

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A).

1. Name of Property

historic name: Douglass, Robert L., House

other names/site number: Cottage Hospital, Fallon Hospital, The 1906 House

2. Location

street & number 10 South Carson Street not for publication N/A

city or town Fallon vicinity N/A

state Nevada code NV county Churchill code 001 zip code 89406

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility, meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

Ronald M. Jarama, SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

6-13-01
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register

other (explain):

(for) Sarah D. Pope
Signature of Keeper

8/13/01
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub: <u> Single dwelling </u>
<u> HEALTH CARE </u>	<u> Hospital </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub: <u> Bed-and-Breakfast </u>
<u> DOMESTIC </u>	<u> Multiple Dwelling </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

roof COMPOSITION SHINGLE

walls STUCCO/SHINGLES

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH/MEDICINE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1904-1947

Significant Dates 1904, 1913, 1914

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) R.L. Douglass

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Churchill County Museum, Fallon

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.29 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>347270</u>	<u>4370740</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jane Pieplow, Director
organization Churchill County Museum date March 22, 2001
street & number 1050 S. Maine Street telephone 775-423-3677
city or town Fallon state NV zip code 89406

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Noonkester
street & number 10 S. Carson Street telephone _____
city or town Fallon state NV zip code 89406

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

7. Description

The R.L. Douglass House

The R. L. Douglass House is located at 10 S. Carson Street in Fallon, Nevada, and it is one of the most outstanding examples of Queen Anne architecture in the state. Built in 1904, the house was designed by an architect from Reno whose name was not revealed in the newspaper article describing the project. One year earlier, Reno architect Ben Leon was in Fallon for the design and construction of the Churchill County courthouse, as Fallon had, as of 1903, wrested the county seat from Stillwater. Although corroborating evidence has yet to be uncovered, it is possible that Ben Leon designed the Douglass House, as well.

Whoever the architect was, he employed all of the style-defining characteristics of a cross-gabled, free classic Queen Anne, with a few spindlework elements thrown in for good measure. The 2,605 square-foot home is roughly rectangular in plan, with the primary façade facing east. The free classic porch wraps around the southern corner of the front elevation, while the two-story turret projects from the northeast corner. The complex roofline employs a combination of hipped and gabled forms, with a hexagonal hipped roof, topped by a finial, covering the turret. A shallow hipped-roof dormer is situated above the foyer. The original roof covering was wood shake, but a modern composition shingle roof has replaced it. Historic photographs reflect the use of decorative ridge cap, but these have not survived to the present time. Set into three faces of the turret roof are gablets offset from below by curvilinear brackets. Early photographs show a brick chimney at the north end of the building where the parlor is located. This chimney has been replaced by a pipe stack. It is not known what prompted the change, but a severe earthquake hit the region in 1954 and may have compromised the stability of the earlier chimney. An original smaller brick chimney is located in the center of the house.

The characteristic Queen Anne wrap-around porch defines the free classic subtype of the Douglass House. Extending from the entrance, the porch wraps around a one-story bay window at the southeast corner of the building. Six Doric columns that extend to the porch floor bear the load of the shallow-pitched porch cover. Breaking the plane of the porch cover over the front door is a shallow pediment with a deep tympanum. The projecting eaves of the porch roof are accented by diminutive paired brackets, and the spindlework is reflected in the balustrade. Five concrete steps lead onto the porch, and the front entry, which consists of a single door with sidelights and transoms. The sidelights and transoms that surround the front door are beveled, leaded-glass panels in a variety of geometric forms including diamonds, circles, rectangles, and squares.

Fenestration in the building is generally simple, as is characteristic of the Queen Anne style. The one-over-one, double-hung windows in the lower story have plain wooden frames. Second-story windows are also double-hung, but the cottage-style windows have decorative leaded lights in the upper half. There are also two stained-glass windows, containing blue and yellow leaded glass, in the library on the building's south

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

7. Description, continued

side. Additionally, there is a small three-part vent in the primary front gable and a bull's eye vent in the north-facing gable.

Typical of the Queen Anne style, the Douglass House employs a variety of devices to avoid flat wall surfaces. These include a projecting section in the top of the primary gable, projecting eaves, with slight kick-ups and diminutive brackets, prominent return eaves, a band of shingles at the mid-point of the turret, changes in the horizontal continuity of wall planes, slightly-projecting belt courses, and a cantilevered bay on the south side. Different wall textures were used, as well. Originally, the first story was covered in narrow bands of horizontal wood siding (historic photos seem to depict either shiplap or tongue-and-groove), with small shingles covering the surfaces of the second story. Today, the shingles on the upper story remain, but at some time, presumably in the 1940s or 1950s, the lower story was covered with stucco. It is not known what the building's original color scheme was, but black-and-white photos from the time of its construction suggest that several colors were used.

Amazingly, the home's High Victorian interior has remained largely intact. The parlor is ornately decorated with pine wainscoting, paneling, crown molding, and decorative fretwork between the rooms. The fireplace has a tile hearth and surround, and the oak mantel reflects high-quality craftsmanship. There is a variety of built-in furniture in the house, including hutches, desks, and window seats. Remarkably, none of the pine floors or other ornate woodwork were ever painted.

The Cottage Hospital

The Cottage Hospital building began in 1904/1905 as R.L. Douglass' garage. The size of the original structure speaks to the importance of automobiles to the owner. Historic photographs from 1905 and 1906, provide limited details of the building's appearance. The photos show a single-story, front-gable building with possibly a pair of double wooden doors, and what appears to be a shuttered window centrally-placed above and in between the two sets of double doors. The building is sheathed in the same narrow boards as the house, and in the center of the slightly projecting, shingle-covered gable is a bull's eye vent that matches the one in the gable on the north façade of the house. Historical reports of the garage describe a device onto which Douglass drove his automobile. This device would rotate the vehicle 190 degrees, so it could be driven straight out of the building. The structure remained a garage until 1914, when Dr. Nichols converted it into the Cottage Hospital.

The hospital retained the exterior form of the garage, adding a projecting, two-story, semi-enclosed porch onto the front, which was modified to add windows in the upper story and entrance doors on the lower. The porch sported eight truncated columns similar in shape and form to those on the free-classic porch on the main

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7, 8 Page 3

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

7. Description, continued

house. The building was expanded to the rear by the addition of at least two gables crossing the original central gable. A third, larger cross gable is visible in modern photographs. It seems to be a later addition, possibly constructed when the hospital was converted into apartments some time between 1923 and 1947.

There have been other modifications to the building since its hospital days. The front porch has been enclosed, and the front entry is covered by a small hipped-roof canopy. The double-hung windows have been changed to aluminum sliders, and the entire surface has been stuccoed.

Integrity

The Douglass House retains a remarkable degree of all seven aspects of integrity. The only significant modification has been the addition of stucco to the lower half of the building, where once there had been narrow horizontal wooden boards, and the replacement of the cedar shake roof with one of composition shingles. The interior of the building is also remarkably intact, reflecting the lavish Victorian interior details common to high-style Queen Anne homes.

The Cottage Hospital building has undergone more extensive changes over time. The building was originally a garage, but when Dr. Nichols converted it to a hospital in 1914, he built two rear additions, a semi-enclosed, two-story front porch, and added windows and doors. He chose materials that matched those used in the main house. At some point, most likely when the building underwent a change in use to apartments, another addition was built to the rear, the porch was enclosed to form a solid wall, and the surface was covered with stucco. Notwithstanding the changes to the building, it is felt that it still retains sufficient integrity of setting, feeling, location, and association to be a contributing element to this nomination. There is no doubt that Dr. Nichols would recognize his hospital were he to see it today.

There is a noncontributing two-car, front-gabled garage located between the house and the hospital/apartment building to the south of the house. The owners report that the garage was built in the 1950s.

8. Significance

The Douglass House/Cottage Hospital is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, B, and C. Under criterion A, the house and hospital played significant roles in the early development of Fallon, which had just been established the year before the house was constructed in 1904. By the time Dr. Nichols purchased it in 1913, and built the hospital in 1914, Fallon had been the county seat for more than 10 years, and the booming community could support medical practitioners and facilities. Under criterion B, the Douglass House is significant for its connection with its original owner, R.L. Douglass. Mr. Douglass

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

built the most lavish home in Fallon, where he made his mark on the community as a prominent land owner, businessman, banker, and legislator. Further, the Queen Anne home is eligible for the National Register under criterion C as a rare and elaborate example of high-style architecture, and as the only house of its type in Fallon.

Criterion A

Fallon

The Douglass House was built in 1904, just one year after Fallon came into existence. Prior to 1903, the area was known as Jim's Town and was at the crossroads between St. Clair and Stillwater, which was Churchill County's third county seat. Jim's Town was the location of Mike and Eliza Fallon's ranch house, and a small store run by Jim Richards. The Fallons settled in the area in 1896, the same year a post office was established on their ranch (Carlson 1974:111).

The notion of turning the arid West into an agricultural oasis began in the minds of several men, including Henry Fulton and Francis Newlands, in the 1880s. On June 17, 1902, president Theodore Roosevelt signed The Reclamation Act, which established a federal reclamation system financed from the sale of public land, and created the United States Reclamation Service. This was a significant development for Churchill County and was the impetus behind the establishment of the town of Fallon. In 1889, the United States Geological Survey had designed a project for water reclamation in the county, and the Truckee-Carson Project, later renamed the Newlands Project, was among the first five projects to be constructed by the Reclamation Service. Construction began on the irrigation project that was to divert water from the Truckee River to the Carson River in 1903 (Churchill County Museum 1992).

By that time, Mike Fallon had sold his ranch to state senator Warren W. Williams, who platted the land and advertised for the sale of town lots. He named the main street after his home state of Maine, and other streets, such as Bailey, Allen, Taylor, were named after his friends. Williams' blocks constituted the west side of the new town; the east side was established on land owned by John Oats. Oats' ranch had been first patented in 1898, under patent number 3857, by Jacob William Allen, son of Lemuel Allen, a Nevada Lieutenant Governor. Allen sold his land to Charles Kaiser, an influential and successful sheep man, who in turn sold to John Oats (Parr 1999).

In 1903, Senator Williams managed to push through legislation moving the Churchill County seat from Stillwater to the new town of Fallon. A new courthouse, designed by Reno architect Ben Leon, was begun immediately, and opened later the same year. A number of Stillwater businesses moved to Fallon, which

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

immediately prospered with the new irrigation system. Work on the project began in 1903 with the construction of the Derby Diversion Dam, and a 31.5-mile canal to the Carson River. The first water from the Truckee River reached the Carson River on July 17, 1905, when Derby Dam was formally dedicated (Churchill County Museum 1992).

The City of Fallon was incorporated in 1908, under a general incorporation act. It was the goal of the new city to provide the finest of services to its residents, the number of which was anticipated to reach 20,000 in a few years. The reason for this surge in population was the Newlands Project that was expected to provide 400,000 acres of irrigated fields for agriculture. This objective was never met, however, because the amount of water needed was underestimated. The lack of sufficient water nearly wiped out the new project in its first few years. This situation prompted plans for a dam and reservoir. Construction began on Lahontan Dam in 1911 and it was completed in 1915. Electricity generated at the dam reached Fallon in 1912. Completion of Lahontan Dam proved to be the salvation of agriculture in Fallon (Churchill County Museum 1992).

Several agricultural crops were introduced into the area with varying degrees of success. The Fallon Commercial Club brought in experts to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a sugar beet factory. In 1910, the Nevada Sugar Company was organized, and a large production plant was built. In 1911, the company endeavored to train local farmers to successfully grow sugar beets, but by the end of summer that year it was clear that sugar beets would not grow successfully in the area. Leafhoppers transmitted "curly top" disease from the native pigweed plants to the sugar beets, dooming the project to failure. Several unsuccessful attempts to revive the project were undertaken, but the sugar beet plant was dismantled in 1934 (Churchill County Museum 1992).

Other crops have proved more successful, and one of the more notable from the 1920s was the Hearts-O-Gold cantaloupe. At the time, Lahontan Valley was known as the King of the Cantaloupe, and Newlands Project farms had a virtual monopoly on cantaloupe sales in Nevada and northern California. The cantaloupes had a national reputation for their large size, quality, and flavor. A severe drought in 1931 and 1932, brought a virtual end to the cantaloupe business in Fallon, although a few growers continue to produce them today (Churchill County Museum 1992).

The most economically-stable agricultural crop associated with Fallon is alfalfa. Alfalfa grown on Newlands Project farms has carried the region through many an economic downturn. Because of the altitude and moderately warm weather in the Lahontan Valley, this alfalfa produces a high protein hay that is favored by dairies and feed lots for its superior ratio of leaf to stem. In 1992, it was estimated that the valley's 30,000 acres produced an average of 5 tons of alfalfa hay per acre, of which more than 70 percent is shipped out-of-state (Churchill County Museum 1992).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

In addition to agriculture, Fallon's growth was tied to its role as a freight center. During the first decade of the twentieth century several mining towns surrounding Fallon flourished. Fallon served as a shipping center to the communities of Fairview, Rawhide, and Wonder, among others (Carlson 1974). In 1906, a 15-mile branch line of the Central Pacific Railroad was built from Hazen to Fallon. Progress was delayed, however, because of the inability to obtain rail following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Fallon had hopes of a Thanksgiving Day "last spike" celebration, but the first train arrived quietly at the Fallon station on January 10, 1907. There was talk of Southern Pacific Railroad plans for an extension from Fallon to Wonder, but these never materialized. Instead, transportation from Fallon to the outlying areas was accomplished by a fleet of six-cylinder Chadwick Racer automobiles (Myrick 1962:38, 234).

The automobile proved to play an even greater role in Fallon's development, with the establishment of the Lincoln Highway. By 1910, there were 458,377 registered passenger cars in the United States, but hardly a decent road on which to drive. Around this time, several automobile enthusiasts in Indianapolis, Indiana began a campaign for a hard-surfaced road, which they dubbed "The Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway." The initial concept was for the road to be financed by states, corporations, and private citizens, so an association was formed to begin raising the funds needed for the monumental undertaking of building an automobile road across the country. This organization became known as the Lincoln Highway Association (Fey 1991).

Nevada's governor, Tasker Oddie, was an automobile enthusiast and supporter of the goals of the Lincoln Highway Association. In 1912, the Nevada legislature, in special session, proposed a state road to be known as "a Nevada State Highway," to run from the Utah-Nevada state line just east of Ely to the Nevada-California state line in Douglas County. The highway would run through Fallon on its way to Reno, following approximately the old Overland road. The problem, of course, was funding, but salvation came in 1913 when the Lincoln Highway Association announced the final route of their highway, which corresponded with Nevada's proposed route. Oddie issued a Lincoln Highway Proclamation, as did Fallon's Mayor George Sherman, who proclaimed October 31, 1913, the official naming day for the highway. Fallon first benefitted from the Lincoln Highway in 1915, when approximately 1,000 people associated with the Glidden Tour traveled the route on their way from the East to the Pacific-Panama Exposition in San Francisco (Fey 1991).

The town profited again that year as a result of the Pacific-Panama Exposition. The Lincoln Highway Association set up a large display in the Palace of Transportation at the exposition, featuring among other things, a large wall map of the Lincoln Highway accompanied by a number of photographs depicting scenes along the route. The most monumental element of the Lincoln Highway presentation was a coast-to-coast motion picture of a journey from New York to San Francisco. The three-hour, 16,000-foot film, known as the Three-mile Picture Show, was shown almost continuously at the exhibit until the exposition closed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Each town along the route was asked to contribute to the film's production, and an attempt was made to show off each town at its best. For its participation, Fallon proudly presented to the Lincoln Highway Association a check for \$99.50, representing 30 donors. A motor caravan was organized for the project, consisting of four cars and a truck. Local observers reported to the press that the "expert moving picture operator was equipped with the most up-to-date apparatus for the film production" (Givens 1994).

The film characterized Fallon as a "remote Nevada town," but when the film came to Fallon for local viewing on January 3, 1916, it was a major event. The film showed at the Rex Theater continuously for twelve hours, and schools were closed so students could have the opportunity to be exposed to "these wonderful moving pictures." Unfortunately, the only known copy of this unique film had deteriorated beyond repair and was destroyed. Efforts to locate a duplicate have been unsuccessful (Givens 1994).

Another significant event along the early Lincoln Highway was the country's first transcontinental military convoy, which crossed the route from east to west in 62 days in 1919. The objective of the expedition was to test various military vehicles and the feasibility of using the road for National defense purposes. The convoy was accompanied by several observers, one of whom was Dwight D. Eisenhower, a young lieutenant colonel at the time. Eisenhower credits his experiences with the convoy for planting the seed that resulted in the inter-state highway system he initiated while president of the United States in the 1950s (Anonymous 1999).

The Lincoln Highway's significance began to wane after the 1950s and the expansion of the interstate highway system, but another development affected the route as it passed through Fallon. Naval Air Station Fallon was initially commissioned during World War II, and was significantly enlarged during the Korean Conflict in the early 1950s. Its role expanded over the years, and in the early 1960s the main runway was lengthened. This resulted in a realignment of travel patterns in Fallon, shifting the main route from Center Street to East Williams (Department of the Navy 1998).

Fallon remains an important center for agriculture and the Newlands Project, automobile travel along Highway 50, and the military presence. There is currently in northern Nevada a growing interest in heritage tourism; to draw visitors to our communities to experience the past through our remaining historic buildings and sites. In this new way, Fallon continues to serve the automobile tourist.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The R.L. Douglass House

On April 23, 1904, the *Churchill Standard* announced that the plans for the R.L. Douglass mansion had been completed by a un-named Reno architect. Construction on the home began two weeks later. Since it was a grand design for Fallon, the *Churchill Standard* kept up with all stages of construction, which progressed on the following schedule:

- April 30 Ground broken for the home.
- May 14 The foundation was nearly in place. The home was to be lighted by electricity.
- May 21 The stone foundation had been completed.
- June 11 The new home was nearing completion.
- July 2 Plumbers were at work piping the interior of the home.
- July 16 G.E. Porter, Reno electrician, was at work on the home.

By September of that year, Douglass and his wife Eleanor Ernst Douglass moved into their new home. Because of his love of cars, R.L. was not slow in building a garage just south of his new home. The building included a turntable that allowed him to open the doors and drive his car up onto this device. Once inside the garage, manually spinning the turntable allowed the car to face forward again to be easily driven out the next time the doors were opened.

The Douglass family did not stay in their lavish home for long. In August of 1905, Eleanor's 20 year old brother, Charles H. Ernst, died at the home from typhoid. This family death is one explanation for the Douglass' early move to the Island Ranch. One story has it that Eleanor was so devastated by the death of her brother that she wanted to move from the unpleasant memories. Another version of the story says that Eleanor wanted to move from "the mansion" because it was so large she could not keep it clean, and domestic help was hard to find. Whatever the case, the couple moved to their Island Ranch in Churchill County in November of 1906. Between 1906 and 1913, the *Churchill County Eagle* notes that several organizations were interested in buying the Douglass residence to use as a clubhouse, but it was never sold for such use.

In 1919, the Douglasses commissioned Reno-native Frederic DeLongchamps, who was developing into Nevada's most prominent and prolific architect, to design a Prairie-Style house on Island Ranch. With two fashionable and high-style homes to his credit, R.L. Douglass brought a degree of architectural distinction and sophistication to Fallon.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The September 13, 1913 issue of the *Churchill County Eagle* reported that Dr. F.E. Nichols had purchased the Douglass home. Franklin E. Nichols was born the youngest of 11 children, in Elizabethtown, New York on September 22, 1861. As a child, he moved with his family to Iowa. He attended college at York, Nebraska, later helping to move the college to Lincoln and to build one of the buildings on the campus. Upon graduation from York, he attended Hahnemanum medical college in Chicago, receiving his medical degree in 1890. That same year he married Miss Jessie Ewing. The couple had three children: Dean, Maxwell, and Margaret (Salisbury). For twenty years Nichols practiced medicine in Quincy, Illinois.

In 1912, at the age of 51, he came to Fallon to continue his practice. In September 1913, he purchased the Douglass' grand home. The first winter of his residence, the house was used for the doctor's office and as a hospital. A year later, the garage building to the south of the home was remodeled into a modern 10-bed facility. Dr. Nichols named it the "Cottage Hospital," which included an operating room and fully-equipped laboratory. According to one Fallon old-timer, Dr. Nichols ran a general practice, but he had a reputation for performing abortions. For a while during the Cottage Hospital period, Dr. Nichols worked in partnership with a Dr. Dempsey. Dr. Nichols also owned agricultural property outside of town. On March 3, 1920, the United States Reclamation Service purchased it as part of the Newlands Irrigation project to serve as a demonstration farm designed to help new homesteaders learn farming methods in the valley.

On September 3, 1916, Dr. Nichols married Annie B. Coffin, a teacher in the Fallon schools, and the couple lived in the Douglass residence. It is not known what became of the previous Mrs. Nichols, but by 1912, Nevada had a reputation as a divorce colony, so Dr. Nichols may have come from Illinois to the Wild West for that reason. The doctor operated the Cottage Hospital until July 1919, when he leased the facility to a Mrs. Carr and a Mrs. Mitchell. They operated it as the Fallon Hospital, with Elizabeth Carter as the Directrice. Dr. and Mrs. Nichols continued to live in the residence and to use it as his medical office.

In October 1921, the hospital changed hands again and became known as Fallon General Hospital, with Mrs. Steinbrook as the proprietor. A year later, the hospital's name was changed once again to Fallon Hospital, under the operation of Mrs. Mears, a nurse. In 1923, the hospital closed for good and was converted into apartments. It is not known what caused the rapid turnover of lessees until the hospital's final closure, but at the time there were a number of hospitals operating in Fallon. The practice seemed to be for women with nursing degrees or administrative backgrounds to lease large homes or commercial buildings, and open a hospital. Competition must have been fairly stiff for a while, because the local newspaper was full of ads for hospitals that were "under new management."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Dr. Nichols continued his medical practice in Fallon, using the R.L. Douglass residence as his home and clinic. He died at the age of 74, on April 21, 1935, after suffering a long illness. His obituary in the *Fallon Eagle* described him as a leader in the upgrading of Fallon. He was involved in community activities, including belonging to Masonic Lodge #26, and, "He was an interesting conversationalist, a good friend and companion. The Consolidated 'B' Schools were dismissed on Monday [April 22] in honor of his memory."

By 1947, the former Cottage Hospital had been converted into an apartment building called the Nichols Apartments. In May of 1951, Annie B. Nichols, widowed in 1935, sold the Douglass home to Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Forsberg. The property changed hands several times until 1996 when it was purchased by the current owners, Jerry R. and Suzanne Noonkester, who operate it as a bed-and-breakfast. For most of its existence, the R.L. Douglass House served as a residence. Although for a few years it was a boarding house, realty office, and antique shop.

Criterion B

R.L. Douglass

The R.L. Douglass house is associated with Robert Lee Douglass, one of Fallon's most influential citizens. His life was filled with more financial success than most, but his experiences in Nevada and Churchill County parallel those of many of the pioneers that settled the west. His landmark Queen Anne Victorian home in Fallon stands today in restored splendor. His nearby Island Ranch, with its Prairie Style residence, continues under cultivation, and is a landscaped showplace.

Robert Lee Douglass was born on a farm in Louisiana, Missouri, on December 5, 1877. He moved to Nevada in 1900, with his constant companion, an automobile. Always an auto enthusiast, it has been said that Douglass may have brought the first automobile into the state. Douglass ventured west to join his uncle, J.M. Douglass, whose extensive land and cattle interests were headquartered in Virginia City. R.L. tried mining on the Comstock, but when the boom started in Alaska he was one of the first to sail north. The young man soon returned home and began working on his uncle's ranch in the Island District in Churchill County.

Upon the death of his uncle in 1904, the ranch was left to J.M.'s nephews William J. and Robert L. Douglass. Other life-changing events were in store for R.L. that year as on February 10, he married Eleanor Marie Ernst. The *Churchill Standard* describes the couple: "Mr. Douglass, or "Bob" as he is familiarly called, is a young man of sterling worth and ranks as one of the wealthiest young men in Nevada. His gentlemanly course in life and his careful consideration for the feelings of others less favored in worldly affluence have made him a large circle of friends Miss Ernst is a youngest daughter of Senator Ernst . . ." On April second,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Douglass purchased two lots on the corner of Williams and Carson Street and, by the end of the month, construction began on the couple's new home.

Also that same year, construction of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project was underway. Up until that time, homesteaders to the area were forced to settle near the banks of the Carson River in order to have adequate irrigation for their limited crops. Natural grass hay grew in these areas and was harvested as winter feed for livestock. Soon, a few large ranches had settled all the irrigable sites along the river.

Nationally, the push was on to make every acres of the United States productive. President McKinley's assassination allowed Theodore Roosevelt to become President in 1900, and the progressive politicians began the drive to reclaim the desert. Back in Churchill County, the United States Reclamation Service began work on Derby Dam in 1904. By 1914, Lahontan Dam was completed and homesteaders were settling the area. During the course of the construction of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project, R.L. Douglass refused to join with the local irrigation district by withdrawing his lands from water-right contracts. He may have felt the organization would fail, or he did not want to be tied to the federal government through water rights to his property. Whatever the case, it is obvious that Douglass was involved in every aspect of this ranch work.

Although involved with his ranch, Douglass was also a well-known and prosperous Fallon businessman. In 1906, he was president of the Churchill Bank, the first bank in Fallon, and he oversaw the construction of the modern, four-storeroom, stone-and-brick bank building that still stands on Fallon's Maine Street. Douglass was also involved with the Douglass-Jarvis Bank at Fairview, Nevada, and owned the Fallon Meat Company, and the Douglass-Cano Hazen-Fallon Stage Line. His interests even extended so far as to propose and map the community of Island City in Churchill County.

Not content to keep his knowledge and skills working for him in Churchill County alone, Douglass broadened his knowledge of state and national politics by representing the county in the Nevada State Senate from 1907 to 1911. He was also a Democratic presidential elector and bearer of Nevada's electoral vote for President Woodrow Wilson in Washington, D.C. during 1917. For pleasure, the Senator continued to indulge his love of expensive automobiles. Involved in auto racing, Douglass was on the scene when Barney Oldfield came to Reno in 1904. He purchased a six-passenger Pope-Toledo passenger car and entered it in the Hazen-Fairview run in 1906. By 1914, Stutz Bearcats were more the former Senator's style, and he won the trophy cup in a big Reno race. Douglass was also a contributor to Fallon's participation in the promotion of the Lincoln Highway route through Fallon. Flying seems to have been another hobby for Douglass as the *Churchill County Eagle* quoted the *Reno Evening Gazette* report that his presence on a September 20, 1919, flight made him the "first civilian to make a flight from Fallon to Reno."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

With his business and ranching interests in full swing, Douglass' busy life came to a halt in 1913. That year was marked by tragedy when his wife Eleanor died from malaria and rheumatism, complicated by jaundice. She was 32 years of age and left behind three children: Mary Martha (1904-1984), Robert Lee, Jr. (1909-1930), and Eleanor M. (1911-). Douglass was re-married to Mrs. Mantee Thorpe in 1918, and they had a daughter named Josephine. By the 1920s, Douglass was busy as ever. From 1927 to 1932, he served as chairman for the Nevada State Fish and Game Commission, and he continued his work as Internal Revenue Agent for the state, a position he held for 18 years. His political activities within the Democratic party also kept him occupied.

Over the years, the large ranch R.L. had inherited from this uncle was subdivided and sold. This choice property always found a ready market. In 1928, the largest land sale ever made in Churchill County was the 1,300 acres comprising the Island Ranch, purchased by the Dodge Brothers. The Dodge family stills owns this property. In 1944, Charles Peckham Frey purchased the rest of the Douglass ranch, and R.L. and Mantee moved to Oakland, California. Seventy-seven years old and in ill health, Robert Lee Douglass died in Oakland of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in October of 1954. The Knights Templars conducted last rites for him in Fallon. The beautiful home he built in Carson Street remains a legacy of his contributions to the Fallon community.

Criterion C

Queen Anne became popular in the 1880s in the eastern United States after it was introduced at the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 (Walker 1997). Although by 1904, the popularity of the style was waning, according to Lester Walker (1997:154) it "represented a reaction to High Victorian 'reality' and renewed interest in the picturesque." The Queen Anne style was the culmination of all the Victorian Styles including details of Italianate, Gothic Revival, Carpenter Gothic, and Classical (Walker 1997). The style was named and popularized by a group of nineteenth-century architects led by Richard Norman Shaw. Rather than following the styles popular during the 1702-1714 reign of England's Queen Anne, this late nineteenth-century style borrowed from late Medieval models from Elizabethan and Jacobean eras preceding Queen Anne. The earliest versions by Shaw and his colleagues employed half-timbering and patterned masonry, but the free classic and spindle subtypes are indigenous interpretations. At the time of its introduction onto the American scene, Queen Anne's main competitor was Romanesque, with its heavy—and expensive—stone construction. A wooden Queen Anne house could be built inexpensively and quickly by any competent carpenter (Walker 1997:152). The Queen Anne style enjoyed a mere 20⁺-year run of popularity, giving way to the Colonial Revival style that followed around 1910.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8, 9 Page 13

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

McAlester and McAlester divide the Queen Anne style into two overlapping subtypes based on shape and decorative detailing. The shape subtype identifies a variety of forms based on roof configuration. Steeply pitched and irregular roofs characterize the Queen Anne style. The R.L. Douglass house falls into the cross-gabled variety. Of the four decorative detailing subtypes identified by the McAlesters, the R.L. Douglass house is distinguished by its spindlework detailing. The Douglass House employs all of the devices that typify Queen Anne from a complex roofline, the spindlework, the use of wall surfaces as primary decorative elements through the use of bays, towers, overhangs and wall projections, and the use of several wall materials of differing textures.

The R.L. Douglass House is the only two-story Queen Anne-style home in Fallon. Further, with such a short run of popularity, coupled with Nevada's general 10-year lag in architectural styles, the Douglass House is a relatively rare example of elaborate, architect-designed Queen Anne architecture in the state. A few Queen Anne homes can be found in Reno and Carson City, but it was not generally embraced in other locales, which were largely rural at the turn of the twentieth century. The reason for the dearth of Queen Anne homes has not been investigated, but it was likely due to economic conditions, the availability of materials, and prevailing tastes.

Summary

Today, the R.L. Douglass House serves as the residence of Jerry and Suzanne Noonkester. It is also known as the 1906 House and is run as a bed and breakfast. This name came about as the result of a miscalculation of the building's construction date. Stationary, business cards, and invoices were printed with the name, and when the error was discovered correcting it was too expensive. The former Cottage Hospital is also owned by the Noonkesters, who operate it as an apartment house. Since the year it was built, this two-story Queen Anne-style home has been a landmark in the community of Fallon. There is no other historic residence in the city that can match this beautiful home.

9. Bibliography

Primary Sources

Newspaper articles in the *Churchill County Standard*, *Fallon Standard* and the *Churchill County Eagle*

Oral history interview of Eleanor Douglass Scofield, youngest daughter of Eleanor and Robert Douglass

Churchill County Recorders and Assessors Office maps

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 15

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

10. Geographical Data:

Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries of the Douglass House include the .29-acre parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 01-533-12, -13, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada, located in Section 31, T.19 N, R. 29E, MDM.

Boundary Justification

Resource boundaries include all land commonly associated with town lots identified as Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada APN. 01-533-12, -13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 16

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

Photographs

Name of Property:	R.L. Douglass House
Location of Property:	10 South Carson Street Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada
Location of Negatives:	State Historic Preservation Office 100 N. Stewart Street Carson City, NV 89701 Churchill County Museum 1050 South Maine Street Fallon, NV 89406
Photograph 1:	Douglass House under construction, facing west 1904, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-573-5/7
Photograph 2:	Douglass House upon completion, facing southwest 1904, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-102-5
Photograph 3:	Douglass House and garage, facing southwest 1905 or 1906, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-109-9
Photograph 4:	Douglass House, garage, and Mercedes, facing southwest ca. 1906, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-103-8
Photograph 5:	Douglass House and Allen Rooming House, facing southwest ca. 1906, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-25-9
Photograph 6:	Douglass House parlor ca. 1906, photographer unknown Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-102-6

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

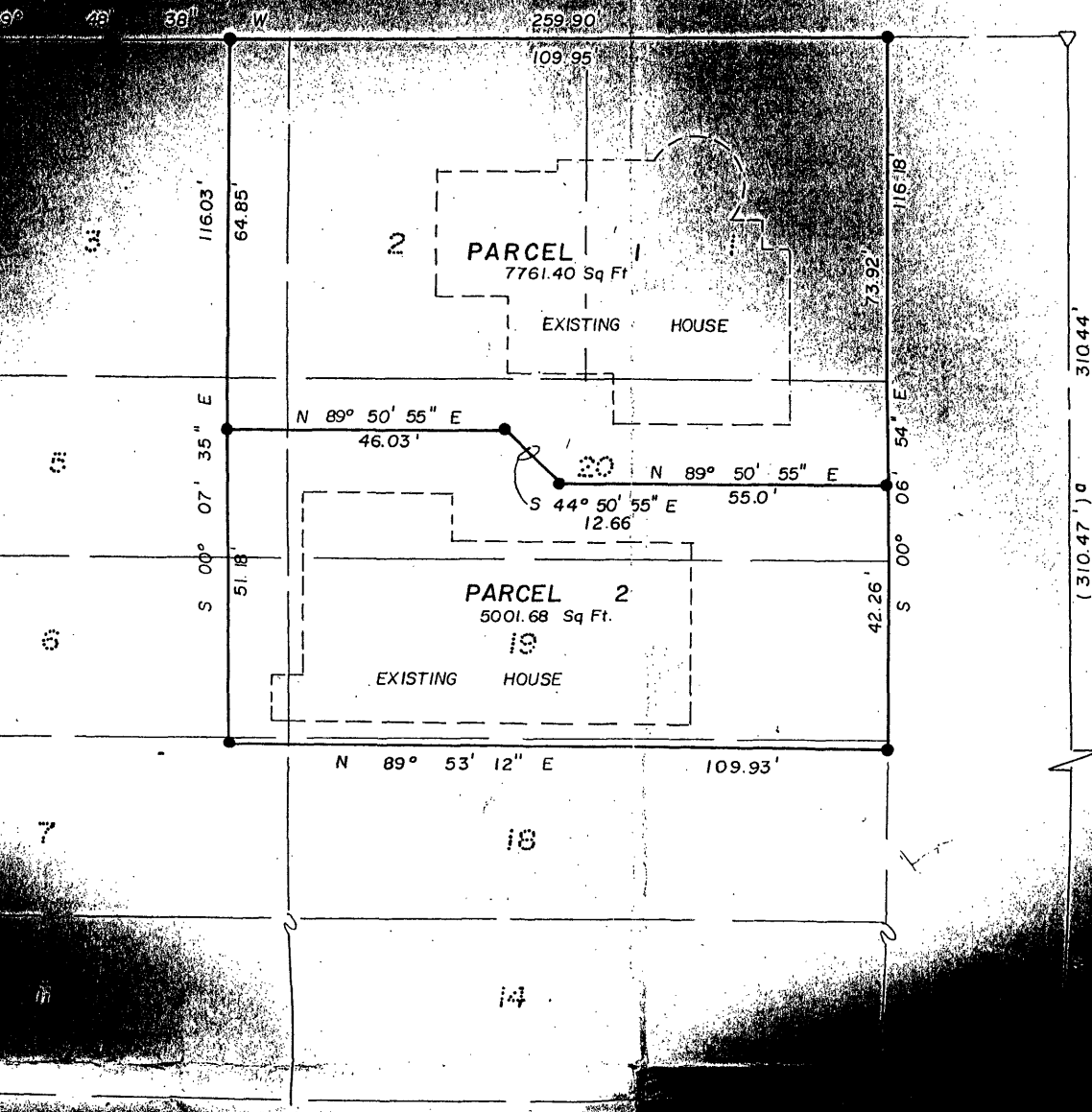
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 17

The R.L. Douglass House, Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada

- Photograph 7: Dr. Nichols House and Cottage Hospital, facing southwest
After 1913, photographer unknown
Churchill County Museum Collection No. PH-560-6
- Photograph 8: Cottage Hospital (left) and Dr. Nichols House, facing northwest
ca. 1916, photographer unknown
Churchill County Museum Collection 35MM-021-3
- Photograph 9: Douglass House front elevation, facing west
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 10: Douglass House, north elevation, facing south
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 11: Douglass House and Apartment Building (former hospital), facing southwest
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 12: Douglass House, south elevation, facing northwest
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 13: Douglass House, living room fireplace detail
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 14: Douglass House, living room into dining room showing woodwork detail
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 15: Douglass House, built-in desk in library
March 13, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 16: Former Cottage Hospital (now apartments), east elevation, facing west
April 11, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 17: Former Cottage Hospital, south elevation, facing northwest
April 11, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer
- Photograph 18: Former Cottage Hospital and Douglass House, showing noncontributing
garage, facing west
April 11, 2001, Jane Pieplow, photographer

WILLIAMS AVE.

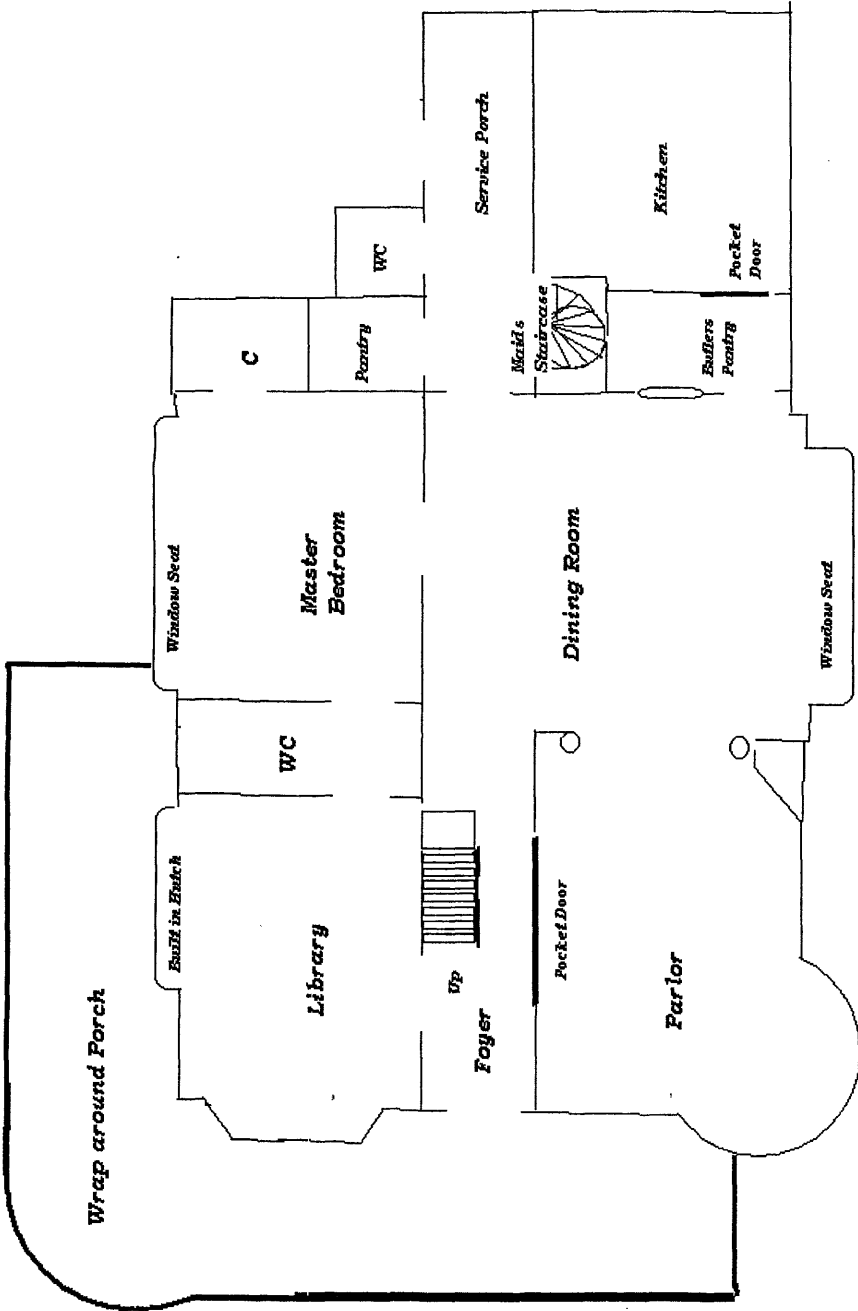


R. L. Douglass House
Fallon, Churchill Co.
Nevada

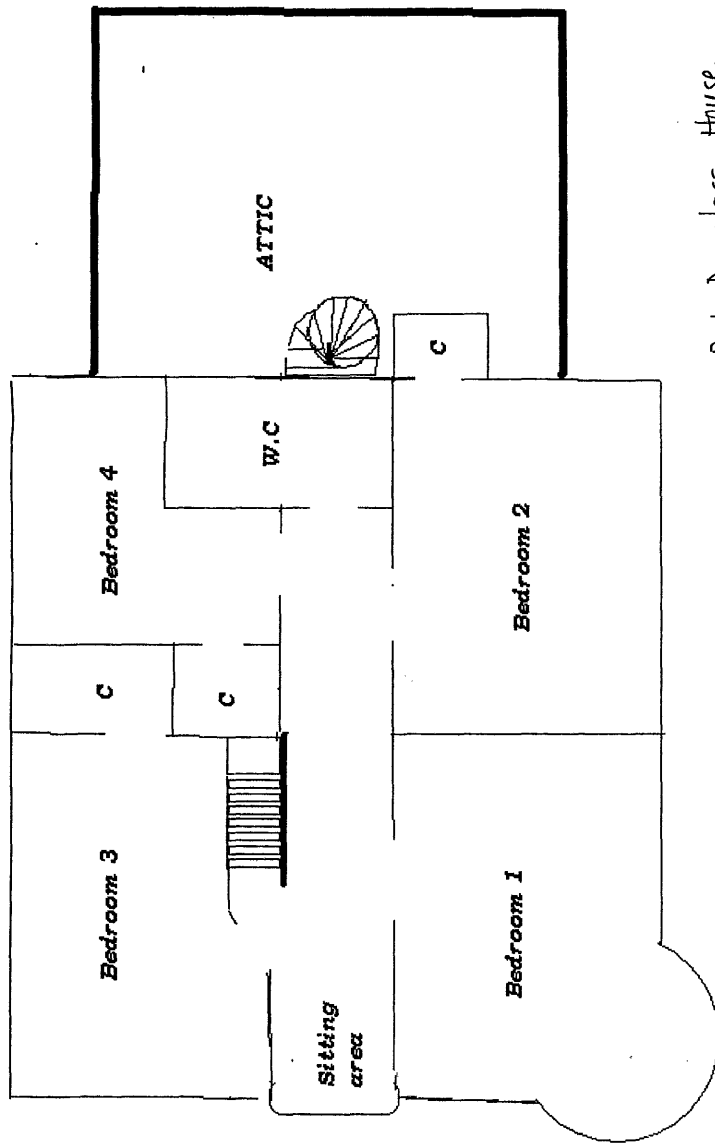
ST.

CARSON

BASE OF BEARING



R.L. Douglass House
 Fallon, Churchill Co.
 Nevada



R. L. Douglass House
Fallon, Churchill Co.
Nevada

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 01000822

Date Listed: 08/13/01

Property Name: Douglass, Robert L., House

County: Churchill

State: NV

Multiple Name: N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

(for) Avail D. Bope
Signature of the Keeper

8/13/01
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Robert L. Douglass built this house in 1904, but only lived there until 1906 when he moved to his Island Ranch property outside of Fallon, and eventually sold the house in 1913. An influential local businessman and politician, Douglass did not spend the majority of his productive professional life at the Robert L. Douglass House, but rather at his Island Ranch. National Register bulletin, *Guidelines for Properties Associated with Significant Persons*, states that eligible properties under Criterion B generally are those associated with the productive life of the individual in the field in which he achieved significance, and should be compared with other properties associated with that individual to identify those resources that are good representatives of the person's historic contribution. In the National Register's opinion, the Robert L. Douglass House does not meet these guidelines and is not significant under Criterion B for its association with Douglass.

An amendment is hereby made to the nomination to delete Criterion B. This amendment has been confirmed with Mella Harmon of the Nevada SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**