremont at the age of 70 unfurled the flag at the ground breaking ceremony for the Southwest Museum building in 1912. Here is the text of her speech:

Mr. Chairman:

“To the Southwest Museum this flag is given in perpetuity in memory of my father, John C. Fremont and of my mother, Jessie Benton, who was always his inspiration and his ally; with the hope that it will aid in keeping alive the interest of our young people in the history and the romance of the older days of our great west, with only in that magnificently beautiful region of Wyoming the grand solitude of which was then only broken by roving Blackfeet Indians and by Buffalo; where it was that on August 15th, 1842 that standing on the loftiest Peak of the Rocky Mountains ‘where never human foot had stood before,’ Fremont the Pathfinder—unfurled this flag to the breeze; but also that their interest may include all of our great west, with the wonders and beauties of our own California which was so dear to my Father, and which he was granted the great good fortune of being so largely instrumental in helping to add to our Union.

I have the right, as the last of the trio to give this flag into the keeping of your Museum, Mr Chairman, since the day (some seventy years ago) when on his return from that expedition, my Father gave it to his young wife and the wee baby by her side saying: ‘this, the dearest possession that I have, our national flag raised in the vast solitude of the Rocky Mountains, I give to you two;’ This flag has been cherished and cared for by my mother and me; we have taken it with us everywhere we went; and now, the last of those three, give it into the safe keeping of the Southwest Museum to remain always in that California which was so dear to my father.”

Elizabeth Benton Fremont Los Angeles, November 15, 1912