

Nevada State Printing Office
South Fall Street
Carson City
Nevada

HABS NO. NEV-13-9 HABS

NEV.

13-CARCI

8-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NEVADA STATE PRINTING OFFICE

HABS No. NEV-13-9

Location: South Fall Street, between East Second and East King Streets, facing the Capitol Plaza, Carson City, Nevada

Present Owner: State of Nevada

Present Occupant: The ground floor is occupied as offices by the Division of Buildings and Grounds, State of Nevada. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Nevada State Fire Marshall both occupy offices on the second floor.

Present Use: Offices

Statement of Significance: The Nevada State Printing Office is a substantial stone building which complements the more imposing State Capitol across the street. It was the first addition in what has become a cluster of State buildings in this section of Carson City, and was the first State Printing Plant.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1885-1886
2. Architect: M.J. Curtis of Reno. Curtis was later involved, to a limited degree, in another State project, the Governor's Mansion, for which he submitted a design in 1907. S. Pixley (see below), was also involved in the design of the State Printing Office.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Nevada State Printing Office is located on Block 3 of Sears, Thompson, and Sears Division of Carson City. On March 24, 1885, A.W. Pray sold lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the north 17 feet of lots 8 and 9 of this block to The State of Nevada for \$500.00. (Deed recorded in Ormsby County, Nevada, Deed Book 24, page 28). The property continues to remain in State ownership.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: A law authorizing construction of the State Printing Office was passed on March 12, 1885. The very next day, the Board of Capital Commissioners advertised in the daily Carson City Index for proposals for the sale of lots near the Capital for the

building. The advertisement also invited architects to submit plans. When the bids were opened on March 20, the lowest property offer was that of S.W. Pray, which was accepted. On March 21, the Board requested S. Pixley to draw up plans and specifications, and to have them ready the next day. The Warden at the State Prison was directed to begin quarrying stone at the prison quarry for the building. On March 22, Pixley not unexpectedly requested an extension of time from the Commissioners. The extension was granted, and on April 6, 1885, S. Pixley and M.J. Curtis, of Reno, were both given \$25.00 as "payment in full for services in getting up plans and specifications." This entry seems to mark the last involvement with Pixley in the project, and the beginning of Curtis' association with the building. At the April 6 meeting, Curtis received the contract for his plans; he was also hired as the Superintendant of Construction on a day to day basis, receiving \$6.00 per diem.

J.W. Boles was the low bidder for the contract of hauling and delivering two grades of sand for mortar (\$.95 per load) and also received the contract for unloading the sandstone blocks at the building site. (The rock was quarried and loaded at the Prison Quarry by convict labor).

On October 9, 1885, the Commissioners ordered the following notice to be placed in the Carson City Tribune:

"Capitalists of Carson having an interest in the completion of the State Printing Office, now in course of construction, are invited to meet the Board of Capitol Commissioners, at the office of the State Controller on Monday, October 12."

Not one "interested capitalist" attended the meeting, so written subscriptions were invited, and several were received. Curtis was called up before the Board on December 2, 1885, and was dismissed. On December 5, 1885 several new contracts were awarded. The firm of Hall and Catlin received the contract for completion of the carpentry work at \$700.00. John Heritage received the painting contract for \$450.00. A note accompanying the awarding of these contracts states that the first floor was to be finished by December 28, 1885, and the second by March 1, 1886. However, on March 20, 1886, the Board accepted two more construction bids: Mr. Cross to do the plastering at \$6.50 per diem, and C. Ouilette to prepare, mix, and carry mortar at \$3.00 per diem.

NEVADA STATE PRINTING OFFICE
HABS No. NEV-13-9 Page 3

In September, 1886, the Commissioners advertised for wood for fuel to be supplied to the State Printing Office, a fairly conclusive indication that the building was finished and occupied.

In the 1885 Act for construction of the State Printing Office, the sum of \$5,000.00 was appropriated to cover costs. This was supplemented by an additional sum of \$9,743.66 which was appropriated in 1887, making the total original cost of the building \$14,743.66.

5. Alterations and additions: The building has not been altered on the exterior to any great extent though numerous additions have been made to the east. Originally, the first floor of the north wing was open and housed the printing machinery. The office of the Superintendent of State Printing was on the first floor of the south wing, and the bindery was on the second floor.

The several additions are of relatively recent construction, and are easily discernable. The first was constructed in 1938, a second in 1951, a third in 1955 and a fourth in 1958. The last addition, completed in 1960, was a pre-fabricated steel warehouse for paper storage. None of the additions attempt to emulate the original construction, either in design or material.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

Orion Clemens, appointed Secretary of Nevada Territory in 1861, had as one of his many duties the responsibility of having the House and Council journals printed. According to his brother, who accompanied him to the territory, his printed instructions ordered him to "pay one dollar and fifty cents per 'thousand' for composition, and one dollar and fifty cents per 'token' for press-work, in greenbacks."*However, local printers would accept only gold coin, not greenbacks, and when the value of paper dollars fell to \$.40, Clemens had a difficult time having the journals published. This situation was at least partially responsible for the establishment of the office of a State Printer, once the Territory had become a State. Consequently the office of State Printer was established by Statutes in 1865. John Church was elected by the State Legislature as the first State Printer for 1865-66. In 1877, the office of State Printer was abolished, to be effective in 1879. Work was awarded by contract from 1879-1880. During this time, the Board of State Printing Commissioners, made up of the Secretary of State, State Controller, and State Treasurer, was responsible for having State material printed.

In 1879, the office of Superintendent of State Printing was created, to become effective in 1881. The first Superintendent of State Printing was John W. Maddrill, appointed by the Board of State Printing Commissioners to hold office for two years. From 1883 on, the Superintendent of State Printing has been elected by the people of Nevada.

At the turn of the present century, the building also housed the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a museum donated to the State by the Society of Pioneers, and at least one Federal office. These were housed on the second floor. All printed matter done under state auspices for three-quarters of a century issued from this building, from statutes and annual reports to textbooks and presentation volumes.

In 1964, the State Printing Office moved to new and larger quarters and the building ceased to serve in the capacity for which it was planned and built. It still, however, houses the offices of State agencies.

*Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Roughing It by Mark Twain. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959) pp. 178, 179.

D. Sources of Information:

Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. Roughing It by Mark Twain. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959

Koontz, John. Political History of Nevada (fifth edition), Carson City: State Printing Office, 1965

Nevada State Archives, files on construction of this and other State Buildings (research done by Mrs. Marshall Humphreys 1972).

Thompson, Thomas H. and West, Albert A. History of Nevada. Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958 (facsimile reprint of this volume, which was originally published in 1881)

Wren, Thomas, ed. A History of The State of Nevada, Its Resources and People. New York: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1904.

Prepared by: S. Allen Chambers, Jr.
Architectural Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
December 1972

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: A substantial public building of the late nineteenth century, of pleasing composition and simple, bold details, with important historical associations.

B. Detailed description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: About 68 ft. by 72 ft. The layout is roughly L-shaped, the north wing being 72 ft. (5 bays) long by 34 ft. (2 bays) wide, and the south wing 34 ft. (2 bays) long by 34 ft. (2 bays) deep. Two stories.
2. Foundations: The portion of the exterior wall which is below the first floor line is not differentiated from the rest of the wall; it is two courses (2 feet) high.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The exterior walls are rock faced sandstone ashlar. The material was quarried at the site of the present State Prison, on East Fifth Street, Carson City. It is a dull yellow color and shows very little discoloration. Some blocks have been roughly dressed with a pick in places. There are chisel-dressed quoins, long and short blocks alternating, at the exterior angles. They have beveled joints.

The walls have been re-pointed in modern times, so the original mortar is not visible on the surface. Each course is almost exactly one foot high; there are 27 courses from grade level to the bottom of the frieze.

On the interior of the first story the stone wall is exposed; here it was dressed with a pick and the margins drafted with a chisel.

The stone masonry throughout is excellent. Joints do not exceed one-half inch in width. It is in good condition.

4. Structural System, Framing: Exterior bearing walls of sandstone ashlar. The south wing is divided in the middle by a similar sandstone partition; presumably the wooden floor joists span from wall to wall--about 15 to 16 feet. In the north wing there is a central longitudinal wooden girder supporting the second-floor framing; it is supported on square wooden columns with chamfered corners and bolster

capitals. Other framing was not visible.

The first floor appears to rest on the earth.

5. Porches: There are none.
6. Chimneys: On the east wall of the south wing there is a projecting brick chimney--an obvious addition. If there were any chimneys originally, they are no longer visible.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: Door openings appear in all four bays of the west front but only one (second from south end) is now in use. There is an active door opening opposite it in the east wall. There is another doorway in use at the east end of the north wall. Along the south wall of the south wing there is a door at the second floor affording emergency exit down a metal fire-escape stair (a later addition).

The first-floor doorways are similar (except for one which has been altered): segmental-arched masonry opening with dressed voussoirs, keystone, and dressed plain trim. A single stone block forms a step up to the stone threshold. The jamb reveals and intrados of the arch are treated with moulded wooden casing. Sash are double hung, one light over one light. There is a glazed transom, below which are double doors, each having a small moulded lower panel above which are two tall moulded glazed panels.

- b. Windows: Window openings are segmental-arched and the trim is similar to that of the doorways, although the window openings are narrower. Within the masonry opening there is a simple moulded wooden casing. Sash are double hung, one light over one light. Sills are dressed sandstone.

In the west gable there is a circular window.

8. Roof:

- a. Roof Shape, Covering: The roof of each wing is gabled. Recently it has been given a covering of composition shingles with a metal edge turned over the upper edge of the cornice.

- b. Cornice: There is a moulded wooden cornice which returns a considerable distance at the corners of the gable ends. It has ornamental brackets in pairs; between each pair there is a moulded panel in the frieze. The cornice woodwork appears to be deteriorating. In some places the symatium piece has been replaced by a plain board.

The whole cornice is now painted dark brown.

Gutters are built in. Several round sheet-metal conductors lead down the wall to splash blocks of uncertain date.

- c. Dormers: There are none.

C. Detailed Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First Floor: Originally the north wing must have been open. A wooden partition between the two wings appears old and was probably an original feature. Half of the space in the south wing was and is partitioned off by a stone wall. It is evident that the printing machinery and similar heavy equipment must have been located in the first story, which has a ceiling height of thirteen feet. There are modern wooden partitions.
- b. Second Floor: A stairway at the northeast corner of the building gives access from the exterior to the second floor. This L-shaped area appears to be divided substantially as it was originally: a central hall with rooms at each side. This floor is now occupied partly by the State Fire Marshall and partly by a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The first floor is now occupied by the State Division of Buildings and Grounds. The second story has a ceiling height of about eleven feet.
2. Stairways: A wide stair of 24 risers ascends along the east wall of the north wing in a straight flight. It is enclosed at the first story but open above, with a railing at the second floor. There is a round newel; balusters are turned and the handrail is moulded. The treads and risers now have a modern surface covering.

If there were other stairs originally there appears to be no

evidence of them now. There are some modern wooden stairs to mezzanine storage areas above the first floor.

3. Flooring: The first floor is concrete of uncertain date, resting on the ground. It has modern covering in some areas. The second floor is covered with modern materials.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Large areas of the first-story walls are exposed stonework (see above) which has been painted. Modern adaptation of some areas for office use has introduced modern covering and finish.

The second story is plastered throughout. It has recently been put in first-class condition.

5. Doorways and Doors: The doors of the second story in general appear to be original. Typically the openings are rectangular with a two-light transom above a moulded bar, a single door with four moulded panels, and architrave trim. Window trim is similar.

D. Site and Surroundings:

This building faces west onto South Fall Street and toward the State Capitol Plaza. Parking lots adjoin to the north and south. The terrain is level.

One-story structures of later date abut toward the east.

Prepared by: Harley J. McKee
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
Date of visit: August 16, 1972

PART III. Project Information

These records are part of the documentation made during the latter half of 1972 and the summer of 1973 in a project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Nevada State Park System to record structures in Carson City and nearby areas.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Eric R. Cronkhite, Administrator, Nevada State Park System, and Mrs. Marshall Humphreys of the Nevada Landmarks Society assisted the HABS recorders in Nevada. Professor Harley J. McKee, Supervisory Architect, National Park Service, selected the subjects

and provided architectural data for the sixteen Carson City structures which were recorded. Historical documentation for these buildings was prepared by S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Architectural Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor for the 1973 Nevada Summer Team, which produced the measured drawings, was Robert L. Hartwig of Harvard University. Student assistant architects were John T. M. Creery (University of Utah), Robert P. Mizell (University of Florida), and Jack W. Schafer (University of Cincinnati). Photographs were made by Aaron A. Gallup of Sacramento, California.