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R1503

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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1. Name of Property

Historic name: Nevada State Prison
Other names/site number: Nevada Territorial Prison
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

2. Location

Street & number: 3301 East Fifth Street
City or town: Carson City (Independent City) State: Nevada County: Carson City
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national x statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A B C x D

	<u>7/27/15</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Nevada State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

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:) _____

by Barbara Ayall
Signature of the Keeper

9-22-15
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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>23</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>6</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>35</u>	<u>5</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

INDUSTRY/Quarry

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

FUNERARY/cemetery

LANDSCAPE

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

FUNERARY/cemetery

LANDSCAPE

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classic Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT

OTHER: Mid-20th Century Minimal Traditional

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Foursquare

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: sandstone, concrete, metal, stucco, asphalt, other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nevada State Prison (NSP) campus includes a complex of stone and concrete buildings south of Fifth Street, built along the northwest slope of a hillock overlooking Eagle Valley to the north and west. The landscape of the Prison complex is anchored by the Prison Yard, around which most of the buildings form a rectangular cluster. The majority of buildings in the historic district are made of quarry sandstone, with more recent buildings constructed of concrete and steel. The southern edge of the main complex is defined by a rock wall of the Quarry, measuring up to twenty feet, topped by a double-run of chain link fence marking the outer boundary of the prison-accessed spaces. West of the main cluster of prison buildings is a landscaped area with a small cluster of housing for prison staff. North of the main cluster, across the historic route of Fifth Avenue (which lies approximately 150 meters south of the current route), is a scatter of smaller buildings including the Kennel and Butcher Shop. The historic district includes elements of Classical Revival and Modernist architecture, as well as landscaping influenced by the Picturesque style. The spatial organization reflects the earliest developments of the state prison. However, significant demolition and reconstruction in the 1920s, followed by additions to the campus in the 1950s and 60s, have given the district its present overall character. To the east of the main building cluster, and excluded from the historic district, are a set of 1980s cell blocks known as the "Hill Units," built on top of the hillock. Within the district, the thirty-five contributing and five non-contributing resources represent developments at the prison that began in 1862 and ended with the closing of the prison in 2012.

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The Nevada State Prison (NSP) campus includes resources from three major phases of development resulting from its continuous use between 1862 and 2012, when the state closed the facility. The first phase resulted in a complete campus that developed periodically and operated between 1862 and 1920. The majority of buildings and structures from this first period of construction have since been demolished, but there is a potential for discovery of archaeological resources pertaining to this period, although the majority of the district has not been surveyed. The second phase, between 1920 and 1940 completely redeveloped the prison complex, resulting in the present core of the historic district. The final historic phase between 1940 and 1967 expanded the prison's capacity and modernized facilities. Currently only the early 1960s License Plate Factory remains in active use, although it is slated to close in 2015. The prison execution chamber and courthouse, within the Administration Building, are maintained in the event they may be needed for use. Future testing may reveal new archaeological resources pertaining to all periods of the Prison's occupation. As survey, testing, and excavation reveal new sites, it may be necessary to amend this nomination to include new archaeological sites and features.

Narrative Description

Campus Overview

The Nevada State Prison campus reflects an overall landscape that constantly evolved over the course of its 150-year operation, and resulted from administrative decisions, prisoner labor programs, and everyday use. The entire Prison complex, both in and out of the district, encompasses forty-five acres of land and contains more than forty buildings, structures, and sites, dating from between 1862 and 2002. The nominated area encompasses roughly twenty-five acres, consisting of the historic prison complex mostly constructed between 1920 and 1967. The Prison sits along the eastern edge of Eagle Valley, built into an active quarry that carved a large expanse of open space into a hillock at the northern end of Prison Hill. The historic downtown of Carson City is directly west, while the Carson River flows north a mile east of the Prison, below the eastern slope of Prison Hill. Remnant, channeled drainages for Kings Canyon and Ash Canyon Creeks lie just to the north of the Prison across Fifth Street. A small tributary to Mexican Ditch, which also runs north of the Prison, runs along the western edge of the prison complex, providing ground water for much of the complex's ornamental landscape features in this area.

Although the State of Nevada constructed and maintained corrections-related buildings on the site as early as 1862, periodic events and administrative changes constantly altered the built environment of the Prison. The State built a Classical Revival style prison campus by the 1870s, following a destructive fire in 1868. However, a major building campaign during the 1920s demolished most of the resources relating to this period and constructed a new campus that is largely present today. Throughout the Prison's operation, NSP administrators used sandstone from the prison Quarry to construct most of the contributing buildings in the complex including the Administration Building, the Warden's House, the Officer's Cottages, and Cell Blocks A and B. The sandstone buildings are similar in design and construction, predominantly un-adorned but often incorporating Classical Revival stylistic features. They are made from cut blocks of sandstone quarried and finished by prisoner labor. The masonry typically uses a running bond

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pattern, though some ragwork and random work patterns are also present. Beginning in the 1950s poured concrete, concrete block, and steel began to supplement the traditional stone construction in some cases, although stone was still frequently used. After 1960, the prison completed virtually all construction in concrete or steel.

The NSP's resources resulted from three general periods of development: the early period from 1862-1900, the Progressive Period from approximately 1900 to 1940, and the Modern period from 1940 to 1967. The early period consisted of the prison's first development, represented by the Quarry and the few remaining buildings from the nineteenth century. Future archaeological testing may discover additional sites and features with information potential to the Prison's formative years.. The Progressive period spans 1900 to 1940, and encompasses the dominant phase of prison development in the late-Progressive Era into the 1930s. This phase was dominated by a building campaign in the 1920s and includes the majority of contributing buildings and landscapes in the district, including the Administration Building, Cell Blocks A and B, and the Prison Yard. The Modern period from 1940 to 1967 expanded the complex including the establishment of a residential landscape along the west side of the prison, and addition of Cell Block C and the License Plate Factory. The majority of the prison grounds have not been evaluated for archaeological resource potential, however, the presence of twentieth century diagnostic surface scatter and refuse piles in the Prison Trash Dump suggest that other sites and deposits may exist within the historic district that could be discovered through future testing.

Character and Narrative of the NSP Campus Landscape

The NSP landscape evolved over time in response to administrative and labor needs that shifted on a frequent basis. However, there are certain aspects of the spatial organization and circulation patterns within the prison that have remained consistent since the early period of Prison development. The primary anchors of the NSP campus has been the spatial relationship between historic Fifth Street, also known as Warm Springs Road on Sanborn maps of Carson City, and the Quarry that continued expanding southward from the street over the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since 1862, the various iterations of the prison campus have extended south from Fifth Street into the Quarry, as prisoners cut further and further into the hill, eventually consuming much of the hill's western quarter and creating a large, flat-bottomed "bowl" into which the Prison buildings have been constructed.

The spatial organization of the Prison has shifted over time within this guiding relationship. The original Warm Springs Hotel and Territorial Prison was linear, consisting of a string of various buildings running east and west along Fifth Street. The formal State Prison campus constructed over the 1860s and 1870s largely replicated the linear organization, with all of the cell blocks and administrative buildings fronting Fifth Street, with a rock wall-lined prison yard extending south into the Quarry. The current configuration resulted from the 1920s state building campaign. As a result of further expansion of the Quarry, the NSP's spatial organization shifted to center around the new Prison Yard, with stone buildings lining the Yard to form a rectangular organization, although the formal landscape and administrative buildings still fronted Fifth Street. This transition defined what has become the current spatial organization of the campus, as

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administrators constructed new buildings that extended the campus outwards from its center at the Prison Yard.

The resulting circulation patterns that are evident within the campus are defined by the permeable layers of control established in the landscape by the twentieth century. The present circulation pattern of the prison, which was established in the mid-twentieth century, involves three layers of resources related to control. The first is the outer Chain Link Security Fence, a non-contributing structure added in the 1980s. Outside of this fence lies an unregulated landscape that is largely ornamental, is publically accessible, but was used for labor programs for low-risk prisoners throughout the early twentieth century. Inside of the fence is a controlled space in which only prisoners, NSP staff, and approved visitors could enter. The access points for this second circulation layer were tightly controlled, with the main gate next to One Tower being the only public entrance. There are secondary staff entrances along the north and south fence to access utility buildings. The last layer is enclosed by fences, buildings, and the Quarry walls, and covers space that prisoners inhabited during the historic period. This includes the Cell Block buildings, the Prison Yard, the Culinary, and the non-contributing Gymnasium and Book Bindery to the south.

These layers of circulation affect the distribution and character of landscapes, buildings, and features within the NSP complex. While all landscape elements are generally vernacular, there is a decidedly utilitarian focus within the interior zone used for prisoner work and recreation, whereas the outer landscape elements are more ornamental in nature, and include irrigated grass lawns and Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.) trees for shading staff and guests. Older historic buildings are anchored closely around the Prison Yard and built of Quarry stone, incorporating modest Classical Revival detailing, while newer buildings are scattered outside of this initial, rectangular development, and are constructed of either Quarry stone or concrete and steel, with mostly Modern stylistic elements, if any. In the 1980s, an extension of the complex to the east resulted in the replacement of nearly all of the security fences, and the addition of eight buildings and several open yards and landscape features. These 1980s complex additions have been excluded from the nominated property due to their geographic concentration and insufficient age.

Nevada State Prison, Resource List

Resource #	Resource Name	Date	Resource Type	Contributing/
1	Quarry	c.1861-1960	Site	Contributing
2	Butcher Shop	19th Century	Building	Contributing
3	Nevada State Prison Cemetery	1875-1881	Site	Contributing
4	Fifth Street Stone Walls	c.1880s	Structure	Contributing
5	Cell Block A	1920-25	Building	Contributing
6	Administration Building	1920-27	Building	Contributing
7	Warden's House	1920-25	Building	Contributing
8	Electrical Shop	c.1926	Building	Contributing

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9	Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel	c.1927-28	Structure	Non-contributing
10	Sally Port (Courthouse)	c.1928	Building	Contributing
11	Fifth Street Guard Tower	1929	Structure	Contributing
12	Pump House	1933	Structure	Contributing
13	Prison Yard	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
14	Front Yard and Parking Area	c.1920-1958	Site	Contributing
15	West Lawn and Garden	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
16	Stone Fountain	c.1962	Object	Contributing
17	Prison Trash Dump	c.1907-1967	Site	Contributing
18	Security Fence Foundations	1942	Structure	Contributing
19	Cell Block B	1948	Building	Contributing
20	Armory (Property Warehouse)	1950	Building	Contributing
21	Storage and Maintenance Building	1952	Building	Contributing
22	Cottage 1	1953	Building	Contributing
23	Cottage 2	1953	Building	Contributing
24	Cottage 3	1953	Building	Contributing
25	Cottage 4	1953	Building	Contributing
26	Cottage 5	1953	Building	Contributing
27	Cottage 6	1955	Building	Contributing
28	Northwest Stone Wall	1957	Structure	Contributing
29	Greenhouse Foundation	1954	Site (not counted)	Contributing
30	Boiler Plant	1958	Building	Contributing
31	Kennel	c.1962	Building	Contributing
32	Cell Block C	1960	Building	Contributing
33	License Plate Factory	c.1962	Building	Contributing
34	Two Tower	1962	Building	Contributing
35	One Tower (Main Gate)	1963	Building	Contributing
36	Three Tower	1966	Building	Contributing
37	Culinary and Dining Hall	1966	Building	Contributing
38	Gymnasium and Book Bindery	1976	Building	Non-Contributing
39	Chain Link Security Fence	c.1980s	Structure	Non-contributing
40	Shed	c.2000	Building	Non-contributing
41	Maintenance Shop	2004	Building	Non-contributing

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Early Prison Development, 1862-1920

Most of the buildings relating to the earliest period of prison development have since been demolished. As mentioned above, future archaeological testing may reveal new sites and features within the district that have information potential regarding the earliest years of the prison's operation. Construction during this period used prison quarry stone almost exclusively, and lined the south side of Fifth Street. Historic photographs from the period reveal that much of the construction was of Classical Revival style, and arrayed along Fifth Street from the current location of Interstate Highway 580 extending several hundred feet east.

Among the first buildings at the site was the Warm Springs Hotel, established by Abraham Curry in 1861 and leased to the Territory of Nevada as a prison beginning in 1862. According to Curry biographer Doris Cerveri, the two-story hotel measured 100-by-32 feet with an adjoining bath house measuring 160-by-38 feet with six pools about twenty-five feet square. Historic photos of the resort from this period show a two-story stone building of side-gable form fronted by a long porch, presumably the hotel portion of the resort. The Hotel was connected to a one-story building of considerable architectural distinction via two intervening stone structures. The one-story building was fronted by a porch and a façade of precisely cut, smooth-faced ashlar blocks, and topped by a stepped parapet with an eagle statuette at its crest. The function of this building is uncertain; it may have been the bathhouse.¹

The earliest operations at the Nevada State Prison involved adapting the Warm Springs Hotel to correctional use. The Warm Springs Hotel's row of connected buildings established the public façade of the nineteenth century prison. A report by Warden Howland dated December 9, 1864, described partial completion of a "new addition" that measured 41-by-28.5 feet and eighteen feet high at the eaves. Completed by Warden J.S. Crosman in 1865, the addition contained two tiers of cells, apparently eight cells to each side with a center passage on both floors for a total of thirty-two cells. The cells measured eight feet long and four feet wide and were constructed of stone on all sides with doors of double thickness two-inch planks. The cell doors were secured by a contraption consisting of "an iron bar which fastens each door at the same moment being worked by a brake from the Guard Room." The cell block, which seems to have been referred to in later years as the "Territorial Addition," survived the May 1, 1867 fire that destroyed most of the rest of the prison. In a report to the legislature following the fire, Warden James Slingerland described the main building that was destroyed as having measured 100-by-40 feet and to have been in deteriorated condition. The prisoner dining room may have been adobe, which would explain how inmates were able to dig a hole through its wall and escape in 1865. The Hotel and bath house had been demolished by the 1920s.²

¹ Lawrence & Houseworth, "State Prison and Warm Springs, near Carson City," c.1860s, Image #495, The Society for California Pioneers, Online Photographic Database, http://www.californiapioneers.org/lh/search_image.php?id=0495, accessed 12/8/2014.; Cerveri, *With Curry's Compliments: The Story of Abraham Curry*, (Elko, NV: Nostalgia Press, 1990), 13-14, 26-28; Jennifer E. Riddle, Sena M. Loyd, Stacy L. Branham, and Curt Thomas, *Images of America: Nevada State Prison*, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 12-13.

² From its dimensions and other evidence the main building may have been the converted ca. 1861 hotel; "Warden's Report and Inventory, 1864," Nevada State Prison Papers, Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City; John B.

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The early NSP campus appears to have evolved periodically over the 1860s and 1870s. As the complex developed, it featured workshops and other auxiliary buildings or wings that supported the operation of the facility. The blacksmith shop mentioned in the March 1864 deed is also referenced in the December 1864 Warden's Report at which time it contained a bellows, anvil, and other ironworking tools. The 1864 Report also mentions a carpentry shop, kitchen, armory, guard room, office, the prison yard, the cells, and a "cell room" which seems to have been the large space that contained the individual cells. In the Prison Yard, prisoners stockpiled worked stone for use in the ongoing construction of the cell block and perhaps other buildings. The prepared stone included "cut Sills" (window sills or door thresholds), "Ashleigh [ashlar] for fronts of buildings," "cut flag" (flagstones for floors or walkways), and "Moulded caps for Columns."³

Historic photographs provide a sense of the prison's physical appearance in the late nineteenth century. The prison complex was not only a prison; it included the residence of the warden and his family and at least some of the guards. The main front building where these apartments were located featured a second-story cantilevered bay window (technically an oriel window) which may have marked the location of the warden's parlor. Unlike most of the prison's windows the bay window and adjacent second-story openings were not barred. They looked onto a landscaped "front lawn" flanked by ornamental watch towers and shaded by trees. A photograph dated to the 1870s, taken from an elevated location above the south Quarry wall, shows an extensive complex of one- and two-story buildings. Most appear to be stone but there are accounts of adobe structures as well. The principal building, distinguished by a cupola with lancet-arched openings, a bracketed cornice, and a domical roof, occupied the site of the present Administration Building and served an administrative function with second-floor staff quarters and a rear wing with small windows that may have lighted cells. The complex appears to have grown incrementally over the course of the 1860s, as funding allowed, with an increase in construction to replace buildings destroyed in the 1867 fire. Another fire occurred in 1870. After the 1870s the complex appears to have grown more slowly until a new phase of construction commenced in 1920, demolishing and salvaging much of the early prison campus.

Newspaper accounts of a large prison break on September 17, 1871 provide incidental detail on the facility. The break began in the upper tier of the cell block which adjoined the apartments of Lieutenant Governor John Franklin Denver, who also served as warden and whose family lived at the prison. An account based on eyewitness testimony stated that the escaping prisoners, numbering around thirty, reached the roof of the main front building and cut a hole through it. Denver, his family, and guests "were seated in one of the Warden's rooms up stairs enjoying a nice little dinner" when "suddenly hearing the tramping of the prisoners along the roof with the clanking of their heavy chains they at first thought it was an earthquake." The prisoners jumped

Snyder, untitled manuscript – history of the Nevada State Prison, 2005, 4-5; Myron Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1881), 546, 547, 556; Cerveri, *With Curry's Compliments*, 26-28.

³ "Warden's Report and Inventory, 1864," Reports, Department of Corrections collection, Nevada State Library & Archives (hereafter NSLA); *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, September 19, 1871, Nevada Historical Society Library (hereafter NHSL); Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 12-18; Photos NSP 0006 and 0323, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

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down into the upper stair hall and secured the prison armory on the first floor. A gun battle ensued, with Denver shooting from above while guards and the proprietor and bartender from the adjacent Warm Springs Hotel fired at the emerging armed prisoners from outside. The account describes an “outer wall” that enclosed the yard in front of the prison and had provision for guards, either a parapet, platforms, or towers. It is possible the octagonal towers were in place by this time.⁴

By 1875, the prison had expanded further to provide larger facilities. An inventory taken that year describes, in addition to the shops and functional spaces described in the 1864 report, a tailor shop, laundry, bath house, prisoner’s dining room, guard dining room, store room, library, warden and guard lodging rooms, stable and barnyard, magazine (containing blasting powder, caps, and fuse), and Butcher Shop. An account of the buildings that existed prior to the destructive fire of May 1867 described the “old kitchen” as “nothing but a tinder box built of rock.” The 1875 inventory also described the equipment of the cells: 133 bunks, the same number of mattresses and pillows, and sixty buckets. The latter were presumably used as chamber pots and their number, roughly half the number of bunks, suggests two prisoners to a cell and possibly three in some instances.⁵

1. Quarry. c.1861-1960. Contributing site.

The Quarry served as a defining feature within the NSP complex during its historic period. Its walls wrap around the complex more or less continuously from the east side of Cell Block A around to the southeast corner of the Sally Port (Courthouse). The walls vary from a more terraced condition west of the License Plate Factory to sheer cliff faces on the south and west sides of the campus.

The Quarry walls are full of fossilized faunal and floral remains and excavation of stone revealed prehistoric animal tracks beginning in the nineteenth century. During the early days of the prison, prison staff used some of these caves for solitary confinement. During the 1940s, the prison repurposed the caves for prisoner activities such as use for the *Sagebrush Newspaper* office, a carpenter’s shop, and prison offices. Graffiti and a human face are carved into the stone near some of the cave entrances, which have iron barred or strap gates. One has a lintel inscribed with the name of Warden Denver S. Dickerson who served two terms as warden in the 1910s and 1920s.

In operation by 1861 as a private quarry for Abraham Curry, the Quarry has expanded significantly as prisoners removed stone for buildings both at the prison and in nearby Carson City. Generally removing rock southward away from Fifth Avenue, the Quarry attained its present shape by 1960, when the use of steel frames and concrete in prison buildings ended the practice of using quarry stone and prison labor for construction. The Quarry walls not only provided an additional barrier to escape, but the flat surface area left as the prisoners cut the walls back provided more space for the construction of new

⁴ *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, September 19, 1871, and *Nevada State Journal*, September 23, 1871, NHSL.

⁵ “Nevada State Prison Inventory and Account Book, 1875,” Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA; Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, 546, 547.

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buildings after the Second World War. Near the south end is an area with modern sweat lodge foundations and other features associated with Native and earth-based religions. A 1962 aerial photograph shows retaining walls along the east side of the Quarry that have since been removed, replacing the sheer cliff with a set of terraces sloping upward and eastward to the License Plate Factory.⁶

The Quarry retains good integrity to the period of significance. The Quarry reflects roughly a century of operation as part of the Prison between 1862 and the late 1950s. Although the Quarry bottom has since been in-filled with buildings and landscape features over the course of the twentieth century, the Quarry walls remain and define the present overall landscape of the Prison complex.

2. Butcher Shop, late nineteenth century, Contributing Building.

The Butcher Shop is the northern-most building within the complex and is located outside of the secure prison fence line. It is a 300-square foot, coursed sandstone rubble building. The west façade includes an off-center door opening. The original door is gone and has been replaced with a wooden door and a re-purposed three-light sash window with a vertical axis. The north side of the building has one off-center opening for a window. The opening is lined with a dressed sandstone lintel, jambs, and sill. The building's front-gabled roof is made of concrete slab supported by a metal ridge beam, likely added in the twentieth century. The Butcher Shop is currently not in use and the interior is in poor condition.

The first mention of a butcher shop is in an 1875 inventory. The building contained a chopping block, a large cupboard with twelve meat hooks, meat spikes, and a "large Force Pump & piping" presumably for hosing down the interior, as well as foodstuffs including large quantities of beans, potatoes, cabbages, and flour. However, an 1887 Warden's Report mentions the construction of a new butcher shop, indicating the building was replaced by that year. Researchers believe this building to be the 1875 Butcher Shop but cannot confirm due to lack of documentation. The concrete roof may be a replacement added along with similar modifications around the campus in the 1920s.⁷

3. Nevada State Prison Cemetery. 1875-1881. Contributing site.

Early prison staff buried unclaimed bodies of prisoners who died while incarcerated on a hilltop to the south of the prison. There are eleven marked graves and the potential for unmarked graves. Tablet-style stone grave markers with round-arched crests record death dates between 1875 and 1881 as well as brief biographical information such as name, birth date, and in some instances place of birth. The graves are defined by rock borders and were once mounded. One tombstone has a lightly pecked depiction of a cross on its obverse. Two graves are marked by unhewn sandstone blocks. Some graves have footstones. The area of marked graves is defined by a partial rock border. An undated

⁶ Snyder, 106.

⁷ "Nevada State Prison Inventory and Account Book, 1875," Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA.

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photo (likely taken in the early twentieth century) suggests some tombstones have been moved or replaced. Separated from the cemetery, but possibly formerly part of it, is a broken obelisk tombstone discovered behind Cottage 2. The partially effaced inscription appears to read “Thomas Miller, died Feb. 2d 1865, age 42 years.” The tombstone is most likely that of F. Miller, a convicted highwayman who died on February 2, 1865, after being shot in a failed escape attempt. The future information potential of the cemetery regarding early prison life makes it eligible under Criterion D as part of the larger historic district.

4. Fifth Street Stone Walls. c.1880s. Contributing structure.

The Fifth Street Stone Walls are two separate features on either side (north and south) of the historic route of Fifth Street that runs along the north edge of the Front Lawn and Parking Area. The walls are built of three courses of rectangular, cut sandstone quarried from the Prison. The wall on the south side of Fifth Street is capped with blocks of poured concrete. The southern course runs approximately seventy meters and creates the north border of the Prison’s Front Yard. The northern course is in poor condition, and sits outside the Chain-link Security Fence built in the 1980s. It also consists of three courses of sandstone, but does not have a concrete cap. The existing remnant of this wall begins along the historic route of Fifth Street, approximately twenty meters northwest of the Fifth Street Guard Tower. It runs 225 meters east along historic Fifth Street, past the Kennel, terminating along the road approximately thirty meters south of the Butcher Shop.

The walls appear in historic photographs of Fifth Street by approximately 1880, although its workmanship appears to have changed throughout its life. While the wall appears to have been constructed early in the Prison’s development, historic photographs, the use of poured concrete as a cap course, and the fact that the Fifth Street Guard Tower is built into the wall, suggests that at least the southern portion was demolished and rebuilt in 1929.

There is a possibility of additional archaeological resources dating to this earliest period of operation. . Despite periodic ground disturbance from re-grading and new construction since 1920, sites such as the Prison often contain intact subsurface features such as privies, wells, cellars, and burn piles, and the like. Within the historic district, a number of buildings along the north end of the historic route of Fifth Street, near the Butcher Shop, have since been demolished, but their foundations and other residual archaeological evidence may be retained in situ. It is not possible to determine integrity of pre-1920 archaeological resources at this time, but archaeological testing in the future could determine the nature and degree of integrity of these unevaluated resources. A field survey of the Trash Dump Site (Resource #15) revealed few nineteenth century diagnostic artifacts.⁸

Late Progressive Era Developments – 1920 to 1940

⁸ Dr. Sarah E. Cowie to Jim Bertolini, personal communication, July 24, 2015.

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NSP administrators commenced a significant building phase in 1920 alongside nation-wide reforms in many aspects of American political, social, and cultural life, a period known as the Progressive Era. As in the previous period of development, prison administrators used prisoner labor for the construction, but contracted architects including the regionally-renowned Frederic DeLongchamps to design new buildings. Sources suggest that architect Edward E. Hoxie was also involved in some designs. State Engineer W.J. Boudwin oversaw the majority of new construction. Other individuals involved with the project in 1920 included W. Heidenreich, likely William M. Heidenreich, a Carson City contractor active in the 1910s and 1920s.⁹

The developments at the NSP between 1920 and 1927 constructed the core of the prison complex's current form. Historic photos from 1924 illustrate the demolition of the nineteenth-century buildings on the north end of the campus, making way for the construction of the present Administration Building and Cell Block A. Changes in the stonework pattern suggest that construction of these buildings proceeded in stages. The Administration Building and Cell Block A together gave the present rectangular form to the prison yard which, prior to that point, had evolved continuously since the 1860s. The Administration Building perpetuated the general outline of the old prison and continued the north-facing front established by the Warm Springs Hotel buildings in the 1860s. NSP administrators removed the last standing portions of the hotel around 1920, the former site now being occupied by the parking lot in front of the Administration Building's west wing and main entrance. Future archaeological testing in this area may reveal features related to this earliest period.¹⁰

After the remodel, the NSP was described as "modern in every respect, being sanitary and fireproof." The flammable wood roofs and combustible interiors of the old prison had been replaced with reinforced concrete roofs and interiors finished with cement parging on metal lathe. Prisoners landscaped the grounds inside the walls and out, including setting out a large American flag made from painted river cobbles, located on a manicured sloping embankment at the south end of the Sally Port. Nevadans generally thought that prison should be a humane place and the newly renovated NSP became a source of pride for the city and the state.

5. Cell Block A. 1920-25. Contributing Building.

Perpendicular to the northeast end of the Administration Building is Cell Block A. Constructed between 1920 and 1925, it is a rectangular, four-story, coursed sandstone building with its north side connecting with the Administration Building. Entrance to the building is via an exterior metal staircase in the Prison Yard on the northwest corner of the building. The building has a flat roof with a surrounding metal railing to allow guards to use the roof as a patrol space. The cells are arranged "back-to-back" in two rows, facing outward toward the prisoners corridor and the windows. Each cell has three concrete walls and an open wall with bars facing the exterior, where there are multi-pane sash windows to provide natural lighting. A pipe chase runs between the row of cells,

⁹ "Prison Construction Claims, July-October 1920," Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA; Drawings NAA1/005, NAA1/061, NAA1/116, Frederic J. DeLongchamps, Nevada Architectural Archives, University of Nevada – Reno (hereafter NAA-UNR); *R. L. Polk and Company's Reno, Sparks, Washoe County and Carson City Directory, 1917*, 237, 260; *Polk's Reno City, Washoe County and Carson City Directory, 1923*, 452.

¹⁰ NSP Photos 102 and 104, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

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providing electricity and ventilation, and a corridor from which guards could access water and electricity for each cell without opening the cell door.

Work crews commenced construction of the cell block in 1920 using designs from Nevada architect Frederic DeLongchamps. However, construction appears to have been delayed persistently by poor funding and weather until the building's completion in late 1925. DeLongchamps designed the cell block with thirty-two concrete cells on each of the four floors, and sandstone quoins on the southeast and southwest corners. Each cell housed one prisoner (though the inmates quickly found themselves with a bunkmate as the population increased) and was sparsely furnished with a metal bed, a toilet, and a sink.¹¹

Warden R. B. Henrichs directed the construction work, which was most active in 1920-21. A period newspaper article noted:

With the cell house completed the new prison will begin to pay for itself through the decreases made possible in the force of guards, at the rate of about \$9000 per year. Construction of the first floor of the cell house has been practically finished and work has been started on the walls of the second story. When completed, under present plans, the cell house will be a four-story building, made of stone cut in the prison yard by convict labor, and will have a housing capacity of 125.¹²

During the construction of Cell Block B in 1948, attached to the south end of the Cell Block A, construction crews removed the gun posts and quoins on the south elevation. Since that time, a metal fire escape has been added to the west elevation, new flood lights have been installed at the roofline and on the roof, and some window unit air conditioners have been added. Later, prison administrators enlarged the cells of Cell Block A by removing selected concrete partitions between them and inserting new steel partitions as needed. Other than this interior modification, Cell Block A preserves its essential 1920s character. It remained in use for housing prisoners until the State legislature decommissioned the NSP in 2012.

6. Administration Building, 1920-27. Contributing Building.

The Administrative Building served as the official visitor entrance and administrative hub for the prison. The two-story building has an L-shaped footprint and is built of sandstone ashlar with a running bond and some random ashlar pattern stonework. Except for the simple Classical Revival entrance surround, the building has no identifiable style. The main public entrance to the building is on the west elevation of the building and consists of double doors. Surrounding the doors are square sandstone Doric pilasters. The Nevada State Seal is painted above both pilasters. The words "Main Entrance" are painted on wood and attached above the double doors. Flanking either side of the entrance are electrical sconces with wrought iron light fixtures. A simple corbelled cornice above the

¹¹ John B. Snyder, unpublished manuscript on the NSP, (2005), 52, 57-58; Drawings NAA1/005 and NAA1/061, Frederic DeLongchamps, NAA-UNR.

¹² "Prison Plans told at Lunch." *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 16, 1921, NHSL.

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entrance repeats the cornice on the building. On the northeast section of the building, there is a third story addition of poured concrete with a flat roof, extending east from the midpoint of the north ell to the east elevation of the building where it joins with Cell Block A. The building retains its original wooden one-over-one sashes with either sandstone or concrete sills and lintels throughout. An inscription stone over a doorway on the east elevation identifies the west wing as the prison's first license plate factory which operated in this building from 1931 until 1962. The third floor addition has wooden four-over-four windows but with no lintels or sills. All windows are secured with exterior bars. The roof is flat and composed of tar and gravel. Metal staircases access the second and third stories from the Prison Yard.

Frederic DeLongchamps provided designs for this building, which was constructed in stages between 1920 and 1927. Like much of the prison's built environment at that time, prisoners provided the labor, cutting and laying the stone from the Prison Quarry. In 1950, a third story was added to the east end, constructed with poured concrete and known as the Hospital Wing. A plaque at the top of the stairs near the east end of the addition notes architect Edward S. Parsons provided the plans for the addition, and that Nevada Engineering Construction Company and G. Panicari constructed it.¹³

In 1931, Warden Penrose added the NSP's first license plate factory to the south ell of the building. That extension connected the Administration Building to the Sally Port. In Penrose's 1931 report he described the newly-constructed addition:

"The building was planned and erected under my direction. Construction started May 1, 1931 and was finished the latter part of 1932. It is a two-story structure of prison limestone [*sic*] and reinforced concrete, matching other prison buildings. All labor, stone which was cut by hand, crushed stone and rock was supplied by the prison without cost to the state. Only one-half of the ground floor is being used for the license plate factory. The other half, and the entire second floor is vacant, and could be used to house other prison industries which would not interfere with anything in our state. Such industries would not only save the state money, as the license plate factory is doing, but would provide education and more work for the inmates. The several pieces of machinery are the most modern, and are electrically driven. The factory runs about one month and a half each year as no outside work is done. Most states [have] their own plants, the same as ours. An average of 20 inmates are employed during the most part of the time, and about 15 during the remainder, finishing up."¹⁴

The building served as the northwest barricade, keeping the inmates confined within the prison proper. Historic photos show wooden double doors with nearly full-length glazing, however, these have been replaced and covered with plywood. "Nevada State Prison" also appeared above the door in historic photos, but has since been removed.¹⁵

¹³ Snyder, 52, 58; Drawings NAA1/005 and NAA1/061, Frederic DeLongchamps, NAA-UNR.

¹⁴ Penrose report in c.1931?

¹⁵ NSP Photo 0327, NSP Photograph Collection, NSLA.

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7. Warden's House. c.1921-1925. Contributing Building.

Constructed between 1921 and 1925, the Warden's House is a two-story, Four Square style building approximately forty-five feet wide and thirty feet deep. It has a concrete foundation with a sandstone ashlar first floor, and a stucco second floor, with a low-pitched, hipped, asphalt composition shingle roof. Windows on the front and side elevations are generally symmetrically placed sash windows, although all window openings are boarded over with plywood. All jambs have been retained, but many sashes have been removed. The porch has also been boarded over, with an unlit entry door at the top of the stoop. The rear elevation has ghost marking indicating a gabled hood was placed over the rear entry at some time, but later removed. The rear concrete stoop has also been removed. There are three chimneys constructed of coursed sandstone masonry: two interior chimneys and an exterior chimney on the north elevation.

The as-built house is slightly different than the drawings provided by Frederic DeLongchamps in 1920. While the form and style of the building is the same, DeLongchamp's plans called for a main entry with a half-view wooden door and a twelve-light glaze, with flanking two-by-four sidelights. The second story included two sash windows and what appears to be glazing for a sleeping porch along the northeast corner of the building, with a ribbon of four fixed windows or screens. The designs did not specify beyond sash windows, showing options for either one-over-one or four-over-one vertically-divided units. Plans called for two sandstone chimneys, one on the rear of the building and one on the north elevation.

The most significant alteration was the addition of a second story porch. This is evidenced by the replacement of the porch roof with a shallow, shed roof, and the presence of two doorways on the second story of the façade. The second-story doors were French doors and the roof of the front porch was surrounded by a wood balustrade which was removed at an unknown date (post 1950). The French doors and most of the second story windows are missing and the openings have been covered with plywood.¹⁶

Toward the end of the period of significance, Warden Fogliani oversaw the conversion of the Warden's Residence into an investigation facility. It was then left vacant for many years and the condition deteriorated. The interior suffered extensive water damage and prison labor was used to remove all of the lathe and plaster, down to the studs. The original tongue and groove wood floors, stairway, turned banisters, and some historic trim remain intact.¹⁷

8. Electrical Shop. c.1926. Contributing Building.

South of the Maintenance Shop is a single-story coursed sandstone building known as the Electrical Shop, built in 1926. It was possibly constructed to house the electrical plant for the prison, also completed that year. However, it may have acquired that use in the 1950s when the prison used the building as a shop for electrical, television, and radio

¹⁶ Riddle, 36-37.

¹⁷ Snyder, 53, 58.

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maintenance. The Electrical Shop is built into the hillside and has a lower level walk-out on the west façade. The flat roof is concealed by a low parapet wall. Modern wood stairs lead to the upper level which is entered through a wooden door with two-by-six glazing, sheltered with a metal gabled hood. Beside the door is a large, eight-over-eight wooden window. The other windows in the building are narrow, horizontal, single-glazed windows with iron bars on the exterior.¹⁸

9. Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel. c.1880-1928. Non-Contributing Structure.

Excavated into the Quarry wall behind Cell Block B is the c1880s Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel. The tunnel entrance is adjacent to the Shed, but has been closed and filled with concrete.

After the discovery of fossilized footprints in the Prison Yard/Quarry in the nineteenth century, prison administrators oversaw prisoners who excavated tunnels into the Quarry walls in an effort to uncover more footprints. The undertaking was successful and resulted in two more tunnels in 1882-83. In 1927-28, prisoners extended the horseshoe shaped Footprint Tunnel and installed viewing stations, complete with lighting. A sloth statue was placed at one of the tunnel entrances. Unfortunately, today the entrance to the Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel is permanently closed by a block of poured concrete. The Footprint Tunnel was filled with concrete in the 1990s due to fears that in an earthquake the tunnel would undermine the stability of the License Plate Factory, built just above it. Before the concrete was poured, the Nevada State Museum advised prison administrators to place sand and wood barriers on top of the prints so that if the cement were removed the prints might remain. The condition and integrity of the footprints is unknown.¹⁹

10. Sally Port (Courthouse). c.1928. Contributing Building.

Connected to the southwest corner of the Administration Building is the Sally Port/Courthouse. Sally Ports were the primary entry and exit of the prison grounds for incarcerated individuals. As was the case with the NSP, many sally ports were un-roofed structures with gates on the interior and exterior. The exterior walls are constructed of rusticated ashlar with a running bond. The archways are Classically-influenced with well-defined voussoirs and a keystone with a molded stone cap. The east archway into the Prison Yard is inscribed with the name Penrose, a former warden, and the date "1928." The archways are filled with square concrete blocks and flush metal doors. The building

¹⁸ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1926, to June 30, 1928, Inclusive*, NSLA..

¹⁹ There is a lively discussion in national journals regarding the discovery of the footprints at the Nevada State Prison. Despite their significance to late-nineteenth century zoology, the prints are now covered by concrete, and thus non-contributing to the historic district at this time. See "Ancient Footprints: A Record of Post-Tertiary Man-Gigantic Sandals and Small Men," *The Helena Independent*, August 20, 1882, 1; "Find relics of the Days of Civil War," *The Carson City News*, February 2, 1928, 1:6; "Footprints of Monster Men," *New York Times*, August 18, 1882; Mark Twain, "Carson Footprints," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, March 25, 1885, 1; Robert H. Davis, "Nevada Footprints," *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, 4(1893):598-605, available via Google Books; Gene Hattori, Nevada State Museum, personal communication, 2013.

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has no windows except for glass blocks randomly placed among the concrete blocks within the arches. A concrete wheelchair ramp has been added to the exterior doorway on the building's north elevation. The flat roof has wood trim around the cap of the stone walls, and is a single-ply membrane.

When constructed in 1928, the building functioned solely as a sally port, a controlled entry corridor into the Prison Yard. It was hollow and roofless, with arched entryways and iron gates on the north and east elevations, providing access between the exterior and the Prison Yard. In 1966, crews of prisoner and Synanon²⁰ labor filled in and finished the Sally Port for use as a Courthouse. Workers filled in the arched entry points on the north and east elevations and added the metal doors. They added a roof, and finished the interior, creating a 1,475-foot Courthouse for the prison.²¹

11. Fifth Street Guard Tower. 1929. Contributing structure.

Near the Administration Building, inside the prison fence line but inaccessible to inmates, is the only remaining example of three free-standing, stone guard towers built in 1929 under Warden Penrose. The octagonal tower is a 10' by 10' structure built of coursed sandstone masonry. Seven of the building's sides have window openings and the eighth has an entry, but all openings are boarded over with plywood. Original windows appear to have been one-over-one wooden sash units. The decorative metal sheathed roof has an ornamental metal weathervane-like finial, a decorative overhanging fascia, and a molded base. A round-arched opening at the base, under a modern wraparound deck, has a decorative wood door on iron strap hinges. The style of the tower mimics those of free-standing stone towers that were built as part of the c.1868 NSP grounds. The original towers were taller and narrower, but were demolished as part of construction in the 1920s. Of the other two 1929 towers, one was located south of the Sally Port above the Quarry, and the other was located farther east on Fifth Street near the current Storage and Maintenance Building.²²

12. Pump House. 1933. Contributing structure.

In the parking lot on the west side of the Administration Building and Sally Port is the Pump House. Built in October of 1933 under Warden Penrose, the Pump House is an 8' by 8' structure made of coursed sandstone ashlar with a barrel-vaulted concrete roof studded with small river cobbles for ornament. Prison administrators located the Pump

²⁰ Synanon was a prison reform organization that attempted to provide work experience for prisoners in preparation for eventual release. More on the Synanon movement at the NSP can be found in Section 8.

²¹ Snyder, 57..

²² Calisphere, University of California Digital Library, digital image A8825, <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt5h4nc5w8/?layout=metadata&brand=calisphere>, (accessed April 10, 2015); "Warden Calls for Books for Library at the State Prison", *Carson City News*, January 6, 1928, 1:5; "Beautifying Grounds At State Prison", *The Carson City News*, April 13, 1928, 1: 3; NSP 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

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House here above the original springs to source fresh water for the remainder of the prison, as well as the garden and spring house to the west of the building.²³

13. Prison Yard. c.1920-1967. Contributing site.

The Prison Yard achieved its present rectangular form in the 1920s with the construction of the Administration Building, Cell Block A, and Sally Port, however, its current form reflects post-war redevelopment of the complex. The Yard includes mostly open unplanted areas, with raised, rock-lined planting beds along its south border, and flat, ornamental planting beds and rectilinear concrete walkways along its north. An asphalt basketball court surrounded by chain link fence dominates the western half of the Yard. Three concrete walkways cross the remainder of the Yard at angles.

The earliest prison campus from the 1860s contained a rear yard for prisoners, defined by the collection of buildings lining Fifth Street. During the nineteenth century, historic photographs reveal the yard as a simple, dirt enclosure surrounded by a high stone wall. However, the redevelopments of the 1920s demolished this and constructed a new Prison Yard into a form of parterre with broad walkways, rectangular lawn areas, and topiary-like coniferous plantings. Prisoners built and maintained most of the landscape features, which included examples of decorative stonework and stone carving. The grass lawn that appears in a c.1930 aerial photo disappeared by 1962, likely as a result of water prioritization amid an expanding prison population. During the first half of the twentieth century, several stone buildings, referred to as “the Bullpen,” defined the south wall until construction crews razed them in 1967 to make way for the Culinary.²⁴

Historic Associated Feature: *Raised planting beds* – rock-lined raised planting beds on south edge of Prison Yard.

Historic Associated Feature: *Flat planting beds* – grade-level planting beds along north edge of Prison Yard lined with rocks.

Historic Associated Feature: *Concrete walkways* – concrete pathways that cross the Prison Yard both symmetrically and diagonally, and appear to have been added later in the prison’s administration.

Historic Associated Feature: *Basketball court* – asphalt, single court basketball court with a chain-link fence surrounding it. The basketball court appears by the 1961 aerial imagery series. It appears to have been a component of expanded recreational opportunities for prisoners under Warden Fogliani.

14. Front Yard and Parking Area, c.1920-1958. Contributing Site.

The Front Yard and Parking Area includes the designed landscape covering the northwest corner of the prison along the approach from Fifth Street. The landscape abuts the north and west elevations of the Administration Building. It provided visitors with an

²³ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1932, to June 30, 1934, Inclusive*, NSLA.

²⁴ Snyder, 106; NSP 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

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ornamental introduction to the prison's sandstone buildings, and established a visual border between Fifth Street and the complex.

At present, the Front Yard retains the triangular, grass lawn established in the 1920s. The deciduous trees, mostly elms (*Ulmus* sp.) lining its northern edge have matured since their planting along Fifth Street in the late-nineteenth century. There is a coursed stone wall that runs an abbreviated course from the prison entrance 200 feet to the east along the historic route of Fifth Street. A semi-rectangular space adjacent to the west façade of the Administration Building is the open, paved Parking Area. Designed and built by the time of a 1931 aerial photo, the Parking Area is defined by open parking and turn-around space, anchored around an oval planting bed near the main entrance to the Administration Building. Painted stones similar to those used in the American flag structure (described on page 23) border the planting bed, which is now surrounded by an additional concrete curb.

Early historic photos show very few alterations in spatial organization, circulation, and built features in the site. A ca. 1930 pamphlet about the prison stated, "Today [there are] beautiful lawns [and] every conceivable variety of flower . . . lending a soothing touch to offset the necessary 'Spanish Lace' that bars the doors and windows."²⁵ Aerial photographs from the 1930s indicate that the formal appearance of the lawn retained its character into the late Progressive era, with the addition of what appear to be garden or sculpture features (no longer extant). In the 1931 photo, a small grassy strip fronted the access road, and spelled the words "N. S. PRISON" in river cobble. Prison crews paved most of the exterior road and parking areas with asphalt between 1956 and 1958.²⁶

Historic Associated Feature: *Elm alley* – planted early in the prison's development, likely the 1860s, there are four elm (*Ulmus* sp.) trees remaining, of what had once been a solid line of elms flanking Fifth Street on its route west into Carson City.

Historic Associated Feature: *Traffic circle rock border* – on the interior of the parking circle is a patterned rock border that used to mark the circle when this portion of the Prison's parking was dirt. Since the area outside the circle has now been paved, a concrete berm has been added around the rock border. Historically, there was a tree (likely an elm [*Ulmus* sp.]) in the center of this feature, and planted grass. The tree has since been removed, and since the closing of the Prison and end of irrigation, the grass and most of the plantings have perished.

Historic Associated Feature: *Oval planting bed* – twenty meters south of the traffic circle, and three meters southeast of the Pump House is an oval, rock-lined planting bed, halved by a rock-lined dirt path running east-west. Due to lack of maintenance and watering, the planting areas are mostly dirt. Historic photos suggest the rocks were periodically white-washed.

²⁵ *Picture Story of Nevada State Prison*, undated pamphlet (c.1930), Pamphlet HV9475 N32 P53, Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada; "Perils of Fire Faces Many U.S. Prisons." *Syracuse Herald*, April 25, 1930, 21.

²⁶ Snyder, 106.

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15. West Lawn and Garden. c.1920-1967. Contributing site.

The West Lawn and Garden encompasses landscaping, retaining walls, water features, and various artistic and structural features on the west side of the campus, outside the prison walls. Situated around and west of what became housing for prison guards, this area reflects developments begun as Warden Penrose's beautification program in the late 1920s and refined under Wardens Bernard and Fogliani in the 1950s and 60s. The construction of this designed landscape provided not only a gardening opportunity for low-risk prisoners outside the prison fence, but also created a residential landscape for prison staff who lived on site with their families. The area straddles a service road, and is defined by a the outer security fence running along its east side along the edge of the controlled prison grounds, along its west by an irrigation ditch, hedge, and remnant stone wall, and on the north by a dressed sandstone wall.

On the south side of the Northwest Stone Wall is the Greenhouse Foundation site (an uncounted, contributing feature) and a roughly square irrigation reservoir. The reservoir has both coursed stone and rock pilings lining its banks, and was in use to support irrigation on State land including the prison by 1911.²⁷

The landscaped grounds follow the west side of the access road to the Cottages and the Warm Springs Correctional Center (WSCC) and include an open, terraced lawn area to the south of the Armory. Aerial photographs show this area attained its present spatial organization and tree composition by the 1930s, although the grounds were mostly used for gardening. Trees are a mixture of Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.). A 1962 aerial shows a transition in the intervening years towards open lawns with modest landscape features.²⁸

There are several landscape features in the lawn area with unknown dates of construction, although all appear to date from the 1950s or later. On the north side of the lawn is an approximately six-foot Stone Fountain. circular fountain constructed of white, reddish, and green stone with an octagonal walkway border of the same stone. The 1962 aerial photograph shows the fountain in this location. Near the midpoint of the lawn area are stone walkways, a stone-lined swale, and a footbridge paved with white, green, and reddish rock, as well as a double terrace with stone and concrete retaining walls. Just north of, and below, the retaining walls are white river cobblestones that spell out "WSCC" (for Warm Springs Correctional Center). The rise with the terraces appears to be the remnants of a filled-in swimming pool constructed by 1954. The grounds continue as a narrowing triangular lawn opposite the cottages, shaded by cottonwood and elm trees, slightly raised above a marshy area on the west side and ending opposite Cottage 6.

²⁷ Snyder's history relates a 112,000 gallon reservoir constructed west of the prison that captured Warm Springs water for use to irrigate farmland north of 5th Avenue. It is quite likely that the extant pool is the reservoir, constructed in 1910. The pool appears in the first aerial photographs of the prison taken in 1931; NSP Photo 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA; Snyder, 61.

²⁸ NSP 0005 and NSP 004, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

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Just south of Cottage 6 is a grotto-like feature with a small sunken pool of cold water, rock faces, sandstone rubble-paved slopes, stone-lined beds and walkway, and a stone bench. The feature appears in the 1962 aerial photo series, and was possibly constructed along with the Cottages in the 1950s.

The steep slope south of the Sally Port was graded, planted at the top with cottonwood trees, converted to lawn, and ornamented with a large US flag formed of painted river cobbles between 1929 and 1931. Stones painted red, white, and blue form the letters USA at the top. South of this, behind the Cottages, are remnant rock terraces and concrete planting beds that were previously interspersed into a post-war residential landscape. There is also an entrance to a tunnel of unknown original function which appears in a c. 1931 aerial photo, located east of Cottages 1 and 2. At the foot of the slope are vestiges of a line of garages that formerly stood behind the Cottages.

Historic Associated Feature: Irrigation reservoir – this feature covers most of the northwest corner of the West Lawn and Garden, and appears to have been first constructed between 1909 and 1911. The rock-lining along the banks, especially the east bank, served as both a decorative feature and as foundation stabilization for the Greenhouse.

Historic Associated Feature: Cottonwoods – planted in the 1930s, the west Lawn and Garden is heavily shaded with mature Fremont cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*).

Historic Associated Feature: Paths and walkways – there are several short concrete and rock-lined pathways within this site, almost all of which appear in the c. 1962 aerial photograph and appear to date to the Bernard era, when there was still gardening practiced in this portion of the Prison.

Historic Associated Feature: Stone bridges – there are two mortared stone bridges over a water channel along the west edge of the Lawn area. Both of these bridges are still present.

Historic Associated Feature: Retaining wall – there is a terraced set of retaining walls towards the middle point of the Lawn, west of the access road. Historic photos indicate this was the location of a residential parking area in 1962, and may have been the former location of the swimming pool, built along with the Cottages.

Historic Associated Feature: Concrete water channel – this channel runs west from the access road into the water channel along the west end of the Lawn, emptying just north of the southernmost stone bridge.

Historic Associated Feature: Stone American flag – along the west fence-line of the Prison, east of the access road, is an American flag comprised of painted stones. This feature appears in the c.1930 aerial photographs and has been maintained since that time.

Historic Associated Feature: Grotto – at the south end of the Cottages is the Grotto, a small water feature that is indented into the southwestern corner of the ridge comprising the west boundary of the Prison Yard. The Grotto is a rock-lined

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pool measuring approximately seven meters wide (north-south) and five meters long (east-west), and has a rock-lined path running southeast from Cottage 6 approximately ten meters to the pool's edge.

16. Stone Fountain. c.1962. Contributing Object.

On the north side of the West Lawn and Garden is an approximately six-foot, circular Stone Fountain, constructed of white, reddish, and green stone with an octagonal walkway border of the same stone. The aerial photographs of the Prison show no fountain in 1931, but show the fountain by 1962, suggesting it was built under either Warden Bernard or Fogliani.

17. Prison Trash Dump. Early. c.1907-1940. Contributing Site.

The Nevada State Prison trash dump is a disperse scatter of prison related refuse located east of the prison fence and extending almost to Fairview Drive. The trash dump consists of domestic and industrial debris widely scattered over an irregular area measuring approximately 1300 feet by 450 feet. The dump contains thousands of diagnostic artifacts, characterized by concentrated trash mounds as well as scatters of diagnostic glass, ceramic and metal fragments including tin cups and license plate fragments. Most of the dump surface is composed of scattered individual fragments of discarded materials. However, a concentration of trash mounds containing high densities of cultural materials occurs near the center of the dump. Diagnostic artifacts in these piles include cut nails and colored glass, and an applied lip bottle neck indicating a possible association with the mid-nineteenth century period. Larger mounds, perhaps the result of mechanical clean-up and dumping by truck are also present. Temporal indicators (maker's marks, trademarks, distinctive manufacturing elements) indicate that most of the mounded and scattered debris dates to the early and mid-twentieth century. A concentration of construction debris is located in the northwest quadrant of the dump and includes dressed sandstone blocks, "T" beams, concrete slabs and heavy iron doors. A granite mano and red chert secondary flake indicate that the area was likely used prehistorically.

While it appears debris is not in its primary context, extant portions of the dump retain integrity of materials, setting, feeling, and association. While the movement of the dump materials has disrupted its depositional integrity, the volume of cultural materials present allows for reasonable "presence-or-absence" information potential. Subsequent cleanup of the area resulted in mounding of refuse and topsoil, but all debris remains within the dump extent. Mounds and scatters of debris within the trash dump contain data that can address research questions relating to prison operation and use over time. Functional artifact categories observed within the dump include: domestic items relating to food preparation and consumption; personal items relating to hygiene, grooming and health; activities, including those related to prison industries and maintenance; and architectural items consisting of construction hardware, materials, and utilities.

The association of the dump site with the prison, and the presence of prison-related cultural materials in volume, allow the dump site to contribute information potential to

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the significance of the prison. Future archaeological analysis of the dump site may help researchers answer questions about the daily social lives of prisoners and guards, the material culture of the prisoners and guards, and the diet of both prisoners and guards. The building refuse may also contribute to analysis of any changes in construction over time, differences in workmanship or materials used in buildings that are no longer extant, and perhaps even what tools were used to work the stone in what periods. By retaining clear association with the prison's historical context, and possessing integrity in materials, setting, feeling, and association, the dump site contributes to the significance of the NSP under Criterion D.

There may be additional archaeological features within the historic district relating to the 1920-1940 period, but a formal archaeological survey and evaluation will be needed to confirm their presence and integrity.

The Modern Period – 1940 to 1967

Following the Second World War, the NSP underwent a second major phase of development as administrators sought to expand and update the prison campus. Development of new technology alongside expansion of services led to the addition of new buildings and some modification of existing buildings to suit new needs. NSP administrators converted the once-hollow Sally Port into an enclosed Courthouse. Dedicated library and culinary facilities freed space in the cell blocks to house more prisoners as the number of incarcerated persons in State facilities rose steadily in the 1950s and 60s. While the prison continued to expand after 1967 due to massive increases in the number of incarcerated citizens in Nevada, modifications after that date were generally concentrated in the "Hill Units" located on the eastern side of the NSP campus and outside the historic district boundary.

18. Security Fence Foundations. 1942. Contributing Structure.

There are concrete and stone foundations for chain link fence courses interspersed atop the Quarry wall and running southward toward the Cemetery, likely completed in 1942. The fences were replaced and upgraded on these courses in 1960 under Warden Fogliani. Many of these historic fence lines have been demolished and built over with new courses of modern chain link fence, likely in the 1980s. By that time, the expansion of the NSP to include the Hill Units required the replacement of most of the fences with new materials and courses. Among the best intact foundations of the 1942 fence can be found along the ridge top east of the Cottages and north of the Prison Cemetery.²⁹

19. Cell Block B. 1948. Contributing Building.

South of Cell Block A, and connected to it, is Cell Block B, a four-story, coursed sandstone masonry building constructed in 1948. The window openings are barred and have sandstone lintels and sills. The metal window sashes feature a nine-by-nine glazing pattern. The roof is flat and has a railing around its perimeter to allow guards to patrol. As built, NSP staff projected that Cell Block B would house 216 inmates. During the building's construction, crews removed the stone tower guard posts on the corners of the

²⁹ Snyder, 97, 109; NSP 0002, NSLA.

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adjacent Cell Block A, replacing them with steel and glass towers at the south corners of Cell Block B. A plaque on the interior identifies the architect as Edward S. Parsons and the contractor as the Walker Boudwin Construction Company.³⁰

20. Armory (Property Warehouse). 1950. Contributing Building.

Just south of the Greenhouse is the Armory, a one-story, gabled building with wood lapboard siding and a concrete block half wall around the perimeter above the foundation. The windows and doors are boarded over. Prisoners constructed the building in 1950. It originally served as a warehouse and armory storage building. It has been vacant since at least 2009. Aside from the addition of a newer composition shingle roof, there have been no significant changes to this building.

21. Storage and Maintenance Building. 1952. Contributing Building.

East of the Warden's House is the Storage and Maintenance Building, a one-story, rusticated sandstone building with a side gabled roof, measuring 30' by 100'. In the southeast corner of the building is an inscription stone carved with name of Warden A. E. Bernard and the date 1952. The roof is sheathed with corrugated metal. The building is elongated with four entrances on the west façade and garage bays and doors on the rear/east elevation. One of the front entrances has been filled in with concrete slump block, and another contains a modern air conditioner unit. Prison administrators made at least two additions to the building prior to 1962, both of which extended it to the north. The first of these was a single car garage built with a coursed sandstone foundation and panel and batten walls, and the second, a ragwork stone addition extending north to the historic route of Fifth Street.³¹

The Cottages (#22-27)

On the west end of the complex, outside the prison fence, are a set of cottages designed and built in the 1950s to provide on-site residences for prison guards and their families. All of the cottages are constructed of rusticated sandstone laid in a running bond and low-pitch, asphalt composition shingle roofs. They all have inset porches supported by wooden posts and containing a large picture window on their west façades. All other windows are wooden one-over-one sash units. The boxed eaves on the five hipped-roof units appear to have been reconstructed recently, and the roofs recently replaced. However, some of the units have slight modifications that distinguish them from the others, detailed below. There were sandstone, front-gabled garage buildings constructed for these cottages in the late 1950s, but these were demolished between 2004 and 2006.³²

22. Cottage 1 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

³⁰ NSP 0107 and 0108; Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1946, to June 30, 1948, Inclusive*, NSLA.

³¹ NSP Photo 0002, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

³² John Snyder, *Nevada State Prison History*, State of Nevada – Department of Transportation, Carson City, NV (March 2005), 106, and Attachment photos NSP-27 and NSP-28; NSP 0002, Nevada State Prison Photograph Collection, NSLA.; Aerial photographs available at Carson City's public GIS webpage show the garages present in 2004, but absent in the next series in 2006.

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At an early date, likely before 1960, a stone pony-wall was added around the porch of this cottage. The pony-wall uses a random un-coursed pattern. A sandstone exterior chimney is on the north side of the house. The front picture window has an octagonal accent window. There are remnants of an enclosed, lapboard shed roof entry added onto the rear elevation that has since been partially removed.³³

23. Cottage 2 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

Aside from the features listed above, this unit has a small, enclosed shed addition on the east elevation.

24. Cottage 3 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

25. Cottage 4 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

26. Cottage 5 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

27. Cottage 6 – Minimal Traditional. 1955. Contributing Building.

Cottage 6 is a Minimal Traditional type house with one story and a side-gabled roof. Cottage 6 was built from sandstone cut to the dimensions of standard bricks. Red bricks have been used as an accent around the windows to mimic shutters. The front porch has ladder-like wood supports. There is a small, enclosed shed addition on the east elevation.

28. Northwest Stone Wall. 1957. Contributing Structure.

The dressed sandstone wall at the northern edge of the lawn is an historic associated feature. It runs along the south side of the parking lot. The wall incorporates a stone carved with the name “Warden A. E. Bernard” and the date “1957,” and it terminates at both ends at pillars with decorative molded tops.

29. Greenhouse Foundation. 1957. Contributing Site (not counted).

West of the main gate and south of the Northwest Stone Wall are the remains and stone foundation of the former Greenhouse. The remains and foundation include a two foot high stone foundation made of uncoursed sandstone masonry and capped with a poured concrete sill. A rectangular, concrete trench in the middle of the floor is fed with water from the warm springs. Historic photos show that a similar building appears to have been constructed in the 1920s and included a wood framed, front-gabled greenhouse building set on the foundation and designed to keep the plants from freezing in the winter. However, records and a carved block reading A.E. Bernard, Warden, 1957, indicate it was demolished and reconstructed in that year. The site is not a counted resource in the

³³ The Quarry stopped active production by 1960, so it is unlikely that any stone work on the campus was completed after that date.

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historic district, as it is already within the larger West Lawn and Garden, with which the Greenhouse was functionally related during the period of significance.³⁴

30. Boiler Plant. 1958. Contributing Building.

South of the License Plate Factory is the Boiler Plant, a 65' by 40', painted, pre-cast concrete building constructed in 1958. It has a primary one and a half story section on its south side consisting of the boiler and utility room, with a two-story section to the north. Both sections have a flat roof, and multiple pedestrian and freight doors with multi-light glazing. Windows are predominantly paired, two-by-two steel frame windows. The building's west elevation includes a ribbon of paired windows along the full length of the two-story section, providing light into the boiler and utility room.³⁵

31. Kennel. c.1950s. Contributing Building.

Southwest of the Butcher Shop, but still north of the prison fence line, is a 60' by 25', side-gabled building constructed from coursed sandstone masonry. The building has a moderately pitched gable roof sheathed with corrugated metal. The gables have wood siding. On the north elevation, toward the northwest corner are three large sliding bay doors. There are some paired, fixed windows on the building. The construction date and original function of the building is unknown but it appears to have been built between the 1930s and 1950s as a maintenance or storage building. However the use of quarry stone indicates it was built prior to 1960, after which the Quarry was no longer in use. It served as a kennel for guard dogs in the 1970s.³⁶

32. Cell Block C. c. 1960. Contributing Building.

Cell Block C is a two-story building connected to the south elevation of Cell Block B. It is constructed of pre-cast concrete and has an asphalt, low-pitched gabled roof and barred windows. Constructed in about 1960, this building became a separate block to house high-security inmates, and for use as a solitary confinement facility. Although possessing a separate floor plan, it served as an addition onto the south elevation of Cell Block B, extending the east definition of the Prison Yard southward by several hundred feet. The construction of the Culinary eventually eliminated this relationship to the Prison Yard.³⁷

33. License Plate Factory. c. 1962. Contributing Building.

East of Cell Block A is the License Plate Factory. The factory is a 180' by 40' concrete masonry building constructed by 1962. It has a shallow gable roof, high ribbon windows in multiple sets, and billboard-style painted signage on the north gable end. There is a two-story, shed-roof projection on the west elevation. The first story of the projection is

³⁴ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1952, to June 30, 1954, Inclusive*, NSLA.

³⁵ NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

³⁶ The construction date of the Kennel is unknown but it does appear in the 1962 aerial photograph set. NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

³⁷ NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

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concrete block, with a single door on its north elevation. The second story of the projection is corrugated steel.³⁸

34. Two Tower. 1962. Contributing Building.

South of the Electrical Shop is a 12' by 12' pre-cast concrete guard tower with an asphalt roof with a wide overhang. An interior staircase climbs up three stories to the guard room at the top. The majority of the tower has squared concrete walls. The guard post portion has a concrete half wall and glass picture windows that are canted outward to the roof overhang and provide a full view of the prison.

35. One Tower (Main Gate). 1963. Contributing Building.

One Tower, a pre-cast concrete 18' by 18' building constructed in 1963 sits at the northwest entrance to the prison. The first floor is canted inward, and contains ribbons of aluminum framed windows on all four sides. The walls of the second story are made of canted glass windows. The roof is flat with a wide overhang, and is topped by several utility and communications modules.

36. Three Tower. 1966. Contributing Building.

Three Tower stands on a single, round steel support with an octagonal guard room at the top. The structure contains twenty-five square feet and is accessed by a spiral steel stair outside the prison fence, with the entrance via a platform on the south face of the octagon. The guard room itself has a metal half wall canted inward, joining a continuous ribbon of steel-frame windows that are canted outward. The roof is flat, with flat metal faces approximately two feet in height above the windows.

37. Culinary and Dining Hall. 1966. Contributing Building.

North of the southern Quarry wall is the one-story Culinary and Dining Hall. Built in 1966 with International stylistic influences, the Culinary consists of a 65' by 125' primary building, with a 40' by 100' addition onto its east elevation. Both sections of the building are constructed from concrete block and share a flat, single-ply membrane roof with a large face along the eave with evenly-spaced block brackets. Though of concrete and steel construction, the exterior walls are faced with square tile. The compatible east addition was added in 1999.³⁹

³⁸ The License Plate Factory does not appear in an aerial photo series from 1962. However, it was constructed shortly thereafter and appears in photographs of the prison from the late 1960s. It is also mentioned in subsequent reports by Warden Fogliani prior to his removal in 1967.

³⁹ "1998 Aerial Photos" and "2001 Aerial Photos" layers, Carson City public GIS web tool, <http://ccapps.org/publicgis/>, accessed 3/9/2015;

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Post-Modern Construction

After 1967, there remained some modest construction within the main prison complex for basic needs and further increases in the prison population. The dominant construction phase after the historic period was the addition of the “Hill Units” east of the historic NSP campus. There have also been infrastructural upgrades including a larger water tank and accessory buildings constructed on the east side of the campus. Both the Hill Units and accessory buildings are not within the historic district.

38. Gymnasium and Book Bindery. 1976. Non-contributing Building.

South of the Boiler Room is the Gymnasium and Book Bindery Building, a prefabricated building with metal siding and a metal gabled roof. It was constructed in 1976. The Book Bindery occupies 4,137 square feet of the building and the Gymnasium occupies 7,980 square feet of the building.

39. Chain Link Security Fence. c.1980s. Non-contributing Structure.

Most of the historic campus is surrounded by two runs of chain-link fence of approximately twelve feet, topped with concertino wire. Aluminum posts are spaced at approximately ten feet. These courses of chain-link were most likely added after the construction of the Hill Units to provide additional security. Many of the fence courses run along historic courses established in 1942 or 1960.⁴⁰

40. Shed. c. 2000. Non-contributing Building.

Beside the blocked off entrance to the Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel is a small shed built from concrete blocks with a front gabled roof. The construction date of the shed is approximately 2000.

41. Maintenance Shop. 2004. Non-contributing Building.

East of the Storage and Maintenance Office is the Maintenance Shop, a 40' by 100' prefabricated building with metal siding and a metal roof. It is on a concrete slab foundation and was built in 2004.

Integrity of the District

The Nevada State Prison retains good integrity in all seven aspects during its period of significance from 1862-1967. The campus as a whole reflects the result of continuous evolution in administration at a site that has been used by the State of Nevada as a prison from 1862 to 2012. The built environment of the historic district best represents the period between 1920 and 1967 when the Prison refined its rehabilitative methods of correctional administration. The overall integrity of setting, feeling, and association of the NSP has been well retained.

The buildings themselves retain strong integrity in design, workmanship, and materials. The heavy use of prisoner-crafted sandstone from the Quarry prior to 1960 is still very evident. Most

⁴⁰ Snyder, 109.

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historic buildings within the district have received very few modifications to their design or finishes since the historic period, with most changes being interior infrastructural upgrades. The non-contributing buildings within the district are compatible with the significance of the NSP as a prison complex. A small number of resources date from before the 1920 reconstruction phase, and represent the vestiges of the NSP's earliest built environment. Although the NSP complex best represents its use and development after the construction campaign of 1920, remnant resources, and the presence of the Quarry walls, provides enough historic fabric from the earliest period of the prison to begin the period of significance in 1862.

Although no formal archaeological investigations have been completed, there is an expectation of information potential in the Prison Trash Dump site within the district. There is reasonable information potential within the prison grounds for other archaeological deposits that are not known at this time. Despite years of landscape alteration and surface re-grading, institutional settings such as these often possess intact archaeological resources preserved underneath the disturbed layers and under parking lots. Even within the upper, disturbed layers, there could be diagnostic artifacts with information potential. Careful monitoring of excavation within the district, and future archaeological testing will be necessary to determine the nature and extent of these resources.

The various landscapes and associated features retain strong integrity to the period of significance in their spatial organization, species composition, land use patterns, and topography. Most changes since the period of significance have been minor additions or subtractions of designed landscape features. Most of the new landscape features are decorative elements in the West Lawn and Garden that are compatible with the overall character of the site as a park-like recreational space.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ARCHAEOLOGY

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Period of Significance

1862-1967

Significant Dates

1862 – Establishment of the Nevada Territorial Prison

1864 – Establishment of the Nevada State Prison

1920 – Construction begins on main campus

1967 – End of rehabilitation-focused methods at NSP

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

DeLongchamps, Frederic J.

Parsons, Edward S.

Heidenreich, William M.

Nevada Engineering Construction Company

Panicari, G.

Walker Boudwin Construction Company

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Nevada State Prison is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the Area of Politics and Government for its association with Nevada's administration of a correctional system, especially its adoption of rehabilitation-focused prison reforms in the nineteenth century, and the refinement of those reforms in the twentieth century. The Nevada State Prison (NSP) best represents Nevada's implementation of rehabilitative methods of penology by 1920, and the expansion of those practices after the Second World War. The NSP is

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also significant under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology for its potential to yield information about prisoner and guard life in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1862 with the establishment of the Territorial Prison and ends in 1967 with the transition from rehabilitative methods of corrections to contemporary, security-based modes of prison administration. Between 1862 and 1967, NSP administrators created a built environment that emphasized the treatment of prisoners as patients who could be rehabilitated through labor. Among the various work programs established for NSP inmates was the quarrying and cutting of sandstone, the construction of prison campus buildings, and the development and maintenance of the prison's landscape. In 1967, the administration of the prison, and the treatment of its prisoners, changed dramatically towards a system that emphasized security and control, leading into the contemporary age of prison management in the United States.⁴¹

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Corrections in the State of Nevada

The Nevada State Prison (NSP) is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government as a reflection of Nevada's correctional policies beginning with the establishment of a territorial prison in 1862. The NSP became the only correctional institution for the State of Nevada until the 1960s when nation-wide increases in incarceration rates required expansion of the state's prison system. During most of the NSP's operation in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, administrators utilized rehabilitative correctional practices developed after the American Civil War and refined during the Progressive Era, but phased out in many areas by the late-twentieth century. During that time, NSP administrators developed a campus of buildings and landscapes that were designed around concepts of prisoner rehabilitation through labor and cost-saving measures for state administration, including stone-quarrying, gardening, and building construction and maintenance. Until 2012, the NSP was the anchor facility of Nevada's oldest state agency, and served as the only territorial and state correctional institution in Nevada from 1862 through 1964. Rehabilitation practices at the NSP continued from the late-nineteenth century to 1967, after which administrative changes at the NSP, and national trends in incarceration beginning in the 1960s, precipitated a shift away from rehabilitation as the primary focus of the Prison.

Establishing Nevada State Prison, 1862-1864

The site that became the NSP began as a makeshift territorial prison following the establishment of Nevada as a territory in 1862. Americans and immigrants flocked to what became western Nevada in 1859, seeking riches from the newly discovered Comstock Lode in Virginia City. As a result, Congress officially recognized the Nevada Territory in 1861, and the following year the territorial legislature provided that a prison be established at the capital of Carson City. The population boom following the "Rush to Washoe" exposed the need for an organized

⁴¹ James W. Hulse, *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted*, (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 291-92.

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correctional system in Nevada, precipitating the development of one of Nevada's oldest institutions.⁴²

Nevada adopted the tiered correctional system that had become the standard throughout the United States. Tiered corrections established a combined system of county jails, state prisons, and federal prisons, each with its own purpose. While federal penitentiaries exclusively housed those who had violated federal laws, state and county institutions interacted more closely. Each tended to house convicts under state or county law, respectively, but state prisons often housed convicts with long-term sentences from throughout the state, regardless of whether local or state law had been violated. The Nevada legislature formed a Prison Commission in 1862 and charged it with finding a suitable building to serve as the state prison. Because no such building existed, legislator and Carson City founder Abraham Curry offered to board prisoners at his Warm Springs Hotel east of Carson City for \$500 per month. Curry's land featured a warm freshwater spring and a sandstone Quarry, upon which he built a stone bathhouse and hotel.⁴³

Upon its conversion to a prison in 1862, the Hotel housed four prisoners who spent their time laboring in the Quarry. Curry served as their warden, agreeing to "keep all convicts for their labor, and a bonus of \$6,000 more or less per annum. He will employ them in his extensive stone Quarry, and has already prepared cells etc., for their safe retention."⁴⁴ Curry sold the property to the Nevada Territory for \$80,000 in March of 1864. The twenty-acre purchase included the thirty-eight-cell former hotel building that measured thirty-two by ninety-six feet, the sandstone Quarry with its tools and horse teams, and use of Curry's adjacent toll road. Despite its reuse as a prison, the property retained the impression of a crude frontier hotel: canvas lined the interior walls, the roof was composed of wood shingles, and no fences or walls existed around the building's perimeter. Period newspapers also indicate that the hotel portion remained available for public accommodations for several years after the transfer.⁴⁵

The Reformatory Movement at the Nevada State Prison, 1864-1900

On October 31, 1864, Nevada made the transition from territory to statehood, and on November 5, the prison officially became a state-administered institution. From its earliest days through the modern era, the NSP sought to adopt nationally-recognized correctional practices. However, limited funding often hampered this goal, leading to only scattered adoption of Reformatory practices until the twentieth century. Despite the institution's status as Nevada's first state agency, its management remained somewhat provincial in its early years. In 1864, Warden Howland added the first cell block, known as the Territorial addition, to the campus to house the nineteen inmates of the prison. In 1865, J.S. Crosman assumed wardenship, inheriting twenty-two inmates and a dismal budget. In spite of fiscal constraints, Crosman successfully secured funding to complete construction of a twelve-foot high security fence around the Hotel, Quarry, and Prison Yard, as well as guardhouses, two water wells, an icehouse, an enclosed garden, and a

⁴² Hulse, *The Silver State*, 75.

⁴³ Snyder, 2-3.

⁴⁴ Undated newspaper article, "Nevada State Prison," ephemera file, Nevada State Library, Carson City.

⁴⁵ Snyder, 4; Nevada Statute 1864: 66 "An act to provide for a territorial prison;" Ormsby County Deed Book 8, 63; Raymond Smith, *Carson City Yesterdays*, Vol. 1, (Minden, NV, 1999), 29.

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cellar. He also constructed an addition to the Hotel measuring thirty-two by forty-one feet, which provided fourteen additional two-person cells.⁴⁶

Among the consistently defining features of the prison was the stone Quarry, included in the 1864 deed. The deed granted to the State of Nevada “all the quarried stone now on said premises.” In addition to the spring waters, the NSP’s outcrop of sandstone provided raw materials for building purposes and began operation by 1861. While early stonecutting at the Quarry was a commercial venture of Curry’s, stonecutting soon became a source of revenue and an occupation for prisoners. Nevertheless, as late as 1870, non-inmate quarrymen worked alongside the prisoners to blast out rock for the Nevada State Capitol (NRIS#75002126).⁴⁷

A prison escape in December of 1865 illuminated the need for improved security, in spite of the new fence. A group of inmates were able to loosen mortar and dig their way out of the main building. As a result, Warden Crosman plastered the interior walls of the prison, in addition to raising the southwest security wall by four feet. In 1866, Crosman also increased the size of the prison yard by blasting out the Quarry, constructed a masonry water tank that delivered water to the kitchen, and added a twenty-two by seventy-eight foot room to the rear of the main building.⁴⁸

The subsequent management of the NSP responded both to national trends in prison management and Nevada’s population trends in the second half of the nineteenth century. The expansions and improvements outlined below were a response to overcrowding at the NSP, mirroring national trends that saw a swell in inmate population between 1868 and 1878. The NSP’s population increases correlate with the state’s early mining boom between 1859 and 1879. According to Warden James Slingerland, the population at the NSP tripled from 41 in 1867 to 128 in 1869. Because of the crowded conditions, the 1873 Legislature passed a law mandating a new prison, large enough to house 300 inmates and to be constructed in nearby Reno. However, the project ran over budget, and the massive spending resulted in only a partial perimeter wall being built at the Reno location. The 1877 Nevada State Legislature refused to provide additional appropriations for the construction of the state prison at Reno, and the site was abandoned. In 1877, the inmate population at the NSP ballooned to 144, forcing guards to house the prisoners in the prison’s fifty-three cells. According to early-twentieth century historian Blake McKelvey, the overpopulation problem was a result of Nevada “thronging with desperadoes” in the “boom days” of the 1870s, but may have been influenced by a rise in crime following the end of ‘bonanza’ mining in the late-1870s. The prison’s population remained relatively steady until 1888, when it declined to 99, reflecting the decrease in Nevada’s population as people began to

⁴⁶ Snyder, 4-5.

⁴⁷ Ormsby County Deed Book 8, 64; Robinson, *Nevada Directory of 1862*, 1, 3, 5-8, 11; “Warden’s Report and Inventory, 1864,” Nevada State Prison ephemera files, NSLA; Dolan, “Pages from the Past,” April 30, 1972. The 1862 business directory lists five stonecutters as boarders at Curry’s Warm Springs Hotel, presumably cutting and facing stone for projects in the Eagle Valley region.

⁴⁸ Snyder, 6-7.

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leave the state for employment elsewhere. After this drop, the prison population remained steady into the 1900s.⁴⁹

The appointment of James Slingerland to the NSP wardenship in 1867 signaled the beginning of the prison's early Reformatory period. Despite Nevada's relative youth as a state, the legislature and administrators attempted to adopt contemporary strategies for prison management. Shortly after Slingerland, assumed wardenship, a kitchen fire consumed much of the prison, largely sparing the "Territorial Addition," but precipitating some of the first Reformatory changes at the institution. Slingerland began a reconstruction project that helped establish the prison as a state institution, replacing the improvised frontier hotel with a dedicated iron-and-stone penitentiary, adding two dungeons for solitary confinement, iron gates, and a locking mechanism that he designed himself. Compared to other Gothic and Romanesque Revival style state prisons that were popular during the late nineteenth century, the NSP was relatively modest in appearance, yet it did possess a number of architectural flourishes. The ornamental gates, medievalist octagonal watchtowers, and roof-top cupola seen in historic photographs suggest a conception of the prison as a State institution worthy of such embellishments. The prison's proximity to the Warm Springs resort may also have encouraged a more decorative approach.⁵⁰

Slingerland's developments echoed an ideological shift in American penology away from the harsh discipline of the Auburn System, which enforced absolute silence and solitary confinement at night. Prisons throughout the country began adopting a rehabilitative approach known as the Reformatory System, compelled by an 1867 report on correctional institutions. In that year, the New York Prison Association employed Enoch Wines and Theodore Dwight to examine prison conditions in the United States and Canada. Wines and Dwight emerged from their investigation with a list of recommendations, including larger cells, better sanitation, rehabilitation incentives, and non-corporal punishment. Despite the call for improved conditions for prisoners, the report also espoused simplicity of construction. To Wines and Dwight, "highly ornamental" prisons were "objectionable" because they were more expensive to build, increasing the cost of crime to society. Wines and Dwight argued that investment in architectural adornment would discourage prison authorities from modifying or replacing their facilities in the event that evolving prison theory suggested better arrangements. The authors also claimed that ornamental prisons lent "dignity" to crime. While their suggestions were not broadly adopted until the 1876 establishment of Elmira Reformatory in New York, their influence became apparent in Warden Slingerland's sanitation improvements at the NSP. Beginning in 1867, Slingerland implemented several improvements to the facility, including increasing ventilation by installing transoms over doors and draining the adjacent marshland. Despite his desire to improve health and hygiene at

⁴⁹ Blake McKelvey, *American Prisons*, (University of Chicago, Chicago: 1936), 76, 197; Snyder, 17, 28, 33; Hulse, *The Silver State*, 101, 162; C.C. Batterman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1877 and 1878*, NSLA; Frank J. McCullough, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1889 and 1890*, NSLA.

⁵⁰ James Slingerland, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years of 1867 and 1868*, NSLA; Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 12-18.

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the prison, Warden Slingerland insisted that he had “not proposed to consume precious time in trying to make an unmitigated rascal an honest man.”⁵¹

Among the key Reformatory developments at the NSP was the creation of a Public Account system of penal labor, which involved producing goods onsite and selling them on the open market. This was common for correctional facilities in the nineteenth century, which largely administered prisoner labor for two reasons: to cover operating expenses and to dispense punishment. Warden Crosman reported that prisoners were put to work cutting stone in the Quarry, and the prison sold much of the sandstone that it produced. The quarried sandstone, either rubble or dressed, often went to projects in nearby Carson City, including the First United Methodist Church (NRIS# 11000785, contributing resource to the Westside Historic District), the United States Mint (NRIS# 75002127), the Nevada State Printing Office (NRIS# 78003212), the Governor James W. Nye Mansion (NRIS# 75002128) and the Armory building. In 1869, the Nevada State Legislature passed the Capitol Building Act, which required that the new capitol building (NRIS# 75002126) in Carson City be constructed of sandstone cut from the Nevada State Prison Quarry. According to the act, the NSP did not receive compensation for the stone. In order to supply the amount of stone required, the legislature charged Slingerland with expanding the Quarry operation, which including demolishing the yard’s south fence and employing 60-70 inmates at a time to cut stone.⁵²

Although Slingerland only tacitly adopted Reformatory concepts, the 1873 appointment of P.C. Hyman introduced a period of formal incorporation of Reformatory principles. Hyman arrived in the wake of a prison riot and prison break occurring within ten months of each other. Witnessing an inadequate prison wall as a security threat, Hyman commissioned a fourteen-to-eighteen foot high wall that connected to the high Quarry wall. In an effort to ensure the prison was adequately managed, the Nevada Prison Commission sent Warden Hyman to the 1874 Prison Congress of the United States. The National Prison Association held these annual meetings beginning in 1870, during which the organization adopted a Declaration of Principles that recommended the reformatory concept. The yearly meeting served as a gathering to share new ideas, models, and trends in American penology. Hyman returned with new designs for the NSP based on the reformatory model. During his tenure, Hyman oversaw the construction of a new dining room, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, shoemaking shop, and tailor shop. The warden sought additional opportunities to employ inmate labor, and he intended to use the shoemaking shop to do so. The enterprise was successful from 1874 to 1877, after which shoe production and sales steadily declined.⁵³

Frank McCullough succeeded Hyman and continued operations at the Quarry and shoemaking shop during his tenure beginning in 1887. Under McCullough, prisoners continued to cut stone to be used in onsite construction as well as other state projects; in 1887, the warden commissioned the construction of a Butcher Shop, water building, and improved walls using prison-quarried

⁵¹ John W. Roberts, *Retribution and Reform: An Illustrated History of America’s Prisons*, (American Correctional Institution by United Book Press, Inc., Baltimore: 1997), 61; Slingerland, 1869; Wines and Dwight, *Report on the Prisons and Reformatories*, x, 109-111.

⁵² Slingerland, 1869, 82; Snyder, 9, 13, 32.

⁵³ Snyder, 16-17; Roberts, 62.

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stone. In his 1887 report, Warden McCullough insisted that the shoemaking shop, despite its operation at a deficit, proved valuable for the rehabilitation and vocational training of inmates. He recommended maintaining the shoemaking shop in order to provide employment to inmates, in spite of its poor economic returns. However, when Warden Frank Bell assumed the wardenship in 1893, he closed the shoemaking shop, unable to justify its continued deficit.⁵⁴

Amid the adoption of Reformatory practices, the NSP became nationally celebrated for a discovery unrelated to corrections. In 1882, prisoners in the quarry discovered fossil tracks in the sandstone that became not only a unique tourist attraction for the prison but a source of revenue to expand the institution's Reformatory program. Though fossil discoveries were common in the NSP Quarry, the discovery of oddly shaped, eerily human-looking fossilized footprints prompted a formal investigation by the California Academy of Sciences. The Academy dispatched C. Drayton Gibbs, H.W. Harkness, and Joseph LeConte to the scene and the investigators documented footprints measuring eighteen to twenty inches long and eight inches wide. Despite theories about the prints belonging to a prehistoric humanoid, scholars eventually determined that the tracks were made by a prehistoric sloth. The press and scholarly attention devoted to the footprints drew more than 5,000 visitors over a two year period, and the tourist interest influenced the physical development of the prison grounds. The prison could not curtail quarrying to accommodate the interest; therefore, inmates excavated a tunnel into the Quarry wall with the hope of uncovering more of the footprints, assuming that if prints were inside the tunnel, they could be protected without impeding the everyday function of the prison and the Quarry. The effort was successful, and the revenue raised from the collection of visitors' fees helped to further expand the facility supporting the construction of a prison library as well as the acquisition of a prison chaplain. The sloth prints also provided a degree of international attention, featured in history books, scientific journals, and satire of the period.⁵⁵

The Progressive Era and the Nevada State Prison, 1900 – 1940

The Progressive Era as a national movement is generally defined as the period between 1890 and 1920, and began as a drive for social reform. Among the tenets of American Progressivism was the concept that social problems should be addressed by providing education, safety, and efficiency in economics and the workplace. Nevadans shared these ideals, and became active in the Progressive movement by 1900, seeking to make their State government a "responsive and effective instrument in relieving the social and economic distress of the people." The movement greatly influenced American penology in the early twentieth century, reflecting a refinement of

⁵⁴ Snyder, 32-33.

⁵⁵ Garrard, William, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1881 and 1882*, NSLA; McKelvey, 197; Snyder, 31; There is a lively discussion in national journals regarding the discovery of the footprints at the Nevada State Prison. Despite their significance to late-nineteenth century zoology, the prints are now covered by concrete, and thus non-contributing to the historic district at this time. See "Ancient Footprints: A Record of Post-Tertiary Man-Gigantic Sandals and Small Men," *The Helena Independent*, August 20, 1882, 1; "Find relics of the Days of Civil War," *The Carson City News*, February 2, 1928, 1:6; "Footprints of Monster Men." *New York Times*, August 18, 1882; Mark Twain, "Carson Footprints," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, March 25, 1885, 1; Robert H. Davis, "Nevada Footprints." *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, 4(1893):598-605, available via Google Books.

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the Reformatory concept that the NSP fully embraced by 1900. This echoed national prison trends of the time, as the Auburn System's influence disappeared from American penitentiaries, with the exception of Auburn-style architecture. Moreover, prison commissions widely accepted Reformatory practices that emphasized prisoner rehabilitation and improved sanitation while rejecting exploitation and degradation. The quintessential Progressive reformer, Theodore Roosevelt further extolled a prisoner's right to "proper work, health, reasonable moral and mental training, and...rehabilitation" in his 1913 work *The New Penology*, arguments that became the defining philosophy for Nevada's corrections in the early 1900s. These new techniques, along with a rise in prisoner population, eventually compelled NSP administrators in the 1920s to demolish the original prison and construct a new campus.⁵⁶

While the use of rehabilitation-focused labor was a carryover from the Reformatory period, Progressive ideology also necessitated the provision of improved sanitation and enhanced quality of life for prisoners. NSP administrators sought to adopt Progressive practices even before the construction of a new campus in the 1920s. During this period, the prison adopted new technologies to improve sanitation and security, as Warden J.L. Considine replaced the pump room's steam engine with an electric engine, installed an electric alarm system, and positioned incandescent lights outside the prison between 1904 and 1905. Between 1907 and 1908, Warden W.J. Maxwell oversaw the construction of an eight-foot electrified fence along the rear of the prison yard, in addition to a new iron door installed on the armory and three guard houses built at the prison gate and along the south and west perimeter. In an effort to further improve health and sanitation, Warden Denver Dickerson added a modern steam laundry and outfitted the hospital with modern operating equipment in 1913. These improvements mirrored contemporary technological developments in national prisons that saw plumbing and electric lighting installed in prisons through the country, and the replacement of iron-latticed, hinged cell doors with case-hardened, cylindrical barred doors that slid on tracks.⁵⁷

The Progressive Era practices utilized by the NSP advocated inmate rehabilitation through the individualized treatment of prisoners, indeterminate sentences, and convict employment programs. Warden Maxwell recommended the construction of a separate cell house in order to segregate first-time offenders from hardened criminals, following national recommendations to classify inmates and prescribe specialized treatment plans. These plans aimed to create reformed, contributing members of society. Maxwell also recommended that the State form a committee to address inmate employment issues, in addition to considering an indeterminate sentence system to reward prisoners for good behavior. By 1923, the prison established a credit system that reduced sentences based on good behavior and time spent working for the benefit of the prison. This signaled a shift in the emphasis of prisoner labor from a means to cover operating costs to a rehabilitation method that offered vocational training and eliminated idleness. In 1909, Warden Maxwell reported that twenty-five percent of inmates were addicted to opium, and he attributed

⁵⁶ Russell R. Elliot, *History of Nevada*, 2nd ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 239; McKelvey, 213; Roberts, 79.

⁵⁷ J.L. Considine, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1903 and 1904*, NSLA; W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1907-1908*. Nevada State Archives, NSLA; Snyder, 45; Roberts, 95-104.

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this statistic to the lack of available work at the prison. Maxwell believed that prisoner idleness, in combination with the current penal system, harmed inmates rather than reforming them for a return to public life. In his report for the 1925-26 years, Maxwell stated that “there are some men, serving their first prison terms, who are not at heart criminals. We find law-breakers and we find criminals in prison . . . Idleness, especially in a prison, does more . . . toward making criminals of these law-breakers than anything else.” Although under Maxwell’s wardenship, the Quarry continued to supply stone and cracked rock for Carson City construction and infrastructure projects, he contended that the Quarry did not provide enough work for the inmate population.⁵⁸

The aim to provide work opportunities to aid in reforming prisoners precipitated the proliferation of prison honor camps at state penitentiaries, including the NSP, in order to relieve overcrowding and provide more rehabilitation opportunities. Through work such as road building and farming, these honor camps provided an opportunity for well-behaved inmates to work in minimum-security conditions. In 1911, the Nevada Legislature authorized the NSP to establish road camps, which allowed inmates to work on the roads between Carson City and Reno, between Carson City and Glenbrook, and along the east side of Washoe Lake. These road camps were common throughout the United States, although they were particularly common in the West. In fact, western prisons pioneered the concept of employing trustworthy inmates, primarily prisoners facing imminent eligibility of parole, to work in these camps. Motivated in part by the increasing number of automobiles on American roads, Colorado first developed the inmate road-building model which quickly spread to Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. Convict road-building in Nevada lasted only two years, until the 1913 Legislature declined further appropriations for the expensive program.⁵⁹

A longer lasting labor program adopted by the NSP was an off-site farm to provide both work opportunities and food for prisoners. In 1910 the Nevada Board of Prison Commissioners purchased the Schultz Farm, located between the prison and Stewart Indian School (NRIS# 85002432), with the intent of expanding opportunities for inmate labor and establishing self-sufficiency amid consistently inadequate funding for the prison. At the NSP, a foreman supervised inmate farm-workers, ensuring that they did not leave farm property. Aside from this restriction of movement, prisoners on the farm enjoyed full liberty. Warden Maxwell lauded the opportunities for rehabilitation, and the prison administration anticipated the potential of the farm to meet the prison’s need for meat, vegetables, and hay. Under the subsequent leadership of Warden Henrichs, the farm expanded to include a dairy that met the needs of the prison in excess. Despite the farm’s success, Henrichs noted in 1919 that inadequate employment opportunities for inmates persisted, particularly during the winter, which interrupted work at the Quarry and farm. To ease the lull, he leased prisoners to nearby, privately-owned farms and ranches to assist in harvest activities. The warden requested appropriations to build a manufacturing shop to bolster inmate employment; however, the Legislature did not approve

⁵⁸ Roberts, 121; Maxwell, 1908, NSLA; Snyder, 54; Roberts, 82; Maxwell, *State of Nevada Biennial Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary: 1925-1926*, 6, NSLA.

⁵⁹ *The American Prison: From the Beginning...A Pictorial History*, (The American Correctional Association, 1983), 114; Roberts, 90; Snyder, 43, 46; McKelvey, 223.

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them. As another effort to reduce inmate idleness, the state promoted increased inmate exercise, which included the installation of a tennis court in the Front Yard of the NSP in 1915.⁶⁰

Alongside the popularity of prisoner labor was a movement to provide compensation to prisoners for their labor. These developments grew out of the 1910 formation of the National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor, which stated its “intention to investigate the prison labor problem broadly and systematically and to promote appropriate remedies.” The NCPPL urged state prison boards to abolish contract and forced labor, based on Director D. E. Stagg Whitin’s work *Penal Servitude*, which argued that forced labor was akin to economic slavery and therefore in direct conflict with rehabilitation. The committee recommended paying a fair wage to working inmates and promoted education and exercise as integral to rehabilitation. In 1923, amid the NSP’s significant expansion project, which primarily employed convicts, the Prison Board instituted a daily wage schedule for inmate labor.⁶¹

Nevada’s population, and subsequently the prison’s, rose significantly in the early twentieth century, placing added pressure on the existing facilities of the prison. During Warden Considine’s 1903-1907 tenure, the prison housed an average of 106 prisoners. After W.J. Maxwell assumed wardenship in 1908, the population doubled to 217. Simultaneously, the state experienced its second mining boom in copper, gold, and silver, resulting in a significant population increase from 1900 into the early 1920s. Considering the overcrowded conditions at the NSP, the 1909 State Legislature allocated \$205,000 for the construction of a new prison.⁶²

Beginning plans to expand the prison, the state commissioned prominent Nevada architect Frederic DeLongchamps in 1910 to design a new prison. His blueprints, inspired by the Auburn and Eastern State Penitentiaries, called for an imposing Gothic Revival style penitentiary with a central rotunda and radiating wings of cells. The design featured a large chapel to encourage the moral reform of inmates, a photography studio and darkroom to document incoming prisoners, a “Bertillon room” to take body measurements as a way of identifying prisoners prior to the acceptance of fingerprint identification, and a separate cell block exclusively for female prisoners, the first such accommodations at the prison.¹⁸ However, funds were not available to build the huge facility, and the plans did not take into account the terrain that included an ever-expanding stone Quarry. The steep Quarry walls worked well as a barrier and the more the prisoners worked the Quarry, the more formidable the walls became. A prison modeled after New York State Penitentiary or Eastern State Penitentiary, with their static stone fence lines, could never have accommodated the growing Quarry. Also, the new prison would have been built with unskilled prison laborers who were not trained to the level of craftsmanship required for such a detailed and complex building. As such, the state placed the prison’s expansion project on hold.

⁶⁰ McKelvey, 104; Snyder, 42, 46-47; Denver Dickerson. *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1913—1915*. Nevada State Archives.

⁶¹ Rebecca M. McLennan, *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State 1776-1941*, (Cambridge University Press, New York: 2008), 324; Snyder, 54.

⁶² Considine, 1904, NSLA; W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1907—1908*. NSLA; Hulse, 162-179; Snyder, 41.

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However, in 1919, the Nevada legislature revived the expansion project for the NSP, involving then State Architect DeLongchamps to develop new designs. DeLongchamps' updated designs for the NSP reflected the tenets of Progressive Era penology. Under direction by State Engineer James Scrugham, DeLongchamps created plans for a new cell house (now Cell Block A) and the Warden's Residence, both of which would be constructed using convict labor. W.J. Boudwin eventually replaced Scrugham as State Engineer, and he employed an African American convict named "Slim" as his foreman. Prisoner work crews began demolition work in advance of the new cell house in April of 1920. The floorplan for each cell included a flush toilet, washstand, drinking fountain, electric lighting, and provisions for adequate ventilation. In order to keep costs down and avoid patent royalties, DeLongchamps and Boudwin designed custom cell fronts that recycled existing metal, including old cell gratings and doors, and they engineered a new locking device and door suspension scheme. Slim had served in a similar capacity for a construction project at Folsom Prison, and his observations informed their designs. Inmates performed metal work for the project in the prison shop in addition to assisting with excavation and construction.⁶³

The expansion project took place between 1920 and 1927 and in addition to the Warden's Residence and Cell Block A, resulted in a commissary, kitchen, dining rooms, women's quarters, heating plant, cold storage, and administration offices, all housed in the Administration Building. The expanded facilities proved necessary as the NSP received more prisoners into the 1920s. In 1920, NSP housed ninety-nine prisoners, but the population rose again to 200 by 1925. This reflected national trends at the time, as the crime rate in the United States increased steadily between the late 1910s and early 1920s. This was in part due to rising unemployment after World War I and the enforcement of new laws such as the Volstead Act passed by Congress in 1918, signaling the beginning of Prohibition. The National Vehicle Motor Theft Act passed in 1919 also contributed, making interstate transport of stolen vehicles a felony, authorizing offenders to be sentenced to state or federal prison. These statutes, as well as the housing of federal prisoners at the NSP from 1925 to 1933, contributed to the rise in inmate population. Federal convicts housed at the NSP contributed significantly to the need for expansion. The NSP housed a total of 334 federal prisoners between 1925 and 1933, earning \$217,148.51 in fees from the federal government. However, in 1930, the United States established the Federal Bureau of Prisons, precipitating the transfer of a number of federal prisoners housed at the NSP to the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island in Washington. By 1933, all federal prisoners had vacated the state prison, either by fulfilling their sentences or transferring to federal facilities. The elimination of federal prisoners resulted in a largely depopulated prison. In fact, Warden Penrose sent a telegram to the United States Attorney General requesting more federal prisoners in exchange for a reduced per diem, as the prison's recent expansions and reduced population provided a surplus of space, but the Attorney General denied his request.⁶⁴

⁶³ Snyder, 48-50; Scrugham, James G., to Dr. J.W. Kime. Letter, April 9, 1924, Reports, Department of Corrections collection, NSLA.

⁶⁴ R.B. Henrichs, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1921—1922*; Snyder, 57, 63-64; *The American Prison: From the Beginning...A Pictorial History*, (The American Correctional Association, 1983), 126-127; M.L. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1933—1935*, NSLA.

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By 1929, the built environment of the NSP fully reflected Progressive Era values of improved living conditions and security. Warden M.R. Penrose reported a spurt of new construction in that year that included a heated library outfitted with electric lighting, as well as three new guard towers: one at the main entrance, one atop the south end of the cell house, and one atop a wall on the south side of the main building. The towers were of rusticated quarry stone, and featured electric heat and telephones. New walls, punctuated by three arches with large iron gates, provided additional security to the main entrance, and existing walls were heightened. Additionally, Penrose launched an exterior beautification program for the grounds, which included grading the grounds east of the warden's residence, clearing all sagebrush within 11,500 feet of the prison, and grading the hill to the west of the prison, sowing it with grass seed. Penrose also rebuilt the stone wall north of the prison, laid a stone walk on the north and east side, excavated the yard by two inches to provide additional drainage, and laid concrete walks in the yard leading from the main building to surrounding buildings. Penrose's 1929 report mentions a library under construction, as well as the "improved appearance of the grounds" as a result of planting various trees, shrubs, and flowers. By 1931, Penrose had graded the pond in front of the prison and spread crushed rock on its banks, as well as planting 100 cottonwood trees along the south side of Fifth Street between the prison and Carson City. He also graded the hillside on the southwest corner of the prison and laid painted river cobbles on it to resemble the American flag. In his 1935 report, Penrose reported building a hothouse (the current Greenhouse) over a stream from the hot spring, installing a sprinkler system, and laying additional driveways, walks, and a lawn in the yard.⁶⁵

Prisoner entertainment and the public's attitude toward acceptable forms of entertainment in prisons also influenced the development of the NSP. One of the activities sanctioned by prison officials was gambling. From 1932, following the legalization of gambling in Nevada, to 1967 the NSP was home to an inmate-run casino housed in a building known as "the Bullpen," demolished in 1967. Inmates could wager on craps, poker, blackjack, and gin rummy in addition to placing bets on sports. Each game was run by an inmate and as in any other casino environment, the person running the game had to bankroll it. In addition to facilitating the casino games, the NSP created its own gambling currency by issuing tokens known as "brass" in denominations ranging from five cents to five dollars. According to Warden Penrose, who organized the casino program, gambling taught inmates basic banking skills that they would need on the outside. "Odd though it may sound," Penrose said, "the gaming table has given many a dead broke inmate a start in this little world within. Gambling helps a little in the refining. It is legal in Nevada, well-regulated, tax-burdened, and a great deal cleaner than say, the big casino in Wall Street."⁶⁶

Amid its rebuilding, the NSP became the setting for an important development in the national debate on capital punishment: the adoption of lethal gas as a method of execution. Debate about capital punishment in Nevada began during early statehood when officials grew alarmed by the mob-like, spectacle atmosphere of public executions. The state legislature stipulated that all

⁶⁵ Snyder, 60; M.L. Penrose, Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1925-1927; 1927-1929; 1929-1931; 1933-1935. NSLA.

⁶⁶ Matt Penrose, *Pots O' Gold*, (Carlisle & Co. of Nevada, 1935).

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capital sentences should be carried out in a controlled setting at the NSP. In 1912, Nevada still condoned hanging and shooting as the preferred methods of execution, however, state officials were uneasy with the methods. Reviving Enlightenment-age concerns regarding the nature of civilized society and the continuing use of gruesome execution methods, Progressive advocates began an international conversation about “humane” execution. Establishing a humane approach to capital punishment became a primary concern of Progressive reformers.⁶⁷

Nevada led this effort, with the NSP becoming the first institution in the United States to execute a prisoner using lethal gas. After the first execution by electric chair was carried out in New York in 1890, the result precipitated considerable public criticism. Nevada officials sought a more humane execution method. In 1921 two state legislators, assemblymen Harry L. Bartlett of Elko County and J.H. Hart of Pershing County officially proposed a solution in Assembly Bill 230. The bill stated in part that:

The judgment of death shall be inflicted by the administration of lethal gas. The execution shall take place within the limits of the state prison, wherein a suitable and efficient enclosure and proper means for the administration of such gas for that purpose shall be provided by the board of prison commissioners. The warden of the state prison must be present, and must invite a competent physician, and not less than six reputable citizens, over the age of twenty-one years, to be present at the execution; but no other persons shall be present at the execution.⁶⁸

The Nevada Legislature passed the law in 1921, and Nevada became the first state in the nation to approve lethal gas for execution. Reaction to the new method was swift with international commentary ranging from enthusiastic approval to abject horror. Despite the mixed reception, Nevada moved ahead and conducted the first legal execution by lethal gas in 1924. To prepare for the execution, warden Denver Dickerson oversaw the creation of the nation’s first gas chamber, which began its life on the NSP campus in 1888 as a barbershop. To convert the barbershop into a death chamber, inmate laborers sealed its doors and windows with wax and installed a steel cage inside the building. A series of pipes delivered hydrocyanic acid to a spraying apparatus within the room, which featured an observation window from the outside. Nevada’s first use of the chamber came on February 8, 1924, when NSP staff executed inmate Gee Jon despite strenuous efforts by his defense team to convince the Nevada State Supreme Court that the untested method was cruel and unusual. In October 1928, a new stone and cement execution chamber, featuring a guardroom and two condemned cells, replaced the converted barbershop, and the original gas chamber was demolished.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “Kemmler Executed: A Sickening Sight to Behold,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 6, 1890, 1.

⁶⁸ Assembly Bill No. 230. Statutes of the State of Nevada Passed at the Thirtieth Session of the Legislature 1921, Carson City: Nevada State Printing Office, 1921; Spellier, Louis A. “They Don’t Know Whether it is Good or Bad Politics.” *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 4, 1919, NHSL.

⁶⁹ Snyder, 53, 60; “Boston’s Lethal ‘Humor.’” *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 8, 1921, 4; Brisbane, Arthur. “Death by Gas in Nevada.” *The Ogden Standard Examiner*, July 28, 1921, 4; “Death Gas In Nevada Brings Murder To End.” *The Evening Republican*, Mitchell, S.D. January 22, 1925, 12; “Execution by Gas Sought in Arizona.” *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 13, 1933, 12; “Fight to Save Gee Jon May Go Into U.S. Court.” *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 6,

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The tenets of Progressive penology received criticism by the 1930s in response, in part, to concerns from business leaders who criticized the practice of using prisoner labor. By the 1920s, unions and other supporters of free industry criticized American prisons for interfering with the free market, as inexpensive convict labor undercut fair market prices. As a result, prisons established the state use system, in which convicts produced goods—including license plates—for sale to the United States government rather than competing with private businesses for other services. In response, many states like Nevada adopted the state use system, which focused prisoner labor on specific state needs, such as the production of license plates. The prison-run license plate factory has become ubiquitous in popular culture, as it was an early adoption of the state-use system of penal labor in America. In 1931, Warden Penrose introduced the manufacture of license plates to the NSP after he constructed a factory expressly for this purpose, housed in an addition to the Administration Building. The addition featured a cell house on the second floor; however, the extra space was not needed, and Warden William Lewis converted the space into a school in 1936. Lewis wrote a letter to the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the New Deal's most ambitious agency, requesting their assistance in establishing the school. As a result, the WPA largely provided support to the NSP education program, including furnishing a classroom instructor.⁷⁰

Modern Rehabilitation at the Nevada State Prison, 1940 – 1967

After 1940, the Nevada State Prison refined Progressive Era models of rehabilitation, including detailed classification of prisoners, community involvement, and improved medical care. In the early 1940s, World War II and wartime industries influenced the prison's population trends, as well as inmate labor opportunities. Following the war, the prison refined new modes of prison administration adapted from the earlier Progressive model. NSP administrators humanized inmates, seeking to further individualize rehabilitation and create a campus-like environment.

The establishment of wartime industries in Nevada at Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot, the Basic Magnesium Plant in Henderson, and new air bases in Fallon, Tonopah, and Las Vegas, all led to a spike in Nevada's population. This rise correlated with additional increases in inmates housed at the NSP. By 1940, the NSP's inmate population had reached a record high of 340. The cell house could only accommodate 266 prisoners, and Warden Lewis sent the overflow of inmates to the prison farm to avoid doubling cell occupancy. The 1941 State Legislature appropriated funds for prison expansion; however, the nation-wide defense effort indefinitely postponed construction. In 1945, Warden Sheehy wrote, "Due to war, it was impossible to

1921, 1, "First Gas Execution Is A Success." *Sheboygan Press-Telegram*, February 8, 1924, 1-2; "First Lethal Gas Execution Takes Place in Carson City, Nev. Prison" *Manitoba Free Press*, February 9, 1924, 1, 12; "Gas for Murderers," *The Gleaner*, April 8, 1921, 5; "Humane Nevada," *Manitowoc Herald-News*, April 7, 1921; "In the Death Chair: Further Particulars of the Kemmler Electrocution," *The Frederic News*, August 7, 1890, 1; "Lethal Chamber Plea," *The Daily Mail*, December 22, 1921, 3; "Painless, Both," *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 13, 1921, 4; "True Mercy or Cruellest Torture?," *Syracuse Herald*, May 15, 1921, 7, all at all at NHSL; Scott Christianson, *The Last Gasp: The Rise and Fall of the American Gas Chamber*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 73-74.

⁷⁰ Roberts, 86; "50% is Saved Buy State on Motor License Plates," *Nevada State Journal*, January 20, 1934, 4; Snyder, 66.

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obtain materials and labor.” The NSP contributed to the war effort by donating scrap iron and scrap rubber, as well as constructing cots, stretchers, and related items for Nevada’s Council for Defense. This level of involvement in the war effort was common for American prisons, many of which manufactured shoes, boats, and even aircraft engines. In Nevada, prison inmates also bought war bonds and stamps.⁷¹

After the war ended, the prison attempted to address overcrowding through the expansion of prisoner housing, but this remained limited until 1951. The earliest attempt, begun in May of 1947, constructed Cell Block B, along with some additions to existing buildings. Arthur E. Bernard assumed wardenship in 1951, and his tenure is largely characterized by an ambitious building program that furthered the individualized treatment of each prisoner. Bernard personally interviewed all incoming prisoners to determine their security risk and capacity for rehabilitation. He employed those deemed fit for reformation in the prison hobby shop, in his construction projects, and on the occasional off-site job. Between 1951 and 1954, he expanded the inmate dining room and library and remodeled the Butcher Shop and Warden’s Residence. Using prisoner labor and materials for all of his projects, Bernard built a new guards’ dining room, a shower and lavatory in the Prison Yard, plumbing shop, horse barn, garage, gas chamber, recreation hall, potato cellar, and paint shop. Inmates used quarry stone to construct six two-bedroom cottages (Cottages 1-6) to be used as guards’ residences, and they excavated a 25’x50’ swimming pool in the West Lawn for use by prison personnel. Bernard continued his building campaign between 1956 and 1958, again using convict labor and reclaimed materials to construct two more garages, a guesthouse, two dormitories, and a new greenhouse. Under staff supervision, inmates modified much of the thoughtful, Progressive-Era landscaping, creating athletic space in the Prison Yard and paving much of the exterior landscape with asphalt.⁷²

In 1959, the Prison Board appointed Jack Fogliani as warden, who became the last of the rehabilitation-era wardens at the NSP. Fogliani focused on rehabilitation through arts and crafts, education, music, and vocational opportunities. Inmates organized “The Boys in Blue” prison band, which performed at various events around Carson City, and the prison converted the solitary confinement cave excavated into the Quarry wall to an office for the *Sagebrush*, an inmate-run newspaper. They also formed basketball and boxing teams that competed in outside events throughout the state. During this time, prisoners demonstrated a deep connection to the larger community, as they donated to various charities and participated in blood drives. These changes represented the larger trend in American prisons, which sought to ease convicts back into society by providing rehabilitation in a campus-like setting.

⁷¹ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 213, 334; Snyder, 67-68; *The American Prison*, 181-183; Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942*, NSLA.

⁷² Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1948, to June 30, 1950*, NSLA; Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1950, to June 30, 1952*; *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1952, to June 30, 1954*, NSLA; Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1958*, NSLA; “Dietitian Named at State Prison,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 22, 1951, 12.

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Within the modern rehabilitative techniques, known collectively as the Medical model, Fogliani emphasized the importance of medical, mental, and dental care for NSP prisoners. Under his wardenship, the prison established individual and group psychology programs, a dental clinic, and an Alcoholics Anonymous program. Fogliani also worked to enrich inmate-staff relationships, hoping that better relations would improve the overall operation of the prison. These developments fit with the Medical Model's emergence as the new standard for penology in the 1950s. Adherents viewed delinquency as equivalent to physical disease. As such, prisons had a duty to diagnose and treat each prisoner according to their unique circumstances. The Medical Model reinvigorated and expanded upon inmate classification using new developments in psychology and sociology.

Warden Fogliani invited Synanon to establish an outpost at the prison in 1963. Charles E. Dederich, a graduate of Alcoholics Anonymous, founded Synanon in 1958 to support and assist individuals in overcoming their addictions. At the prison, Fogliani reserved a tier of cells for members of the program, many of whom were addicts. The program also included non-addicts, operating on the principle that non-addict prisoners often share personality traits with drug addicts. Synanon provided cutting-edge treatment including art therapy and group therapy. Members worked in the prison hobby shop, and prison officials often employed them to work inside the compound. Fogliani credited Synanon with improving the attitudes and morale of the prisoners.⁷³

Fogliani developed quality vocational and educational programs as warden. He established the first successful honor camp at Spooner Summit in the mountains east of Lake Tahoe, where inmates engaged in fighting fires and removing invasive plants. Fogliani also expanded the prison farm. The prison launched a work crew program, whereby local governments, farms, and ranches employed inmates. The construction of a new auto shop and carpenter shop within the prison compound extended additional vocational opportunities to inmates. Fogliani also founded a GED program at the prison and hired the State Department of Employment Security to administer tests that assisted inmates in procuring employment upon their release.⁷⁴

Concurrent with the adoption of the Medical Model, Warden Fogliani oversaw an expansion of the prison that included a new License Plate Factory, security fences, the two-story Tower One at the northwest entrance, a new library, a coffee shop, and the maximum-security Cell Block C with a private exercise yard. The NSP's population rose to 460 in 1960, prompting the Prison Board to construct a new women's and maximum security prison south of the main complex, housing 17 female, and 298 maximum security male prisoners. Fogliani remodeled visitors' booths to include telephones during an era in which prisons across the country sought to create more comfortable and informal visitation areas. Despite the popularity of the Medical Model, the mid-1960s suggested a shift in prison ideology and administration during Fogliani's tenure. In light of the new maximum-security facility south of the NSP, State and prison officials began to place an emphasis on public safety and security. The State completed a north-bowing highway

⁷³ "Mutual Aid in Prison," *Time Magazine*, 81:9 (March 1963), 67; Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1960, to June 30, 1962, Inclusive*, NSLA.

⁷⁴ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1959, to June 30, 1961*, NSLA.

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bypass for Fifth Street to eliminate traffic through the prison grounds. In Fogliani's 1965 report, he recommended that the warden should be able to choose his residence, as opposed to living in the Warden's Residence, which at that time was located within the NSP security compound. The resulting solution led to the use of the Warden's Residence as an investigation facility, and the conversion of the Guard's Cottages to storage space.⁷⁵

The End of the Rehabilitation Era

By 1967, security issues caused a major shift in the prison's administration away from the Medical Model to a contemporary strategy of security and control. A nation-wide surge in incarceration began in the 1960s and accelerated into the 1970s. Prison administrators across the country began to de-emphasize rehabilitation in favor of enhanced security, in part, in response to increasing violence and resistance among prisoner populations.

At the NSP, the withdrawal from the rehabilitative model began as a response not only to national trends represented in the NSP's prisoner population, but also local events. In January of 1967, two prisoners escaped and held a Carson City family hostage before prison officials captured them and returned them to the penitentiary. One week later, seven maximum security inmates escaped. Once officials recovered them, Governor Laxalt fired Warden Fogliani, replacing him with Carl Hocker, San Quentin's correctional captain. Carl Hocker's wardenship signaled the end of rehabilitative practices at the NSP. Under his tenure, biennial reports of the warden were no longer composed for the Nevada Legislature, and prison officials shifted their emphasis from rehabilitation to control. Hocker endured a number of prison riots, hunger strikes, and increased violence during his administration that received national media attention. Alongside national trends, NSP inmates began engaging in civil disobedience in addition to violent rebellion, eventually giving way to the Inmates' Rights Movement and institutional responses in the form of super-maximum custody. Subsequent developments at the NSP included the construction of the "Hill Units" cell complex on the east side of the historic district in the 1980s during an expansion of the prison to house an estimated 850 inmates. Following the recession of 2008, the State legislature chose to close the prison, which took effect in 2012.⁷⁶

Potential for Future Information Regarding Nevada's Correctional System

The NSP is eligible under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology for its potential to yield future information about the social life of prisoners and prison staff during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The known resources within the district are concentrated within the Prison Trash Dump, but there is potential for the future discovery of archaeological resources related to the operation of the Prison for its full period of significance between 1862 and 1967. Disturbance and post-1920 construction within the historic district have disrupted the archaeological integrity within the prison core, and will require future excavation to determine if intact, sub-surface sites exist and can yield additional information. However, institutional archaeological sites similar to the NSP have yielded information despite intensive ground disturbance. Therefore, although the

⁷⁵ Roberts, 179; Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1963, to June 30, 1965*, NSLA; Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 34-35; the women's and maximum security prison to the south of the NSP campus is what is now known as the Warm Springs Correctional Center.

⁷⁶ Tom Kennedy, "Nevada Prison Warden Fired After Escape," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), Jan. 31, 1967.

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Prison Trash Dump is the only known archaeological site in the district at the time of this nomination, future excavation, survey, and testing may reveal additional resources with information potential that contribute to the historic district.⁷⁷

The archaeological resources in the Prison Trash Dump have not been formally evaluated and lack integrity of deposition in their primary context, but a pedestrian survey of the site by professional archaeologists revealed strong information potential within the assemblage. The presence of diagnostic artifacts within the Prison Trash Dump may be able to address a number of research questions related to the history of the NSP.⁷⁸ Other, as yet undiscovered, resources within the district may also provide information if discovered in the future. Those research topics include the following:

- Daily social lives of prisoners and guards, including work programs, maintenance practices, and recreational activities.
- Material culture of the prisoners and guards, including clothing, personal belongings, personal hygiene, etc.
- Diet of both prisoners and guards, through waste containers from both the prison kitchen and from food items possibly provided by prisoner family members.
- Building refuse may also contribute to analysis of any changes in construction over time, differences in workmanship or materials used in buildings that are no longer extant, and perhaps even what tools were used to work the stone in what periods.

The information potential of trash dumps and trash scatters has been established in archaeological discourse. While temporal determinations may be limited to what can be supported through primary and secondary historical documentation, the presence or absence of particular artifacts, and statistical analysis of these artifacts, can reveal a great deal regarding particular research questions like those outlined above. The volume of twentieth century diagnostic artifacts extant in the Prison Trash Dump in the northeast corner of the historic district provides a large enough sample size to evaluate these questions, especially during the early and mid-twentieth century.⁷⁹

At the time of this nomination, there are no recorded surface features other than the Prison Trash Dump with information potential to the period of significance. Again, the district as a whole contains many potential areas with the possibility of future archaeological discoveries, but future testing will be needed to determine their ability to yield information about the prison. The Prison Trash Dump retains “presence-or-absence” potential with what appears to be predominantly twentieth century diagnostic artifacts. Monitoring of any excavation, as well as future research

⁷⁷ Dr. Sarah E. Cowie, personal communication to Jim Bertolini, July 23, 2015.

⁷⁸ A pedestrian survey of the Prison Trash Dump on January 23, 2015 was completed by four archaeologists, two from the Carson City Historic Resources Commission, and two from the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

⁷⁹ See the following: Dennis E. Lewarch and Michael J. O'Brien, “The Expanding Role of Surface Assemblages in Archaeological Research,” *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 4 (1981): 297-342; Thad M. Van Buren, “(Not) Just Another Isolated Historic Refuse Scatter,” *California Archaeology* 1, No. 2 (Dec. 2009): 163-182; and Douglas C. Wilson, “Identification and assessment of secondary refuse aggregates,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 1, No. 1 (March 1994): 41-68.

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through survey and testing, will be necessary to determine the presence and integrity of other archaeological features within the district. Additional discoveries as a result of future testing may provide additional insight into Nevada's correctional past, and precipitate additional documentation to amend this nomination.

Summary

The Nevada State Prison historic district stands as an historically significant representation of Nevada's adoption and refinement of Progressive Era, rehabilitative correctional practices. The prison's significance to Nevada, and its historic integrity to the period of significance, make it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D.

The period of significance encompasses the time during which the Nevada State Prison was administered by the State of Nevada and implemented rehabilitative prison practices. It has been further restricted by the presence of confirmed extant resources associated with that significance. Unfortunately, nearly all the resources dating prior to 1920 have been demolished. The three extant resources dating from the nineteenth century do not have confirmed construction dates, and have been altered since construction, although most major modifications appear to have taken place during the period of significance. As a collection of buildings, structures, and landscapes within the prison campus, the NSP reflects its construction and development between 1862 and 1967 with the end of the Fogliani administration.

Efforts are underway to preserve the prison. Although the Nevada Department of Corrections retains administration of the facility for limited purposes, the Nevada State Prison Preservation Society (NSPPS) is currently developing plans for the rehabilitation of the historic district for future use. Rehabilitation of the Prison will be effected under Nevada Assembly Bill 377 signed into law on July 1, 2015, which established "provisions for the preservation, development and use of the Nevada State Prison as a historical, cultural, educational and scientific resource." Included in the provisions was the creation of an endowment fund for the Prison to be overseen by the Nevada Board of Museums and History in cooperation with the NSPPS.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Roberts, 212-224; Nevada State Prison Preservation Society website; Whorton, "Nevada State Prison."; Geoff Dornan, "Locked but still loaded with history," *Nevada Appeal*, January 15, 2012, A1, A4; *An Act relating to the Nevada State Prison...AB377, 78th sess., Nevada Legislature*, (July 1, 2015), <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Reports/history.cfm?ID=834>.

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Nevada Historical Society Library, Reno, NV.
Nevada State Prison ephemera file, Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City, NSLA.
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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

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X Other

Name of repository: Nevada State Library and Archives; Nevada Historical Society Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 52.75 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Coordinate #	Easting	Northing
1	263343	4338238
2	263428	4338228
3	263451	4338251
4	263520	4338295
5	263493	4338334
6	263505	4338363
7	263575	4338391
8	263645	4338390
9	263705	4338366
10	263896	4338195
11	263884	4338020
12	264066	4338004
13	263860	4337773
14	263677	4337834
15	263832	4338066
16	263650	4338158
17	263636	4338120
18	263601	4338090
19	263594	4338068
20	263570	4338077
21	263556	4338047

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22	263554	4338027
23	263549	4338012
24	263529	4337995
25	263524	4337980
26	263515	4337963
27	263450	4337874
28	263419	4337881
29	263357	4337954
30	263305	4337970

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nomination boundaries are portrayed on the boundary map that accompanies this nomination and is based upon the historic extent of the prison during the period of significance. The boundary begins at the northwest corner of the property, where the old Fifth Street route and the current access road join, running along the stone wall at the south end of the parking lot, then pushing north to the current Fifth Street right of way. It curves back to the southeast along the right of way, and then runs south along a dirt access road, then east again along the same access road until meeting the right of way for Fairview Drive. The boundary then runs west back to the prison fence, but runs north, then west, around the 1980s Hilltop addition. The boundary then runs south along the west side of the Hill Units along the top of the Quarry wall, then running south to include the Prison Cemetery. The boundary then runs north and west to the west property line of the prison, then back to the beginning at the district’s northwest corner.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Nevada State Prison Historic District were selected to include known prison-related historic resources built or in existence prior to 1967 (the close of the period of significance) and associated grounds. The boundaries were selected based on property lines, modern roads, and natural boundaries to exclude concentrations of non-contributing modern buildings such as the 1980s Hill Units on the east side of the historic prison core. Also excluded is a nineteenth century and later prison cemetery now located on the grounds of the modern Warm Springs Correctional Center to the south of the historic district. Although it is related, it is non-contiguous to the district and has not been evaluated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jim Bertolini and ZoAnn Campana / Elizabeth Dickey and Mike Drews / Jennifer Riddle

organization: Nevada State Historic Preservation Office / Carson City Historic Resources Commission / / Nevada Department of Transportation

Nevada State Prison

Carson City, NV

street & number: 901 S. Stewart
city or town: Carson City state: Nevada zip code: 89701
e-mail jbertolini@shpo.nv.gov
telephone: (775) 684-3436
date: 12/22/2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: unknown Date Photographed: c.1931
Description of Photograph(s) and number: NSLA Aerial photograph (NSP 0002) of prison at the Nevada State Archives showing virtually all of the contributing resources in the nominated area. View looking southeast. 1 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: unknown Date Photographed: 1962

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: NSLA Aerial photograph (NSP 0002) of prison at the Nevada State Archives showing virtually all of the contributing resources in the nominated area. View looking south. 2 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: North section of the West Lawn and Garden, showing the pond, the Greenhouse Foundation, and the wall along the parking lot. View looking west. 3 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Administration Building and Sally Port. View looking south. 4 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Pump House with the Armory and One Tower beyond. View looking north. 5 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The flag on the slope between the Sally Port and the cottages. View looking east. 6 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Rear elevations of the cottages. View looking southwest. 7 of 43

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front elevations of the cottages. View looking north. 8 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cottage 6. View looking northeast. 9 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Three Tower. View looking northwest. 10 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Nevada State Prison Cemetery. View looking northwest. 11 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street Tower with the Administration Building beyond. View looking east. 12 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Warden's House and front yard with the Storage and Maintenance Building beyond. View looking east. 13 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Side and rear elevations of the Warden's House. View looking northwest. 14 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Kennel. View looking southwest. 15 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Butcher Shop. View looking southeast. 16 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Electrical Shop with the Maintenance Shop beyond. View looking northeast. 17 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The License Plate Factory, Quarry Walls with Shed, Boiler House, and Gymnasium and Book Bindery. View looking south. 18 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: East elevation of cell blocks A, B and C. View looking southwest. 19 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with cell blocks B and C, the Culinary, Three Tower, and Quarry Walls. View looking southwest. 20 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with Quarry Walls, Sally Port, and Administration Building. View looking west. 21 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with Administration Building and Cell Block A. View looking northwest. 22 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Quarry Walls with two cave entrances. View looking west. 23 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Armory building within the West Lawn and Garden. Looking southwest at the north elevation of the building. 24 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Two Tower, looking east at west elevation. 25 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Boiler Plant, looking southeast. North and west elevations of the building. 26 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Storage and Maintenance Building, looking southwest. East and north elevations. 27 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street (historic route) and Front Lawn, looking west. 28 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Nevada State Prison

Carson City, NV

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, showing designed landscape features. Looking northwest. 42 of 30.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, looking south across the upper terrace of the site. 30 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street Guard Tower, stone wall, and cottonwood/elm alley, looking southeast. 31 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Historic fence foundation, looking north. 32 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cell Block C, Boiler Plant, and License Plate Factory, looking northeast. 33 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North end of the West Lawn and Garden, showing the Greenhouse Foundation, One Tower, and the Administration Building beyond, looking northeast. 34 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Rubble piles at northwest end of the Prison Trash Dump, looking northeast. 35 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Typical surface scatter in Prison Trash Dump, looking northeast. 36 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Trash Dump rubble piles, with Nevada State Prison in background, looking west. 37 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Nevada State Prison

Carson City, NV

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front Lawn and Parking Area, showing lawn with Fifth Street Guard Tower and stone wall, and One Tower in the background. View looking northwest. 38 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front Lawn and Parking Area, showing the parking area, looking southwest. 39 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden showing terraces and other landscape features, looking south. 40 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cottages 1 and 2, and West Lawn and Garden, looking west. 41 of 43.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, showing landscape features from Modern period, looking north. 42 of 43.

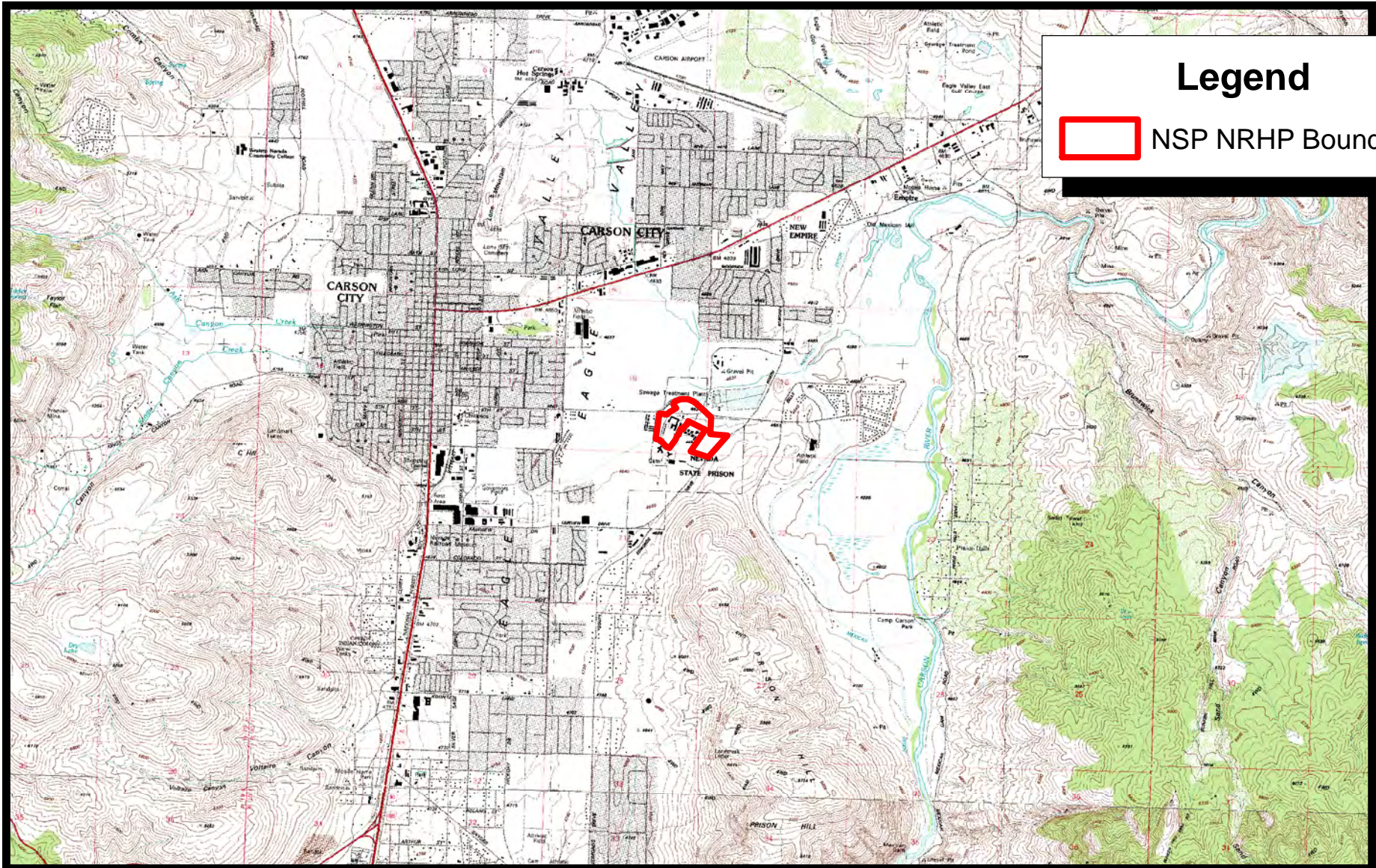
Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street Stone Wall (north section) looking southeast. 43 of 43.

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.460 et seq.).


Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

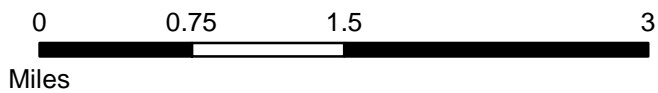
Nevada State Prison NRHP Topographic Map

New Empire and Carson City Quadrangles



Legend

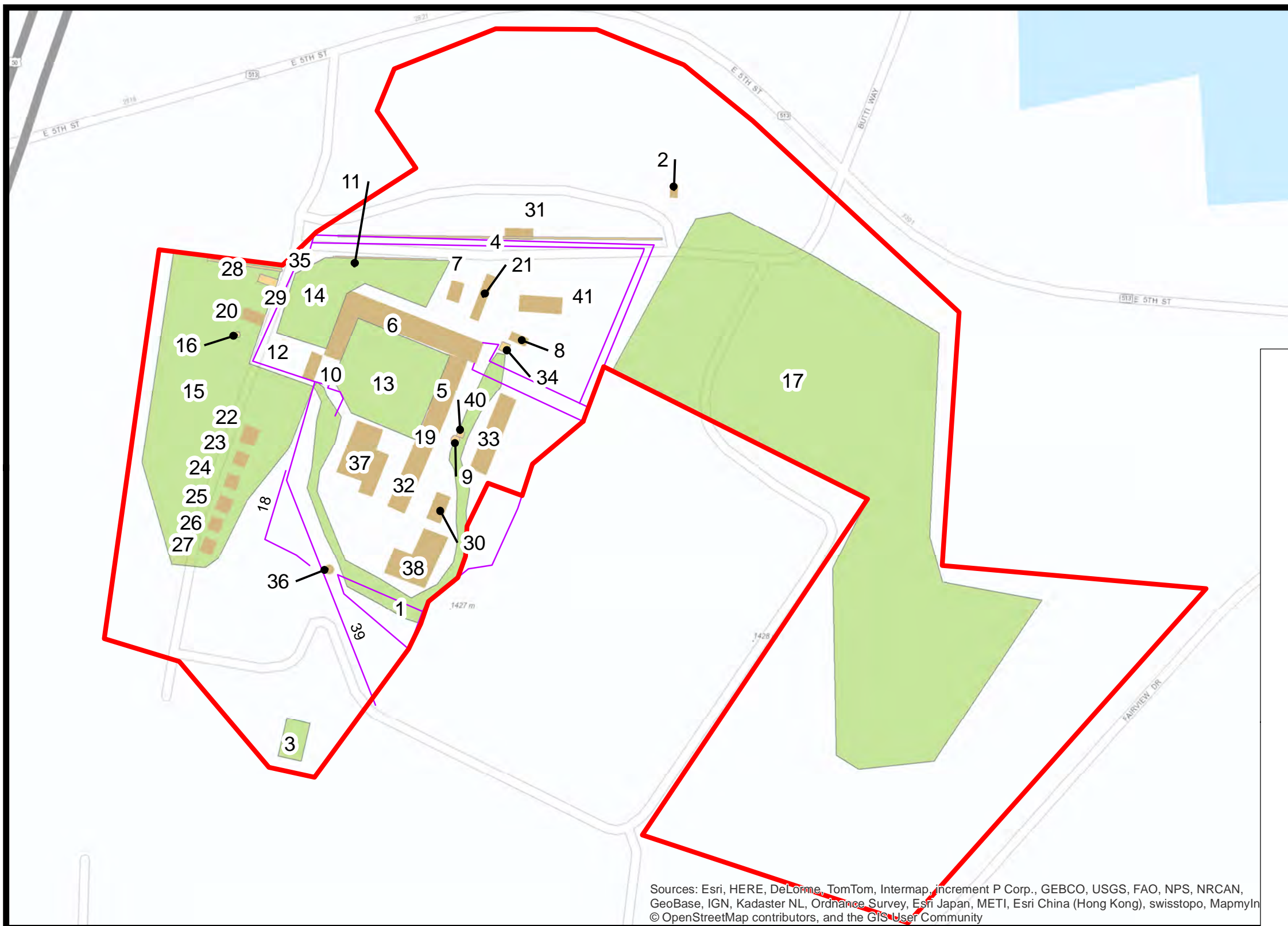
 NSP NRHP Boundary



Author: Nevada SHPO
Date: April 14, 2015
Source: Nevada SHPO
Datum: NAD 83
Projection: Zone 11 N

Nevada State Prison NRHP Boundary Map

Topographic Site Map



Legend

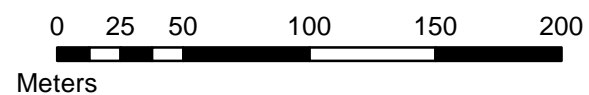
- NSP NRHP Boundary
- Historic Fence Lines (Structures)

NSP Resources

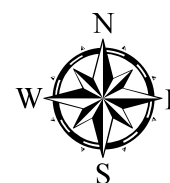
Res_Type

- Site
- Building
- Structure
- Object

#	Resource Name	Date	Resource Type	Contributing/
1	Quarry	c.1861-1960	Site	Contributing
2	Butcher Shop	19th Century	Building	Contributing
3	Nevada State Prison Cemetery	1875-1881	Site	Contributing
4	Fifth Street Stone Walls	c.1880s	Structure	Contributing
5	Cell Block A	1920-25	Building	Contributing
6	Administration Building	1920-27	Building	Contributing
7	Warden's House	1920-25	Building	Contributing
8	Electrical Shop	c.1926	Building	Contributing
9	Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel	c.1927-28	Structure	Non-contributing
10	Sally Port (Courthouse)	c.1928	Building	Contributing
11	Fifth Street Guard Tower	1929	Structure	Contributing
12	Pump House	1933	Structure	Contributing
13	Prison Yard	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
14	Front Yard and Parking Area	c.1920-1968	Site	Contributing
15	West Lawn and Garden	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
16	Stone Fountain	c.1962	Object	Contributing
17	Prison Trash Dump	c.1907-1967	Site	Contributing
18	Security Fence Foundations	1942	Structure	Contributing
19	Cell Block B	1948	Building	Contributing
20	Armory (Property Warehouse)	1950	Building	Contributing
21	Storage and Maintenance Building	1952	Building	Contributing
22	Cottage 1	1953	Building	Contributing
23	Cottage 2	1953	Building	Contributing
24	Cottage 3	1953	Building	Contributing
25	Cottage 4	1953	Building	Contributing
26	Cottage 5	1953	Building	Contributing
27	Cottage 6	1955	Building	Contributing
28	Northwest Stone Wall	1957	Structure	Contributing
29	Greenhouse Foundation	1954	Site (not counted)	Contributing
30	Boiler Plant	1958	Building	Contributing
31	Kennel	c.1962	Building	Contributing
32	Cell Block C	1960	Building	Contributing
33	License Plate Factory	c.1962	Building	Contributing
34	Two Tower	1962	Building	Contributing
35	One Tower (Main Gate)	1963	Building	Contributing
36	Three Tower	1966	Building	Contributing
37	Culinary and Dining Hall	1966	Building	Contributing
38	Gymnasium and Book Bindery	1976	Building	Non-Contributing
39	Chain Link Security Fence	c.1980s	Structure	Non-contributing
40	Shed	c.2000	Building	Non-contributing
41	Maintenance Shop	2004	Building	Non-contributing



Author: Nevada SHPO
 Date: July 27, 2015
 Source: Nevada SHPO
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: Zone 11 N



Nevada State Prison NRHP Boundary Map Aerial Photo



Legend

NSP NRHP Boundary

Historic Fence Lines (Structures)

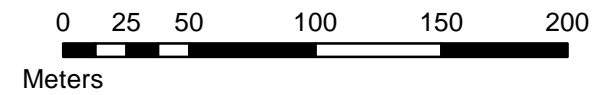
NSP Resources

Res_Type

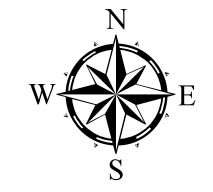
- Building
- Site
- Structure
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27	Cottage 6	1955	Building	Contributing
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40	Shed	c.2000	Building	Non-contributing
41	Maintenance Shop	2004	Building	Non-contributing

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, I-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

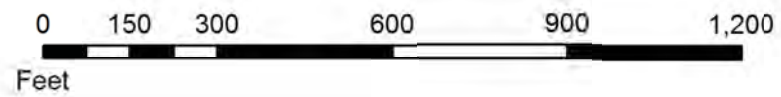
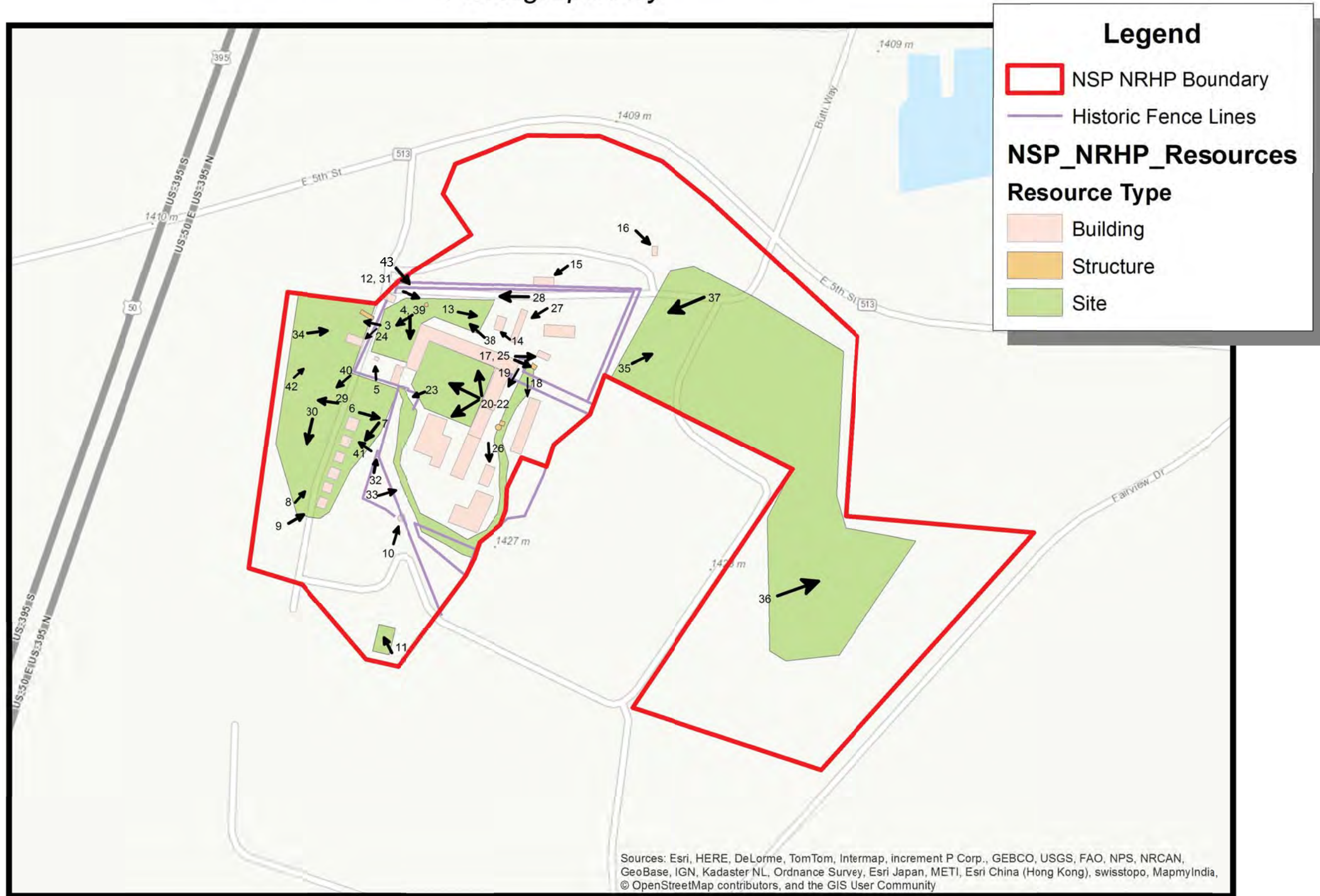


Author: Nevada SHPO
 Date: July 27, 2015
 Source: Nevada SHPO
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: Zone 11 N



Nevada State Prison NRHP Site Map

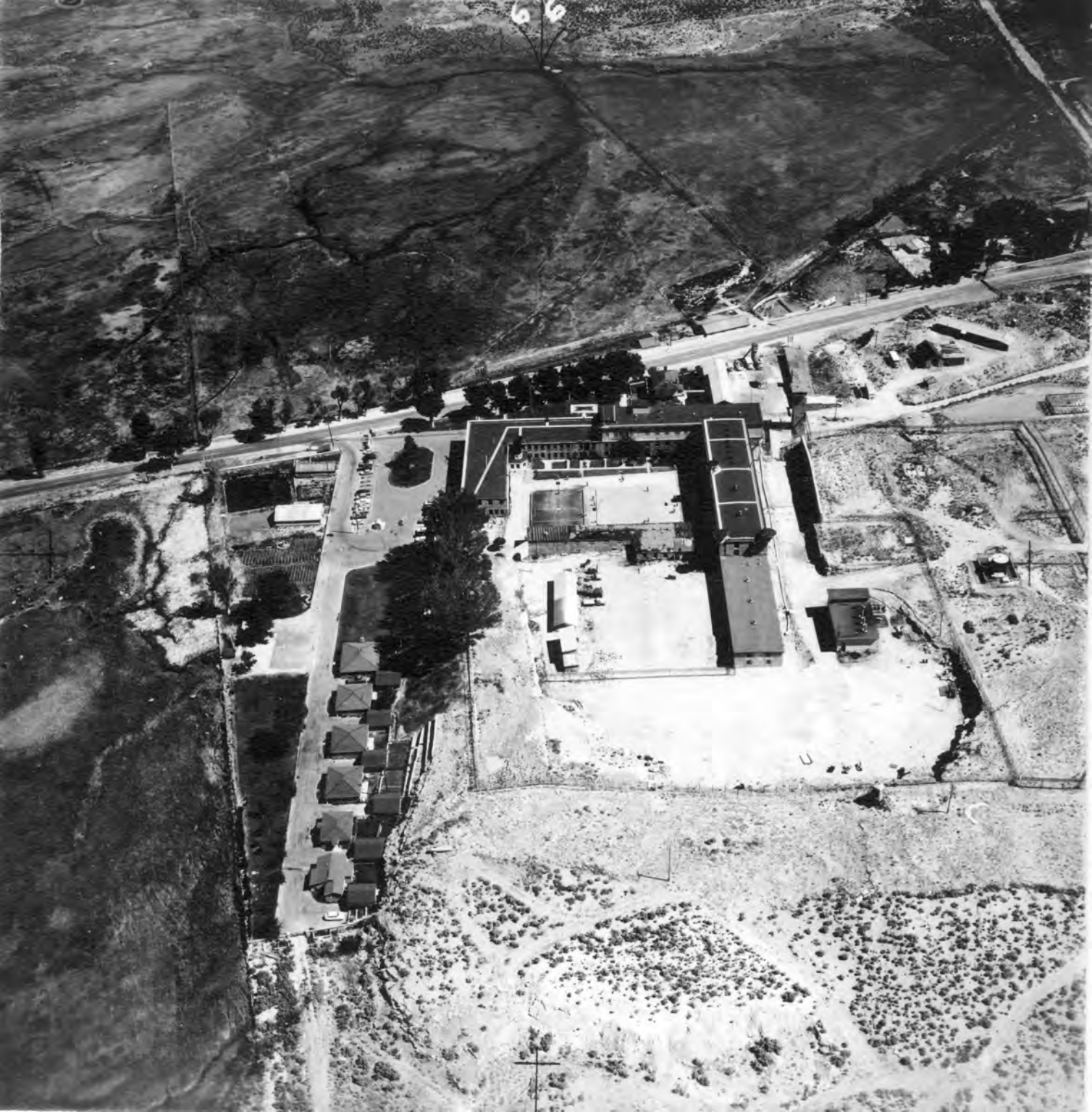
Photograph Key



Author: Nevada SHPO
 Date: April 14, 2015
 Source: Nevada SHPO
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: Zone 11 N





































DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
LICENSE PLATE FACTORY
INDUSTRIAL BUILDING













MUSEO DE LA HISTORIA LOCAL
1981-2001







DANGER
Hazardous
Fuel

































National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY Nevada State Prison
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Carson City

DATE RECEIVED: 8/07/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/22/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000320

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Nevada State Prison (NSP) is listed in the National Register under criteria A and D for significance in Archeology and Politics/Government. The prison complex is significant at the state level and it has a period of significance that begins in 1862 and extends to 1967. The NSP served as the only territorial and state correctional institution in Nevada from 1862 to 1864. Buildings and landscapes reflect the treatment of prisoners using rehabilitative correctional practices, a philosophy that developed after the Civil War, was refined in the Progressive Era, and phased out by the late twentieth century.

RECOM./CRITERIA A&D
REVIEWER Barbara Byatt DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE 9-22-15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

NEVADA STATE PRISON HISTORY



BY JOHN SNYDER
P.S. PRESERVATION SERVICES
CARSON CITY, NV 89702

PREPARED FOR
THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CARSON CITY, NV

MARCH 2005

NEVADA STATE PRISON

- Location:** 3301 East Fifth Street, Carson City, Carson City County, Nevada.
UTM coordinates: 11-263580-4337950 (center of Prison Yard)
- Significance:** First opened in 1864, the Nevada State Prison is the state's oldest penal institution, and continues in service today. It is historically linked with Nevada's earliest political history, and with the lives of persons important in State and local history. The prison quarry furnished building stone for many of the most important civic and public buildings in Carson City. The Nevada State Prison was the first in the United States to conduct executions by the use of gas. The historic complex that exists today is a 20th-century product that is architecturally significant as representing the organic growth of a penal institution, as opposed to a planned whole. Contributive elements include, but are not limited to, the Administration Wing (1921-25), Cell Block A (1921-25), Cell Block B (1947-40), the Warden's House (1921-2), License Plate Factory/Cell House (1931), Pump House (1933), perimeter stone walls and workshops (various dates), Cottages (1952-55), Guard Tower (1931), Chapel/Sally Port, Kennels, the sandstone quarry (1864), lockdown cells carved into the walls of the quarry (early 20th century), the gas chamber (1951), and the warm springs (1864).
- Description:** Exterior:
- The Nevada State Prison consists of an aggregation of two- and three-story flat-roofed buildings of reinforced concrete construction, with ashlar sandstone veneer facing, set around a central yard. Entrance to the property is through a modern, non-contributive security gate located adjacent to the prison parking lot west of the complex. Once past the security gate, one approaches the 2-story administration wing built 1921-25, facing west and located at the northwest corner of the complex. The main entrance to the administration wing is approached by a broad flight of concrete steps. Entry is gained through glazed double doors, set within a classical portico consisting of a corbelled strip cornice surmounting pilasters; the name of the facility is carried within the entablature. Electrically-lighted lantern fixtures set on oval bosses flank the entry. The administration wing is joined on the south by the former License Plate Factory/Cell house, built 1931-32, also of two-story height. South of this is the stone prison wall and sally port.
- Abutting it to the north and enclosing the north side of the yard is the commissary wing/barracks building, built 1921-25; originally two stories in height, the east half of the building gained a third story to house the hospital, women's quarters, and gas chamber in the 1947-50 additions.

NEVADA STATE PRISON
(page 2)

Adjoining the commissary wing at the northeast corner of the yard is Cell Block A, built 1921-25. This is joined at the south by Cell Block B, built 1947-50. Together these buildings form the east wall of the yard.

Fenestration in the buildings is regularly-spaced, barred and wired for security in the prisoner areas; windows in the administration wing are typically 8/1 double-hung wood sash, typical of the 1920s.

As noted, the contributive buildings surround three sides of the central "yard", with modern, non-contributive guard towers placed at strategic positions to provide security. All the buildings have been modified through the years since their initial construction, in response to changing prison requirements. All, however, retain sufficient integrity to continue to evoke a sense of time and place.

The face of the historic prison quarry closes the southwest corner of the yard.

Outside the prison proper, the former Warden's Residence stands within lawns, just to the north. This structure, reflecting the American Foursquare style popular at the time, was built in 1921 from stone and lumber salvaged when old prison buildings were torn down during the 1921-25 construction program. Two stories in height, the first floor is of sandstone masonry construction laid up ashlar, with a stuccoed second floor exterior. The hip roof was originally shingled. A full-width hip-roofed porch spans the west front of the house, with the roof supported on sandstone pillars. Windows are a mix of 1/1 wood sash, and 4/1 Craftsman-style sash, with vertical lights in the upper sash. The building rests on a raised concrete perimeter foundation. Three stone chimneys rise above the roof at either end, and at the rear.

Just north of the Warden's Residence is the now-bypassed historic Fifth Street, originally the alignment of Abe Curry's toll road to the Warm Springs Hotel. Across the road, between it and the current East Fifth Street alignment is an abandoned one-story stone barn with gable roof. The barn is of indeterminate age and use, but clearly falls within the period of significance of the Nevada State Prison and must be considered a contributive element.

West of the prison and across the road leading to the cemetery is an enclosure within a low stone wall erected in 1957. This is the site of the old hot springs.

Further south down the cemetery road the cobblestone American flag (ca.1930) lies on the slope east of the road. The stone cottages built in the 1952-55 period also line the east side of the

NEVADA STATE PRISON
(page 3)

road. These are one-story structures of ashlar stone masonry construction, with low-pitched hip roofs clad in composition shingles, with open eaves and fascia boards. Each has a cut-in porch with low stone wall and simple pillars supporting the roof overhang. Living rooms have picture windows flanked by narrow 1/1 double-hung wood sash, while the rest of the windows are 1/1 double-hung wood sash. Wire mesh covers all windows for security. Each house also has an exterior stone chimney. At the rear of each house is a stone garage with gable roof,

Finally, at the end of the road lies the historic prison cemetery, which came back into prison ownership in 1962.

Historical Context: Prologue

Actual development of the Carson City area began in 1851, when a group of California miners, working eastward from the Placerville, California area, established a small trading post, which they named Eagle Ranch, in Eagle Valley. The establishment of Johnson's Cut-Off emigrant route, laid out in 1852 and passing along the south shore of Lake Tahoe, linked Placerville with the Eagle Ranch. The locale thus became a gateway between the deserts of the Great Basin, and the high passes of the Sierra Nevada.

At Eagle Ranch owners, Joseph and Frank Barnard, George Follensbee, A.J. Rollins, and Frank and W.L. Hall operated their trading post, gardened, harvested hay from native grasses, and did business with the emigrants passing through until 1854. In 1855 the group sold the property to Mormon settlers, who held it until a general recall of all the Saints to Salt Lake City in 1857 caused them to sell out to John Mankin.¹ In turn, Mankin sold it to Abraham Curry the following year.²

By the time Abraham Z. Curry, a businessman-immigrant from New York City, reached the area, high land prices and increasing numbers of miners confronted him. Though the Mormons themselves had returned to Salt Lake City a year earlier to help Brigham Young defend Deseret against President James Polk's threats of military action, they had left a legacy of inflated land

¹ Palmer, Rebecca Lynn, Historic American Engineering Record, Kings Canyon Road (Placerville Road, Lake Tahoe Wagon Road), HAER No. NV-11.

² Historic Environment Consultants, Historic Property Survey Report and Multiple Resource Area Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for Carson City, Nevada ; Humphrey, Noreen I.K., National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, David Small House ; *History of Nevada, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers*, Myron Angel, ed.

NEVADA STATE PRISON
(page 4)

prices for the prime real estate in Genoa, one valley to the south, and Franktown, one valley to the north of Eagle Valley. Sellers were unwilling to negotiate. Great numbers of prospectors were in evidence throughout the Carson River Valley, perhaps sensing the riches nearby; they would discover and open the Comstock the following year. Wagon trains of immigrants continued to wend their way through the Eagle Valley and into California on nearby trails, and the Overland Stage Line used Eagle Station for supplies. Refusing to bow to the high prices in Genoa and Franktown, Curry, with partners F.M. Proctor, B.F. Green, and J.J. Musser, sought out Eagle Valley, buying most of it, including the ranch and trading post, from Mankin for a reported \$500 and a few horses.³

The ambitious Curry, likely anxious to increase the value of *his* lands in a manner similar to those he had spurned for that very reason, immediately began promoting the valley as the site for the state capital. Curry's promotional abilities must be admired: Nevada had not yet become a territory, and statehood did not even seem on the horizon.

It was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 that had established the United States' territorial system. Modified by the Wisconsin Organic Act of 1838, the system required newly settled areas to pass through at least two states of political maturation before admission to statehood. By 1854, questions of sovereignty led Congress to grant to the Kansas and Nebraska Territories the decision of whether to allow slavery. By the end of that decade, the question of slavery had led to the very real specter of civil war.⁴

It was against this background that Curry began his promotion. His capital had no buildings yet erected; and his first attempt to plat the city failed when the surveyor refused to work in return for ownership of "a full city block" of what he viewed as worthless desert. Curry persevered however, and managed to find another surveyor who, in 1858, platted a town site with wide city streets and a four-square-block area for the Capitol and its attendant offices. Curry then built a stone house for himself. The partners also discovered a warm spring on the ranch site, adjacent to a large sandstone deposit. Establishment of the post office on November 18, 1858 gave official recognition to the town.⁵

³ Carlson, Helen S., *Nevada Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary*.

⁴ Adams, George R., National Register of Historic Places Inventory — Nomination Form, Stewart-Nye House.

⁵ Castleman, Deke, *Nevada Handbook*; Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume XXV, History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming 1540-1888*.

NEVADA STATE PRISON
(page 5)

By the following spring Curry and his friend William Ormsby had named the town after Kit Carson, guide for Frémont's 1844 expedition through the area and for whom the Carson River was also named. In June 1859, Captain James H. Simpson described the town as comprising a dozen small frame houses, two stores—one of which was Ormsby's—with some buildings of sandstone taken from Curry's quarry at the warm springs. The discovery of the nearby Comstock Lode later that summer reversed the flow of traffic to California established by the California Gold Rush a decade earlier. This discovery of silver deposits in the Mt. Davidson area by H. Comstock, Emanuel Penrod, and James Fennimore set off a twenty-year era of intense mining activity. Now, thousands of miners and others scrambled eastward *from* California as they followed the lure of the silver strike. The route took many through the dusty streets of Carson City, whose population grew to nearly a thousand by 1860.

The secession of southern states in 1860-61 brought a return to stricter policies regarding territories, but the federal government was anxious to keep the West in the Union. Thus between 1861 and 1864, the Congress extended territorial status to all remaining unorganized areas except Oklahoma: the Colorado, Dakota, and Nevada Territories all received recognition in 1861, and the Idaho and Arizona Territories in 1864. With Congressional creation of the Territory of Nevada in 1861 and nearby Genoa in decline, the government selected Carson City as territorial capital on November 25, 1861. President Lincoln appointed New Yorker, James Nye as the first territorial governor. William Stewart, a Comstock lawyer and politician who had already moved from Virginia City to Carson City, traveled to San Francisco to meet Nye, and convinced him to allow Carson City to remain the seat of territorial government rather than moving it to the seemingly more logical choice of Virginia City. The streamlined admission of Nevada to the Union in 1864 was the direct result of Republican desire to insure control of Congress and passage of the 13th Amendment following that year's elections. Since the majority of the politicians in the fledgling Nevada Territory were Republicans, the Republican majority in the Congress passed the Nevada Enabling Act in 1864. Curry's dream had reached fruition in only six years.⁶

Beyond Stewart's efforts with Nye, other factors influenced Carson City's selection: the fertile soil of the Eagle Valley surrounded it, it had plenty of wood for fuel, good water, and a

⁶ Castleman; Ossa, Rebecca, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Virginia & Truckee Railroad Depot — Carson City, Nevada ; Humphreys, Noreen I.K. National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, Ormsby-Rosser House ; Marschall, John P., The House of Olcovich ; Adams.

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good supply of local building stone at Curry's quarry at the warm springs.

Previously, Curry had walled up the warm springs and built a bathhouse of hand-hewn stone. In 1861 he completed a stone hotel, measuring one hundred feet by thirty-two feet, at the site. The following year found Curry elected to the Territorial legislature. While thus serving, he arranged to have his Great Basin Hotel purchased by the Territory for \$42,500 for use as the County Courthouse, also receiving another \$10,547 for alterations to the building and to add a jail.

That first territorial legislature also created a board of state prison commissioners. The legislature empowered this board to lease, purchase, or build a suitable prison building, allotting \$10,000 for the purpose. With no fit building available, the board gave Curry a one-year, \$500 per month contract to keep the prisoners. At this time there were only four state prisoners, and Curry boarded them at his Warm Springs Hotel, where the inmates cut stone from his quarry. By February 28, 1864—by which time the "prison" contained 38 cells—the arrangement had brought Curry \$10,000.

On March 1, 1864 Curry and his wife, Mary sold the Warm Springs Hotel property to Nevada for use as a prison, reaping a further \$80,000 from the sale. At the time of the sale the property, located at the east end of Curry's toll road to the site, consisted of twenty acres of land including the prison building, the quarry with its tools and implements and horse teams, and use of the toll road.⁷ The sale also set the stage for questions of land title that would arise again in another decade.

In 1865, after Curry received the first \$20,000 from the sale, he presented a claim against the state for \$2,000. Meeting with the State Board of Examiners, he indicated that he would accept \$1,800 to clear the title to the prison land of encumbrances. Attorney General George A. Nourse denied the claim. The waters were about to become muddied.

When the sale of the property became public knowledge, Alvah Mitchell and Emanuel Meyer claimed to have pre-emptive rights to the lands, asserting they had each paid the U.S. Land Office for rights to forty acres. The legislature hired Butler Ives to

⁷Carlson; Nevada Historical Records Survey Project, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Projects Administration, *Inventory of the County Archives of Nevada: No. 13, Ormsby County (Carson City)*. The old County Courthouse, damaged by fire in 1870, stood until 1920 when it was razed to make room for the present courthouse; *Carson City: The Early Years*; Castleman, Cervi, Doris. *With Curry's Compliments: The Story of Abraham Curry, Founder of Nevada's Capital City and Father of the Carson City Mint*.

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conduct a survey to determine the precise location of the prison property, and appointed a committee of three lawyers to study the matter. The committee concluded that the state did not have clear title to the property. Once more, Curry entered the fray, offering to perfect the state's claim. The Attorney General prepared the documents, but Curry deferred any action until the legislature adjourned, and the matter dragged on.

The committee again turned to the Attorney General, who *then* determined that the prison property was located in Section 16 of its Township. Federal law had granted Section 16 of every Township to the state for the support of public schools. Therefore, Nourse concluded, Curry carried no title to the property, and he recommended that no disposition of any portion Section 16 be made. The Board of Prison Commissioners recommended the legislature appropriate \$500 to retain legal counsel in Washington, D.C. to guard the state's interests until such time as the matter was resolved.

Mitchell then tried to patent the land, and the legislative committee requested the General Land Office in Washington to suspend any action on the patent. The Attorney General opined that Curry's claim to title of the land was only recognized by the courts of the Nevada Territory—which no longer existed—and that the United States had prior claim and authority. Further, Mitchell had filed his claim of pre-emption as soon as the U.S. Land Office had opened at Carson City. Mitchell, an employee of Curry, had never improved the land and the only time he spent there was as Curry's worker. The Attorney General, possibly suspecting fraud on Curry's part, concluded that Curry had no claim to the prison land. The matter would arise again.⁸

Prison History, 1864 - 1870

On November 5, 1864, administration of the Nevada State Prison commenced under the government of the new state, which took over responsibility from the Territorial Board of Prison Commissioners. There were then nineteen prisoners.

The first warden was R.M. Howland. He resigned on February 1, 1865, and that same day the Board of State Prison Commissioners appointed Alexander Hunter to replace him. That evening the prison suffered its first riot; this involved about half of the prisoners, most of whom eventually returned to their cells. Guards shot two rioters: F. Miller from Maryland, serving a five-year sentence for manslaughter in Douglas County, and G. Kirk, imprisoned for one year for attempted burglary. Miller died the following morning. Kirk, on the other hand, managed to escape and get as far as Stewart's Flat in Placer County, California. The

⁸ Cervi. *With Curry's Compliments*.

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local sheriff arrested him there, and returned him to the Nevada State Prison on May 25, so badly wounded that he was still on crutches at the end of the year. T. Gleason, an Irish laborer serving a twenty-year term for second-degree murder, escaped but was arrested at Empire the next day. E. Donnery, an Irish shoemaker incarcerated on a ten-year term for highway robbery also made good his escape, but authorities later found him at the Storey County hospital with badly frozen feet, and returned him to the prison on February 8.

When J.S. Crosman assumed his duties as the third warden of the Nevada State Prison on March 6, 1865, he inherited a facility that barely deserved the name, and twenty-two prisoners.⁹ He had an Assistant Warden, a Lieutenant of the Guard¹⁰, and three guards. He also inherited the remainder of an inadequate budget; he would not be the last. On January 1, 1865 there had been \$10,943.73 left of from an initial appropriation of \$20,000. Though he received an additional \$5,000 in September, Crosman still had to report at the end of the year that the indebtedness for fiscal year 1865 was \$17,509.25, not including receipts.

The Nevada Territory had purchased twenty acres of land containing the best stone quarry in the vicinity, and a 32 by 96-foot "stone house"—Curry's Warm Springs Hotel. There were no fences or walls on the property, nothing to prevent escape into the surrounding sage-covered, rolling hills except the vigilance of the guards. The building itself was almost mortarless, with interior walls of canvas, and with a wood shingle roof. Only the former dining room boasted a bit of wallpaper.¹¹ Crosman immediately recommend spending enough money to build a twelve foot-high board fence enclosing the house, quarry, and yard. He submitted plans for approval, and—in the first of a seemingly endless string of construction projects at the prison—completed construction of the enclosure and guardhouses in September 1865. The location of the front of the fence was such that it would allow future construction of a permanent wall on the inside of the fence. The northeast corner of the yard was intended as a garden, but by the time it was enclosed, it was too late in the season for much production.

Besides the lack of enclosure, the new warden faced another immediate problem when he took command of the "prison": water. The only water supply was from two shallow wells, both

⁹ The list of prisoners reflected the general population of Nevada and the West in general during the Comstock years: 60% were American-born, the remaining 40% being foreign-born, Irish, Canadians, Germans, English, Mexicans, and Italians. In this and ensuing prison reports, there is much material for the social historian.

¹⁰ Whose collateral duty was as Superintendent of Labor.

¹¹ Penrose, Matt R. *Pots O Gold*. Reno: Carlisle & Co., 1935, pp. 88-90.

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of which produced a limited amount of warm, brackish water. This, after having stood for a few hours to cool, developed a "very offensive" smell and taste. Initially this required the prison to import its water from the Warm Springs, but during the summer of 1865 they sank two additional wells. The first, about 130 feet east of the building, struck a good supply of cold water. This, however, was not potable and was only usable for irrigating and for the stables. The second well was near the west fence within the prison grounds and adjoining the Warm Springs Hotel.¹² This well produced warm water, but it proved drinkable once it cooled. Planning for the next summer, Crosman built an icehouse once cold weather set in, and had ten tons of ice in storage by the end of the year.

With regard to the hotel-cum-prison, Warden Crosman discovered numerous shortcomings. There was no cellar, a decided need in warm weather. They excavated one under the main part of the building. There were almost no fixtures or furniture. Most of the kitchen fixtures belonged to the woman who was the cook. She left on April 20, 1865, and took her fixtures with her. Because the warden had almost no funds with which to work, the kitchen was still "quite destitute" when he made his report. There was no office furniture, so he had the prisoners make a desk, and spent a precious \$40.00 to buy four chairs, and a stove and stovepipe.

The prisoners had it even worse. There was one worn-out straw mattress per person, and covers varied from half a blanket to a blanket and a half per man. Crosman cleaned the mattress ticks and filled them with new straw. The blanket situation forced him spend enough money to buy thirty pairs of blankets. Many of the inmates had no change of clothing. The warden supplied enough clothes for each prisoner to "...cleanse themselves and put on clean clothing once a week."

To house the prisoners, Crosman built a 32 by 41-foot addition to the house. This contained fourteen two-person cells. This left him sufficient space for another twenty-four cells within the building, and he had enough stone prepared to construction another eight cells, and envisioned another sixteen cells in the room then used as a prisoners' dining room. What he lacked to complete the aforementioned eight cells, however, was money, a perpetual problem for him and his successors.

The warden found a goodly supply of quarrying and stone cutters' tools¹³, and put the inmates to work opening up the

¹² The prison obtained its supply of warm water from the hotel, using a barrel in a wheelbarrow.

¹³ He augmented these and by the end of 1865 had a good stock in the blacksmith and carpenter shop.

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quarry. They produced enough dressed stone that by the end of the year they had as much stored for the coming building season as they had sold. Using rubble from the quarry, they filled and graded the front yard, covering the surface with topsoil in anticipation of sowing a lawn.

In what would become a litany over the years, Crosman outlined a number of recommendations.¹⁴ An adequate water supply topped his list. He wanted a tank or reservoir built in an elevated position, so that there would be a more adequate supply to fight fires than the isolated barrels set around the property.

The kitchen was also a problem, but not for the lack of fixtures. Instead it was because it was remote from the prisoners' dining room, with numerous doorways and narrow halls intervening, these inviting escape attempts. The kitchen was also too small; the warden recommended a new kitchen be built the following summer.

There was no provision for sick inmates, and Crosman wanted a separate ward constructed.

The various workshops, temporary buildings all, were spread out around the yard, causing both inconvenience and security problems. The warden recommended construction of a series of shops connected or otherwise arranged so that the stonecutters and carpenters and blacksmiths would all be located near one another.

His final recommendation was that work be commenced as soon as possible on construction the main prison wall. He had sufficient labor in the form of the prisoners, but warned the legislators that the materials required—lime, lumber, pipe, hardware, and more—would require a considerable outlay. He asked for a minimum of \$25,000. He had good reason: there had been ten escapes since he arrived (though six of these men had been recaptured). Five of the escapees had simply dug through the prison wall, taking advantage of poor mortar—about which more later.¹⁵

Crosman concluded his report to the legislature by looking toward the future. He had improved the prison, but knew much more was required to make it secure, and to make it

¹⁴ This first report was to the Senate and Assembly. Later reports would be made to the Governor, and to the Board of Prison Commissioners.

¹⁵ Another reminder that would be repeated by other wardens was that there was no provision in the law for the costs of recovering escapees or paying rewards. Warden Crosman paid these expenses from his own resources, and asked the legislature for reimbursement.

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reformatory¹⁶ in character as well as being a penal institution. A uniform for the prisoners, though costly, would make recapture of escapees easier and might deter some from future attempts. He noted that he had attempted to cause the prisoners to, as much as possible, support the prison through their labor. But the state of the prison—largely still to be built—and Nevada's comparative isolation were stumbling blocks:

...but this fact stares me in the face: our Prison, with its securities, is yet to be built; and then we are very remotely situated from any of the great natural thoroughfares inland, where the Sierra Nevadas or the Rocky Mountains lie between us and any considerable communities, where all kinds of supplies or material for manufacturing purposes are at enormously high prices, and they are likely to remain so until the great work of the age, the railroad, shall reach us, spanning the Sierras, annihilating time and space, connecting us with the tide waters of the Pacific, thus cheapening all kinds of supplies, enabling us to successfully establish shops for manufacturing purposes.¹⁷

In late December 1865 another prison break revealed the vulnerability of the facility. The new twelve-foot fences and the quarry face certainly discouraged any attempt to escape from the yard under the watchful eye of the guards. Thus, as they gathered in the room at the west end of the prison building where meals were served, they simply dug their way through one wall of the building itself. It was 6:30 AM when guards ushered the men into the 20 by 40-foot room. The mess table was in the southwest corner; and between the table and a guarded doorway there was a stove. A group of prisoners stood in a group at the stove, ostensibly warming themselves in the chill of the morning. In fact, they were screening others who were at work under the table loosening mortar and removing stones. Those at the stove made enough noise with their manacles to mask the noise of the escapees. Since breakfast was not served until 8:00 AM, they had an hour and a half to work on what they had probably begun the previous day, and to make their escape.¹⁸

¹⁶ A prison library, he noted, would give the inmates an alternative to brooding over their misfortunes, or plotting for an escape.

¹⁷ Ironically, completion of the transcontinental railroad initially brought not prosperity, but rather recession and inflated prices to Nevada and California.

¹⁸ Local Affairs, *Carson Daily Appeal*, December 28, 1865, 3:1. Five prisoners fled; there was no note of their fate. Noting the prison and its regulations to be lamentably imperfect, the reporter promised a future

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A reporter from the *Carson Daily Appeal* visited the prison that December, shortly after the break, and reported it to be clean—an interesting observation in view of the Warden's report—and the prisoners treated strictly but well. He noted that the facility still lacked many things. Interestingly, the item he felt most important was good reading material for the prisoners during their idle hours, and he called for the Legislature to apportion sufficient funds for, and for donors to make available, books, magazines and other reading materials.¹⁹

By the time that Warden Crosman submitted his second report, he had increased his staff to eight, including an Assistant Warden, Lieutenant of the Guard, Superintendent of Labor, Gate Keeper, and four Guards; his inmate population stood at twenty-four. He had also carried out much additional building and improvements to the fledgling facility.

He had built a new building at the rear of the prison building. The addition measured 22 by 78 feet, and had stone walls two feet thick with "as good mortar as the country affords", and a painted tin roof. Iron bars protected the two skylights and four windows, and the interior walls were plastered. A transverse wall 30 feet from the east end divided the interior and provided a large kitchen which, via a double-grated door, connected with the officers' dining room in the hall of the main building. The 48-foot room at the west end of the new building was intended as a prisoners' dining room, but at the time of writing was temporarily partitioned for use as shoemaker and tailor shops.

Ultimately, Crosman planned another 41-foot addition at the west end of the new building. This would be at the rear of the cell room and connected to it by a hall, resulting in there being only one door between the kitchen and prisoners' dining room, and one door between the dining room and the cell room, and providing much better security. With the planned addition in place, the prison would consist of a cellblock in the center of a building surrounded by a hall between them and the outer wall of the building.

The warden had also built a masonry water tank at the east end of the new building, adjacent to the main building. With a 50-barrel capacity, the tank was supplied with water pumped from the prison well near the Warm Springs Hotel. As built, it supplied water to the new kitchen and to the second-floor hall of the main building.

article that would present suggestions to the Legislature to rectify the situation.

¹⁹ A Visit , *Carson Daily Appeal*, December 29, 1865, 1:1. Strict treatment of the prisoners in the wake of the prison break may have been a bit of understatement.

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Having found the walls of the cellblock very loosely built²⁰, the warden plastered the interior walls. This provided both more warmth and better security, since any attempts to break through the wall would be obvious on the plastered surface. Crosman also raised the wall in the southwest corner of the yard by four feet to increase security in that direction. The yard itself he enlarged by blasting out the quarry.

Working in the quarry, the inmates had provided cut stone, and Crosman sold nearly all they produced. Under a contract signed in August he had provided rubble stone to the lot in Carson City where the new United States Branch Mint was to be built. Under a contract from the previous year, the quarry had also provided both dressed and rubble stone for the new Methodist Church in Carson City. He had added to the stonecutters' tools and supplies, and had procured more tools for the blacksmith and carpenter shops. His exhaustive report delineated these and other supplies on hand at the end of 1866.

Dealing with one of his own recommendations—that of prisoners' uniforms—the warden had contacted Mission Woolen Mills in San Francisco in March 1866 and purchased 37 gray-and-black striped suits of the same type worn by prisoners at San Quentin. In September he obtained 48 shirts from the same source, so that his charges were at last uniformed and warmly clothed.

Crosman had more recommendations for the legislature. The kitchen range needed replacing. He advised the need for another eight cells, for which he already had the dressed stone; these would, he estimated, give him adequate cell capacity for another year. By 1868 he wanted another building connected with the cell room to allow another block of cells—half in the existing building and half in the new one—with a hall between them and the walls. He needed workshops for the inmates. The office and other rooms in the main building needed lath-and-plaster interior walls. Perhaps most importantly, the warden pointed out the necessity of walls to enclose the yard, but realistically noted that this was unlikely under the present budget system. With \$4,664.89 left available from his previous budget, he asked for \$25,000 to carry him through 1867, and another \$35,000 for 1868.

The warden's financial report makes fascinating reading, and illuminates the very real problems he faced in running the prison in the early years of Nevada's statehood. When the previous Legislature had adjourned, it transpired that there was "...not a

²⁰ Reportedly the mortar joints were so loose that external wind would blow out candles internally. It was through this wall that the five prisoners had escaped the previous year, by simply digging through.

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dollar of cash to go into the Prison Fund, so that I have been greatly crippled in the way of financiering [sic] for the institution, as the first sack of flour bought in January has not yet been paid for." Law required that, from April 1, 1866 all prison indebtedness be on a currency basis, but there was none in the state treasury. In this turbulent period the value of currency was fluctuating wildly, adding to Crosman's woes. In the end he managed to arrange with Carson City merchants to provide supplies on credit, though with a 50% price mark-up. Obviously, this arrangement added greatly to his expenses.

Inflation caused him to have to increase the salaries of his staff, and the lack of money in the treasury caused him further headaches in this matter. At the beginning of 1866 his guards' salary was \$60.00 per month, at a time when the cash value of the dollar was about eighty cents. He increased their salary to \$75.00 per month, expecting to receive their pay in July. Before then the value of the dollar dropped to seventy cents, and there was little prospect that the pay would be made available on time. Crosman then raised guard's salary to \$90.00 per month (and raised the salaries of his other officers commensurately), all of which required the approval of the Prison Board of Commissioners. He had added to his staff, he wrote, because "...I have thought it best to act upon the principle that it is better to pay more for officers, and less for looking up escapes."

While the quarry provided income, even these accounts were slow in paying. At the end of the year the Mint account still owed \$660. The payment for the Methodist Church is even more enlightening: of a total billing of \$1,534.50 from 1865-66, Crosman had received a total of \$730.09—and most of that was in the form of vegetables, hay, and lumber. He considered the remainder to be solvent debts, and hoped for payment on both accounts during the first quarter of 1867.²¹

James Slingerland²² relieved Warden Crosman on January 7, 1867 and immediately found himself facing fiscal problems. By law, the surplus reported by Crosman had reverted to the General Fund, leaving the new warden without any funds whatsoever with which to operate and improve the prison. The result was that the improvements made during the biennium cost the state much more than would have been the case.²³

²¹ J.S. Crosman,, *Annual Report of The Warden of the Nevada State Prison, for the Fiscal Year Ending Dec. 31, 1866.*

²² Slingerland was the Lieutenant Governor of Nevada, and Ex-Officio Warden of the State Prison.

²³ Lacking the ability to pay warrants drawn on the Prison Fund upon presentation, Slingerland found himself working under the same handicap as his predecessor, having to pay a 50% markup on virtually everything in order to obtain the necessary credit to continue in operation.

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The new warden's caustic observations of the facility he had inherited are worth repeating in their entirety:

The "Old Kitchen," which stood as a landmark, to which, it is presumable, the main buildings composing the prison were afterwards built, was nothing but a tinder box, built of rock, with here and there a patch of mortar, full of seams and openings, through which the wind had full sweep; covered with an old, weather-worn shingle roof, through which the rain poured in winter; lined inside with canvas, that hung in tatters on the walls; and connected with the main building by an opening in which no door had ever been built. The dining-room was lined in the same manner, and also the two front rooms adjoining, with the addition of here and there a patch of wall-paper, making it still more inflammable. Office and guard-room were in the same condition; wood-work old and decayed, and with the rest sadly in need of new material. The roof of the main building—forty by one hundred (40 X 100) feet—was shingled, rivalling [*sic*] in antiquity the roof of the kitchen; open and leaky in winter, and in summer ventilating the whole building with a hurricane of wind and sand, and throughout the whole of this one hundred (100) feet, but three flues, to which the stovepipes led from the different parts of the building, some of which reached for a distance of thirty (30) feet, smoking and leaking with every storm of wind and rain: putting all of which together you have a fair picture of the condition of the buildings as I found them on the seventh day of January, (7th) eighteen hundred and sixty-seven (1867) and for which, with the rock pile adjoining, the Territory paid eighty thousand (\$80,000) dollars.

Warden Slingerland, it appears, was not much impressed, and he had good reason.

While his predecessor had completed construction of the new kitchen, the fiscal condition of the state left him unable to furnish it, and so cooking continued in the "tinder box" that was the old kitchen, with stove and utensils burned out and nearly beyond use. The crockery available was old and battered, and there was barely enough for the officers' needs. In the guardroom he found six cells, which were occupied at night by the guards and prisoners—clearly not a desirable arrangement. For his own quarters in the east end of the building, he found bare walls and floors, two bibles, and a bedstead. Other furniture and carpets

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used by the former warden had been his own, and had left with him.

The new warden's fears were realized on the night of May 1, 1867 when fire broke out in the old kitchen. At about 9:00PM flames were discovered in the roof of the old building, and everyone not actually on guard duty reported to fight the fire. The water tank was full and the men formed a bucket brigade in hope of preventing spread of the fire to the roof of the main building. All this time, the open doorway between the old kitchen and the officers' dining room, noted above by the warden, was acting like a forced draft. Soon the canvas ceiling in the dining room was ablaze and the fire quickly burst into the east rear room, upstairs, and within fifteen minutes of discovery was licking at the partition between the officers' quarters and the upstairs hall. The fire was beyond the abilities of the bucket brigade to quell it.

Before the fire was discovered upstairs, however, a black employee of the neighboring Warm Springs Hotel ran the two miles to Carson City to summon the fire brigades there. This selfless act by Alphonso "Mose" Moore was all that saved the facility. Two companies of firemen and equipment arrived from town in time to help prevent any escapes and to save that portion of the prison known as the "Territorial Addition"—that portion built by Warden Crosman. Their efforts were such that Slingerland recommended that the state pay each company \$300 for their efforts.²⁴

With the blaze subdued, the warden transferred the inmates to the Ormsby County Jail for safekeeping while cleanup and investigation efforts went on. Slingerland concluded that the fire was caused by arson, basing his finding on the fact that the fire in the stove in the old kitchen was "entirely out" at 6:30PM, and that there was no fire in any stove in the prison at the time the blaze was discovered, except for a few coals in the stove in the Territorial Addition which was 150 feet distant.²⁵ By the time the firefighting efforts began, the whole of the old building was in flames and these quickly spread. The warden and his officers lost all their clothing, bedding, furniture, and belongings.

Slingerland returned the prisoners to the State Prison on Saturday, May 4 and by the following Monday had them back at work clearing up the ruins. The warden found the walls of the

²⁴ Mose Moore was given written credit for his aid, but apparently no recompense.

²⁵ Given the condition of the roofs as described by the warden, it is certainly conceivable that the fire might have been kindled by a leaky stovepipe or flue and smoldered for hours before discovery.

building to be beyond repair; and had most torn down to be rebuilt in stone and iron.

The warden met with the Board of Prison Commissioners and developed an agreement regarding plans by which to rebuild the burned-out buildings. On May 28 the Board authorized him to rebuild the prison according to the plan and draft. He could advertise for and receive bids, and employ whatever mechanics and laborers he required.²⁶ He was to report progress to the Board from time to time. On June 4 he published a call for sealed bids in the *Territorial Enterprise* and the *Carson Appeal*. After receiving and opening the bids, he awarded the following contracts:

E.W. Townsend would furnish Nevada Lime at \$31.00/ton;

Mason & Huff would furnish Auburn Lime at \$0.07/pound, hair at \$0.14/pound, and plaster at \$19.00/barrel;

H. Sherwood would supply 60 loads of sand at \$2.10/load;

John Wagner would furnish 35,000 feet of common lumber at \$39.175/thousand;

A.W. Pray would supply flooring at \$33.00/thousand, lath at \$7.50/thousand, and shingles at \$8.25/thousand.²⁷

E.B. Rail would furnish 5,000 pounds of two-inch by half inch iron for gratings and cell doors at \$0.13/pound, 20 boxes of Charcoal Lead Plate at \$30.00/box, and 180 pounds of solder at \$0.50/pound.

Clear lumber was in short supply, forcing Slingerland to obtain this material, as available, from different parties at a price of from \$40.00 to \$50.00/thousand.

With the materials accounted for, the warden hired the necessary builders and set to work. From time to time he altered the plans as he saw fit, in order to add to security of the new building.

His first concern was to provide additional cell space²⁸, since the Territorial Addition building now comprised all the available space. The old Guard Room adjoining the cellblock already had

²⁶ One of these was a carpenter, S.L. Pixley, whom the warden hired at a rate of \$8.00/day. However, in spite of the Board's direction, they refused to pay more than \$7.00/day when Slingerland submitted his invoice, and the warden had to submit the matter to the Legislature.

²⁷ These items were not in market, and were sawed at Lake Bigler (Lake Tahoe).

²⁸ Prison population was now up to 41 inmates.

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six cells in it, plus furniture and bedding for the guards. He converted the whole space for cells. First he excavated to provide two dungeons for solitary confinement, then built six more cells atop this space; in all, this gave capacity for sixteen prisoners. Construction was of heavy dressed stone laid up in the best mortar, and doweled together with iron pins. All of this was set on foundations dug to a depth of four to nine feet, and built of broken stone and hard mortar to prevent escape, with a floor of flagstones cemented together.

Cell doors were four inches thick, built up of one-inch lumber "matched in diamond shape" and held together by 100 bolts with the nuts riveted on; iron-barred openings at top and bottom provided light and ventilation. Yale safe locks secured the doors. In addition, Slingerland himself designed an additional lock mechanism which could only be worked from the outside, and which could not be accessed by a prisoner reaching through either of the openings in the door.

Between the two tiers of cells ran a hallway, at the west end of which was an iron-gated doorway leading into the main cell block of the Territorial Addition. At the east end was another doorway and division wall leading to the officers' quarters. Beyond this lay another corridor leading to the carpenter shop and thence, through another door, to the kitchen. Off the corridor was the guardroom.

By January 1869, the warden was able to report completion of the main cell room, 36.5 by 28 feet and two stories in height, with twelve cells for 24 prisoners. Open to the roof, the room had space for an additional twelve cells, or an ultimate capacity of 48 inmates. The roof was timbered and had a ceiling of matched lumber, with four heavily-grated, operable skylights providing light and ventilation.

Warden Slingerland took the opportunity afforded by the rebuilding to overhaul the Territorial Addition building. The upper story received a new painted ceiling of matched lumber, as well as a second skylight. The building held eight cells, with space for an additional 24. At the time of his report the vacant space was in use as the prisoners' dining room, so that a new building for that purpose would be required when the Territorial Addition was fully built out as a cell block. This, he noted, could be accomplished by adding to the space in use as a carpenter shop/shoe shop/pump room, as that space had originally been designed as the dining room.

The warden had intended to raise the wall height of the Territorial Addition to match that of the main building, putting both under one roof with firewalls within. However, with winter approaching and with funds to be stretched as far as they would

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go, he elected to forego this for the time being, leaving the Addition, with its new wood shingle roof, as the one remaining fire concern.

Turning to the problem of security, Slingerland reminded the Legislature of the need for a secure perimeter wall, declaring his intent to seek an additional \$60,000 for the purpose. Crosman's three year-old board fence was in a state of advanced decay, with posts and braces rotting off, boards twisted and warped by the action of sun and storms. Just repairing the fence for another winter would, he warned, require a considerable outlay.

In terms of other improvements, the warden's raising of the walls of the main building by five feet created more vertical interior space, and allowed transoms over doors to increase ventilation. He had also put inmates to work draining the marsh opposite the prison to improve sanitary conditions, an action to which he attributed better health among inmates and officers alike during the prior year.

Warden Slingerland announced his intent for further improvements. He would, he wrote, build a new hay barn in the coming spring. This new metal-roofed stone barn would replace an older, smaller wood barn and would be fireproof. He also intended to raise the Crosman Addition by another story to make room for a blacksmith shop. The addition would result in a 48-foot room on the second story for use as a shoe shop and tailor shop, with blacksmith and carpenter shops on the ground floor.

There were two escapes under his watch, with two of the three escapees being recaptured in short order. There had been almost no cases requiring punishment. The warden kept his charges well-clothed and well-fed, with the prison menu being as follows:

Breakfast: Beefsteak, potatoes, bread, hot or cold.

Dinner: Roast beef or stew. Baked beans on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Mush and molasses, or pudding on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Soup on Tuesday. Bread and potatoes each day.

Supper: Cold meat, hash, potatoes and bread, stewed peaches or apples every other day, vegetables when in market.

Slingerland clearly saw the prison as a penal institution, not a reformatory, writing, "...I have not proposed to consume precious time in trying to make an unmitigated rascal an honest man. I have no 'trusties,' they all stand on an equal footing, one with another..." Still, he did note that there were some among the prisoners who would "...make good citizens and become

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worthy members of society." Giving them the opportunity, however, was clearly not his interest or intent.²⁹

The last two years of the decade were years of growth at the Nevada State Prison: Warden Slingerland completed a new addition³⁰, and prison population ballooned from 41 to 123.

Beginning construction on June 27, 1869, the warden built a 48 by 28-foot, two-story stone building resting on grouted stone foundations four feet deep. He intended the second story to accommodate female inmates, while the first story would contain cells for "refractory" prisoners.³¹ At that time, the two-room, hard-finished upper story was in use as guards' quarters, a situation forced by lack of space in the main building. A two foot-thick stone wall partitioned the eastern twenty feet of the building on both floors, with a stable in the first story space, and storage for hay and grain on the second.³²

Noting overcrowded conditions in the cells and lack of adequate enclosing walls, Slingerland recommended the legislature appoint a committee to complete cost estimates for expanding the prison. There was, he wrote, an almost inexhaustible supply of stone in the quarry for the purpose, and an adequate inmate workforce to cut the stone and erect the buildings and walls.

1870 – 1880: A Move to Reno?

These were also turbulent years, as the Warden and the Board of Prison Commissioners vied with one another to determine who had ultimate charge. This situation led the warden to complain bitterly in his report to the legislature. Up until early 1870, Slingerland had purchased supplies and materials on his own, as he judged necessary. Then the Board took these matters into their own control. The result, the warden reported, was that the Board bought inferior goods at inflated prices, forcing them on him. He pointed out that State law made such purchases the responsibility of the Warden. The Board's purchases were, he wrote, extremely disadvantageous to the state when compared to his. The Board also put forth a requirement that the warden submit his requisition for supplies and materials five days before the end of

²⁹ James S. Slingerland, *Biennial Report of The Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1867 and 1868*.

³⁰ Referred to as the Slingerland Addition in the report.

³¹ Slingerland had one cell on the first floor in use to house an insane inmate, Frank Le Favre, after the California Lunatic Asylum at Stockton refused to receive the prisoner. The warden intended to complete three cells for such use, in order to keep insane inmates away from the rest of the prison population.

³² There was also a small room in the hayloft for the storage of clothing taken from prisoners upon their arrival, which would be returned to them upon discharge.

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each month. They then proceeded to furnish the supplies whenever they saw fit, causing the warden unreasonable delays and inconvenience.

The Board summarily cut four guards—including his Commissaryman—from his staff without prior consultation. Ordering the warden to work all prisoners inside the prison yard, they then decided that “outside guards” were no longer necessary, and the four in question found themselves unemployed. Slingerland countered by requesting an additional *five* guards from the Board. He explained his reason to the Legislature, reminding them that state law required the prison to furnish stone for the then-building Capitol. To do so he had had to greatly expand the quarry. The force of prisoners working there required four guards and a superintendent, these being in addition to the guard force required for the prison proper. The quarry expansion had required demolition of the south fence of the yard. Having 60 or 70 inmates working in an area that virtually invited escape required the extra guard force. In spite of his written request, he told the legislature, the Board ignored the situation. Further, when the warden submitted expenses in connection with the quarry expansion—and expansion required by the Capitol Building Act, he reminded them—the Board had rejected them as unwarrantable. He also chided the Board for failing to advertise for sealed proposals for supplies more than once or twice in the preceding years.³³

At the Board's feet he laid responsibility for an attempted escape on December 1, 1870, noting that the reduced guard force encourage it. The riot occurred at mealtime, when the outer grating of the cellblock was opened to permit access to the kitchen for those prisoners working there. Leading the riot was Charles U. McCluer, a 46 year-old farmer from New York serving a life sentence for second-degree murder. He attacked and injured three or four guards with a homemade knife and a bludgeon. The guards shot him to death. William Shea, a 19 year-old miner from Ohio under a five-year sentence for grand larceny, struck a guard a “murderous blow” from a “slung shot”, and was in turn shot in the abdomen; he died the following day. James Garnett, a 49 year-old blacksmith from England, was also shot in the abdomen, dying a week later. Guards shot another “lifer”, 34 year-old Florida laborer Thomas Heffernan (aka Heffron), in the back, but he survived. While the riot was proceeding a fifth man, Michael Loon (aka Marks), a 23 year-old German tailor serving two years for grand larceny, used the melee as cover to get out the prison door and out of range of the guards' pistols. He hid in the cellar of the main building, but

³³ To advertise was at the Board's discretion, but the warden pointed out the monetary advantages of doing so. In one case the Board rejected an offer to buy beef at \$0.125 per pound, then contracted to buy beef at \$0.18 per pound.

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guards later found and returned him to custody. The county Coroner later absolved the warden and guards of any blame in resorting to extreme measures in quelling the riot and preventing escapes.

The warden also charged that the Board had let certain accounts slip past the Statute of Limitations. One of these was for stone furnished for the Mint and never paid for; more damningly, another was against members of the Board itself. Then, having done his duty as he saw it in reporting the matter to the Legislature, Warden Slingerland stepped down, to be replaced by Frank Denver.³⁴

Prison population had dropped to 97 by the time of Warden Denver's report, but he reaped the whirlwind sowed by the Board of Prison Commissioners during his predecessor's administration.

His initial report is interesting in its virtual lack of the text that characterized earlier reports. Indeed, his report consists almost entirely of tables and statistics, plus the publication of the "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Nevada State Prison, Adopted April 25th, 1872." These regulations clearly set forth the relationship between the Warden and the Board of Prison Commissioners, and their respective duties and responsibilities, and undoubtedly stemmed from the situation that had arisen between Warden Slingerland and the Board. Beyond that, the report is largely lists of prisoners on hand, prisoners received, prisoners discharged, crimes of which they were convicted, inventories, and expenses. But there is one list that harks back to the warnings posted by Warden Slingerland when the Board reduced his cadre of guards: "List of Prisoners Who Escaped in the Emeute of September 17, 1871."

Ten months after the riot and escape attempt of December 1, 1870 came the riot—the *emeute*—of September 1871. This time there was no lengthy account of the affair in the warden's report, just a list of the 29 prisoners who took part:

William Russell, a 30 year-old Ohio cook serving three sentences: 6 years for burglary, 5 years for prison breaking, and 1 year for jail breaking;

Charles Jones, a 28 year-old machinist from New York serving 10 years for second degree murder*;

³⁴ James S. Slingerland, *Second Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison, 1869 and 1870*.

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Tom Heffron, the New York blacksmith serving life for robbery, who had survived being shot in the 1870 riot*;

T.P. Cockerill, a 37 year-old Illinois miner serving 22 years for robbery and 1 year for prison breaking;

John Squires, a 37 year-old miner from Connecticut serving 23-1/2 years for robbery and 1 year for prison breaking;

Tom Ryan, a 21 year old Irish laborer serving four sentences: 4 years for burglary, 9 years for burglary, 8 years for prison breaking, and 9 years for prison breaking;

David Lynch, a 29 year-old Irish clerk serving 3 years for grand larceny*;

Leander Morton, a 27 year-old unemployed man from Ohio serving 30 years for robbery*;

George Roth, a 22 year-old German shoemaker sentenced to 35 years for second degree murder, and 8 years for killing G.H. Thibbs;

William Forrest, a 23 year-old stage driver from Missouri, serving 5 years for burglary*;

Frank Clifford, an Irish miner serving 10 years for robbery and 1 year for prison breaking;

J.B. Roberts, an 18 year-old California laborer serving 11 years for highway robbery and 1 year for prison-breaking;

Elijah Ingram, a 37 year-old New York carpenter serving 14 years for assault to commit murder*;

Pat McCue, a 26 year-old Irish blacksmith sentenced to 7 years for mayhem and 1 year for prison-breaking;

E.B. Parsons, a 29 year-old miner from New Hampshire serving 20 years for robbery;

J.G. Watson, a 25 year-old miner from New York serving 25 years for robbery*;

William Willis, a 21 year-old Georgia carpenter serving 21 years for first-degree arson, and 1 year for prison breaking;

J.E. Chapman, a 25 year-old Canadian miner serving 18 years for robbery and 1 year for prison breaking;

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Edward Bigelow, a 45 year-old Irish miner serving 5 years for grand larceny;

Tim McNamara, an Irish miner serving 20 years for second-degree murder*;

Daniel B. Baker, a 24 year-old from Kentucky serving 30 years for robbery*;

John I. Jacks, a 29 year-old unemployed Pennsylvania man serving 7 years for grand larceny*;

Moses Black, a 34 year-old unemployed man from Ohio serving 7 years for grand larceny*;

John Burke, an unemployed 23 year-old Texan serving 3 years for manslaughter, 1 year for prison breaking, and 1 year for jail breaking;

Pat Hurley, an Irish shoemaker serving 5 years for robbery and an unnamed sentence for prison breaking;

Chris C. Blair, a 28 year-old New York machinist serving 5 years for burglary*;³⁵

M. Pruett, a 20 year-old laborer from Missouri serving 5 years for burglary and 5 years for prison breaking;

Thomas Carter; and,

Thomas Flynn, a 30 year-old Irish miner serving four terms: 7 years for grand larceny, 9 years for burglary, 1 year for prison breaking, and 9 years for prison breaking.

That the riot and break was successful can be seen from the fact that, a year-and-a-half after the event, seventeen of the men remained at large. (Two of the men—Leander Morton and Moses Black—were reportedly lynched by a mob, though where this took place was unreported.) The report is curiously silent as to the events surrounding this largest break from the state prison. Was the reduced guard force a factor, or the lack of a sound perimeter wall, as warned by Warden Slingerland? The report leaves us guessing, though it is clear that the Legislature had taken action to restore administrative calm between the warden and the Board of Prison Commissioners. Events were to prove the effort was not an initial success.³⁶

³⁵ *Still at large and unaccounted for as of February 27, 1873.

³⁶ Frank Denver, *Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1871—1872*.

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In his first report to the legislature, Warden P.C. Hyman made oblique reference to the event leading to his appointment on March 14, 1873, writing,

It is not my purpose to recall the military preparations made for the carrying into effect of the law under which I took charge of the prison as Warden, and I only now allude to the events preceding my being inducted into the active duties of office, by stating that, on being so, I found everything pertaining to the prison in a state of utter confusion and demoralization.

The event to which Hyman referred was—if not for the potential for bloodshed—straight from a comic opera. For if the prisoners occasionally got out of hand so, apparently, did the Warden. At the end of 1872, with the change of administration, came the time for the previous warden—who was also the outgoing Lieutenant Governor, to step down. Frank Denver, however, refused to yield the prison to the new Lieutenant Governor and ex-officio Warden. Governor Bradley then sent General Van Bokkelin with 60 men and a battery of artillery to force the issue.³⁷ The face-off ended peacefully when Denver, confronted with overwhelming force, surrendered. The General then placed Hyman in charge of the prison.

The new warden indeed found a shambles. There was no adequate wall, and the guards were demoralized and disorganized. He immediately set about to rectify the problems. With the assent of the Board of Prison Commissioners he built a “high and strong wall” running east to the high quarry wall, and another wall from the prison west to the Warm Springs Hotel and thence south along the property line of the hotel to the main quarry wall. The new stone walls were from 14 to 18 feet high and up to three feet thick, and used no less than 21,355 cubic feet of stone. These would confine the prisoners during the working day.

With the prison population on the increase, Hyman built a new dining room adjoining the old one on the south. Measuring roughly 41 by 45 feet, it had walls three feet thick, a flagstone floor, and was lit by barred skylights in the roof. Entry to the new dining room was via a short passageway from the yard, this protected by two iron-grated doors. The officer on duty in the new dining room sat enclosed in a 10 by 4.5-foot iron cage. The old dining room, now filled with cells according to its original design, connected to the new by a central passage fitted with two iron-grated doors.

³⁷ Adding insult to injury, the Governor paid the force, which arrived by train on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad, \$300 from the Prison Fund.

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Cell space had become a vexing problem for the warden. He had built six new cells in the old dining room. Still short of space, he built two new water closets and turned the former water closets into cells. He built three cells in the corridor, and another three in the stable. All were of dressed stone with iron-banded doors four inches thick.

With the prisoners secured and the guard force somewhat reorganized,³⁸ Hyman began to seek ways to keep the prisoners employed for the profit of the prison. Again with the consent of the Board, he built and equipped a shoemaking shop and hired a superintendent. The shop itself was 139 by 22 feet, and 20 feet high, with capacity for 60 workers. Beginning with a force of eight inmates, the business built slowly; there were no profits during the first nine months of operation. After that, however, things began to change until by the end of 1874 he had 35 men employed, with profits averaging \$800 per month. The bulk of the prisoners remained employed in the stone quarry, though at the time there was little demand for stone and hence little profit for the prison.

Adjacent to the shoemaking shop the warden built a 14 x 22-foot bathroom, to be used for bathing the prisoners. A 400-gallon tank atop the bathroom supplied the bathtubs, as well as supplying water to the shoemaking shop in case of fire. Draining the bathroom was a new sewer which ran from the lower end of the yard through the building, and which drained the entire yard.

Having gained momentum in his building program, Hyman then built an 18 x 28-foot blacksmith shop, a 26 x 39-foot carpenter shop, and a 32 x 25-foot tailor shop. Turning his attention to the existing buildings, he constructed a two-story, four-room addition on the east end of the main building. Each room contained one iron-grated window, and had hard-finished plaster walls. The two upper rooms, accessed by a stairway from the front sidewalk, were employees' sleeping rooms. One of the ground floor rooms opened into the office, while the other was connected to the storeroom by an arched doorway, and served as a storeroom addition.

Inside the prison he made more changes, laying new flagging in the old dining room, in the corridor, and in the passageways. Removing a partition wall between the front and back offices, he created one large office space, fitting it out with prison-made

³⁸ By the time of the report, his staff consisted of a clerk, a Captain of the Guard, Lieutenant of the Guard, and eleven guards, so it appears that he had managed to work with the Board to reverse the former force reductions. Though there were several attempted prisoner revolts under his administration, the officers prevented each one.

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black walnut counter and desks. In the yard were a new 23-foot deep well and well house, providing sufficient pumped water to cover the entire grounds.

Then in 1873 the Legislature passed a bill that provided for a new prison to be located at Reno, and authorizing the Prison Commission—which consisted of the Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General—to purchase land for a prison large enough to hold 300 prisoners; the bill appropriated \$100,000 for the project. The need clearly existed: the prison at Carson City, with but 53 cells, then housed 153 prisoners. But the proposal to locate the facility at *Reno* appears to have originated in Governor Bradley's office, with help—or pressure—from Reno politicians. Whether there was any collusion remains unclear. Over the course of the next three years, the Reno prison would require the expenditure of much money, newsprint, ink, and political hoopla as the railroad town sought to wrest the State Prison away from Carson City.

In the event, nothing much happened for the rest of 1873. But in early April 1874 the Reno press announced that the governor would be in town any day to select the site, and that construction of the new prison would begin that summer. "We know of a certainty that the State Prison of Nevada is to be permanently located somewhere on the Truckee River," wrote the paper in a fervor of boosterism.³⁹ A week later, Governor Bradley was finally busy looking for sites along the Truckee. However, important business called him away to San Francisco, delaying any decision until he could return with the rest of the Prison Commission members.⁴⁰

In May 1874 the Prison Commission sent Warden Hyman to the East Coast to attend the Prison Congress of the United States. There he learned more of prison discipline and the treatment of prisoners. He also toured a number of modern prisons to gain a working knowledge of current thinking in prison architecture. On his return, he submitted plans for a new prison at Reno, which the Commission adopted.⁴¹ But though there were plans, there was still not a site, and the project was not moving nearly quickly enough in the minds of Reno officials. In early June the governor was still promising a decision on the site. In an editorial late that month, with no decision forthcoming, the *Nevada State Daily Journal* wrote:

³⁹ The State Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal* , April 11, 1874, 3:2.

⁴⁰ About the Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal* , April 17, 1874, 3:2.

⁴¹ Town and County , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, May 10, 1874, 3:2.
This would be the first of a number of stillborn plans for a new prison in both Reno and Carson City.

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To Governor Bradley, Attorney General Buckner, and Secretary of State Minor, constituting a Board of Prison Commissioners for Nevada, the people of Reno send greeting: You, each and every mother's son, are hereby commanded to appear in Reno within ten days, then and there to show cause why sentence of death should not be passed on you, or forever hold your mouth shut up. You have stated time and time again, that you would select a site in Reno for the State Prison before the 15th of June, which you have failed to do, all of which is against the peace and dignity of the State of Nevada, and contrary to the statute in such cases made and provided. To the Sheriff of Ormsby county, greeting: You will snail the aforesaid defendants by their back hair, and bring them to the Truckee river, where you will give them a bath at the expense of the river, and keep them submerged until they shall have selected a site and let the contract for the outside walls.⁴²

The townsfolk were clearly displeased. They would remain so for a while longer yet. On July 18 the newspaper reported the Commission in town once more, enthusing that, "We shall probably know before the day is over all about the Prison location." The following day, in the absence of a pronouncement from the Commission, the editor wrote, "Hurry up, gentlemen."⁴³

August 1874 finally brought a decision, when the Prison Commission selected and purchased a 206-acre parcel known as the Marshall Place, located a little over a mile east of Reno on the Truckee River and adjacent to the main line of the Central Pacific Railroad. The Attorney General promptly announced that prisoners at Carson City would immediately begin cutting stone for the new prison, and that construction would begin promptly. The *Nevada State Daily Journal* enthused that the new prison would be one of the finest in the United States, and concluded, "More on this subject anon." The reporter certainly got the last part right: there would be much, *much* more anon.⁴⁴ The sniping by opposing newspapers in Carson City and Reno began almost immediately.

Hot on the heels of the announcement of the purchase of the Reno site, the *Carson Tribune*, seeing the interests of Carson City under threat, wrote:

⁴² Summons , *The Nevada State Daily Journal* , June 28, 1874, 3:2.

⁴³ The Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, July 18, 1874, 3:2; Town and County , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, July 19, 1874, 3:2.

⁴⁴ The State Prison The Site Selected , *The Nevada State Daily Journal* , August 8, 1874, 3:3.

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Although rather late in the day, the State Prison Commissioners have at length located the prison at Reno, and men have been set to work breaking bowlders [*sic*] to make stone for the foundation of the new building. By the time the next Legislature meets, there will no doubt be stone enough broken to pay expenses by disposing of the same at forced sales, as the Act locating the prison at Reno will surely be repealed in the year of grace 1875.

To which the Reno paper replied, "The editor may have good cause for making the assertion in the concluding paragraph, but we incline to the opinion that he will be disappointed." The Reno editor appeared to have just cause for his opinion, as that same day the commissioners were back in town to select the specific location within the parcel for the prison.⁴⁵

Work actually began on August 29, 1874 when S.F. Hoole⁴⁶ reported for duty as "Architect and Superintendent" of the project, and began by conducting surveys and staking the corners of the walls of the enclosure, which measured 450 by 500 feet. Foundations nine feet deep by seven feet wide would support twenty-six foot-high battered walls that would be five feet thick at the base, tapering to three feet at the top. Walkways along the top of the walls would link guard towers at each corner and in the center of each wall. The massive walls and towers would consume 15,000 perch of stone.⁴⁷ Gushing over the work, the *Nevada State Daily Journal* wrote, "We won't write too much on this subject just now as it will be a favorite theme for some time to come."⁴⁸ Again he was correct: it would be a favorite theme for much legislative bickering and harping that would begin early the next year. By the end of September 1874, Hoole had between seventy and eighty men at work at the site, and was beginning to lay the wall foundations. In yet another prescient pronouncement, the Reno paper noted that, "...Superintendent Hoole will make a big hole in that \$100,000 by the time the

⁴⁵ The New State Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, August 13, 1874, 3:3; Town and County , *The Nevada State Daily Journal* , August 13, 1874, 3:3.

⁴⁶ Hoole was one of Reno's more important 19th century builders, though his title as architect was probably self-proclaimed. He owned the Reno Planing Mill, which provided materials for his own projects. In the latter years of the century he associated with architect/builder James Z. Kelly. He was a bidder on the contracts for the Nevada State Capitol and the Orphans Home in Carson City, and built the first Washoe County Courthouse in 1873. A Mexican War veteran, Hoole also owned the *Reno Daily Record* for a period, and moved the paper to Bodie, California.

⁴⁷ A unit of measure in stone masonry, one perch was variously 24.75 or 25 cubic yards.

⁴⁸ The New State Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, September 1, 1874, 3:3.

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Legislature meets." Cost overruns would be the bane of the project and its proponents.⁴⁹

In October the Central Pacific built a siding track to the site of the new penitentiary, presumably to supply building materials by rail, and by early November there were 140 men at work. The foundation walls were up to a height sufficient for crews to begin laying the water table on them. But "miles" of new graded roads, a long ditch to supply water to the site, and a boarding house for the workers all were eating into the appropriated funds that the Legislature had intended would be sufficient to purchase the site and erect the facility. Still, the Prison Commission visited the project late in the month, and pronounced themselves "well satisfied."⁵⁰

With the onset of winter, construction of the Reno prison ceased for the season at the end of November. The Reno paper promised its readers a full review of the buildings-to-be that would be built according to plans supplied to Hoole by various state prisons, and which would be of "an approved style." In four months of construction, the foundation of the perimeter walls had consumed 5,000 perch of stone, 64,000 cubic feet of cement grout, and—reportedly—\$35,000.⁵¹

At the end of 1874, Warden Hyman at Carson City concluded his report with a number of recommendations. First, he recommended appointment of a Deputy Warden to take charge during the Warden's absence, since the regulations limited the authority of the Captain of the Guard to carrying out previously-given orders. Second, he backed "speedy" construction of the new prison as the Carson City facility was overcrowded, as noted earlier.⁵² Having been exposed to prison reform in the East, he recommended that prisoners be paid for "tasks" over and above their regular work. Their pay would be held by the state treasury and turned over to them upon release. The aim was to inspire ambition to pursue a lawful, gainful life after prison.⁵³

The new year opened on an inauspicious note for the prison and all connected with it. In mid-January 1875 the Legislature appointed a special committee comprising two senators and three

⁴⁹ The Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, 9/23/1874, 3:1.

⁵⁰ Town and County , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, October 3, 1874, 3:1; The New Prison , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, November 6, 1874, 3:2; Inspecting , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, November 22, 1874, 3:2.

⁵¹ State Prison , *The Daily Nevada State Journal* , November 24, 1874, 3:2.

⁵² Among the 153 prisoners incarcerated at Carson City were a number insane prisoners whom the warden was most anxious to transfer to an asylum.

⁵³ P.C. Hyman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1873 and 1874*.

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assemblymen to investigate the Reno prison project.⁵⁴ The committee paid their first visit to the site at the end of the month, made a cursory inspection, and promised to return with an "expert." They returned in early February, re-visited the scene, and then busied themselves probing the books and accounts of the project, and taking the testimony of witnesses. They returned to Carson City the next day. At least one of the committee members was apparently favorably impressed, and the Reno papers crowed that it would be "...an impossibility for them to make any other than a favorable report." The Legislature, the editor trusted, would see the necessity of appropriating a further \$200,000 for the work.⁵⁵

But the special committee was back in town a week later, seeking more witnesses. A few days later its report became public. The project, it seems, had consumed \$50,000, not the \$35,000 reported earlier. The smaller figure, the report noted, is what *should* have been expended for the work accomplished. In an incredible bit of parochialism, the *Daily Nevada State Journal* of Reno saw this as a favorable report! Accompanying the committee's report was a bill to authorize another \$100,000 to complete the walls and the cell house. The whole project, they estimated, would require nearly \$350,000. They recommended the state dispense with the services of Architect Hoole and his \$300-per-month salary, and that it retain the services of a competent, bonded architect to oversee the work. The committee recommended that all future work be contracted to the lowest bidder. Senator W.L. Ross wrote a minority report asserting that the state had received full value for its expenditure. The waters were about to get muddier still.⁵⁶

The political wrangling that marked the question of where the Nevada State Prison would reside gathered force in the legislative session of 1875. As the state Senate considered the General Appropriations bill in late February, Senator Davenport unsuccessfully attempted to have "Reno" stricken from the bill with regards to the State Prison. In the end, the Senate passed the bill, including the \$100,000 prison appropriation, on a vote of 22 to 1 and the future of the Reno prison appeared firm. However, by the time the final bill passed in early March, the state Assembly apparently had managed to strike the prison appropriation entirely! Worse, they moved the remaining \$50,000 of the original appropriation to the Building Fund. The

⁵⁴ Our Prison , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, January 16, 1875, 3:3.

⁵⁵ Visiting the Prison , *The Daily Nevada State Journal* , January 31, 1875, 3:2; Investigating , *The Daily Nevada State Journal* , February 6, 1875, 3:2; Prison Matters , *The Daily Nevada State Journal* , February 7, 1875, 3:2.

⁵⁶ After Witnesses , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, February 13, 1875, 3:2; Favorable Report , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, February 17, 1875, 3:2; Our State Prison , *The Nevada State Daily Journal*, February 18, 1875, 3:2.

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Reno papers howled, writing, "Oh, smart Alecks! You have not only lost the golden egg, but the hen that laid it."⁵⁷

A week later, the Board of Prison Commissioners once again visited the Reno site, trying to determine what might be accomplished that year in the absence of an appropriation. It looked as if fencing the site and planting a few trees might be all that could be completed. April passed without further news of the project. May 1875 brought amazing news: the Board announced it was calling for proposals to finish the walls at the Reno prison. The Board would receive bids until May 20, and after opening and reviewing them would decide whether to proceed. If the decision were to continue with the building, the successful bidder would be expected to complete the east, west, and south walls, and that portion of the north wall connecting the Warden's House and the Cell House. He would be paid on a monthly basis, up to eighty percent of the total, with the Board withholding the remaining twenty percent until the job was completed and accepted.⁵⁸ Under legislative pressure, the Board was learning how to keep rein on its contractors.

The Board opened the bids in a timely fashion, but then dragged their collective heels in reaching a decision. Only two of the three members were present at the bid opening, so they deferred any decision until the full Board could meet. Among the bidders were S.F. Hoole—the prior Superintendent of Construction—with a bid of \$61,000; C. Klemptfer, who bid \$57,000; [former] Senator Thompson, bidding \$40,000; I.T. Benham, whose proposal was for \$38,500; and a man named Hamilton, who had the low bid at \$34,500. As for the citizens of Reno, the local paper reported that they did not care who got the contract, so long as the work continued. Finally, a full five weeks after the opening the bids, the Board awarded the contract to Senator Thompson.⁵⁹

Thompson had a crew of forty men at work in July, and Governor Bradley was in Reno in some relation to the new

⁵⁷ State Prison Appropriation , *The Daily Nevada State Journal*, February 25, 1875, 3:2 ; No Appropriation , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, March 6, 1875, 3:3.

⁵⁸ Tour of Inspection , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, March 13, 1875, 3:2; Work To Be Resumed , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, May 9, 1875, 3:3; Prison Work , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, May 11, 1875, 3:2. Just where the funds came from remains unclear.

⁵⁹ Prison Bids , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, May 22, 1875, 3:2; Prison Bids , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, May 23, 1875, 3:2; Prison Bids , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, June 4, 1875, 3:2; Town and County , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, June 23, 1875, 3:1; The State Prison Contract , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, June 26, 1875, 3:2. So much for the legislative recommendation that contracts go to the lowest bidder, as there were two lower than Thompson s.

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prison for which he had been a prime proponent⁶⁰. Thompson expected to be at work until the onset of winter. Then, almost as quickly as work had resumed, it stopped again and another round of controversy and recrimination broke out.

At the end of July 1875 the contractor sent a telegram to Carson City announcing that he was stopping work. The crux of the matter had to do with a dispute over the specifications. The Board had issued specifications for two types of wall—rubble construction and solid ashlar masonry. Thompson had submitted the lowest bid⁶¹, but had failed to specify which type of wall construction his bid covered. Architect Hoole, inspecting the work, found Thompson building rubble walls; he informed the contractor that his contract called for solid masonry. Not so, replied Thompson, who asserted he had bid only to build the less costly rubble construction. The Board of Prison Commissioners met in early August to adjudicate the matter. Siding with the opinion of Architect Hoole, they determined that Thompson's contract was for walls of cut masonry. Having won what he must have regarded as a plum contract, Thompson—and those who had bonded his bid—suddenly faced disastrous losses.⁶²

Work remained on hold for a short time, but resumed by mid-August with a reduced crew of thirty workers. The contractor had several large wagon teams at work hauling rock to the site, and the Reno paper wrote, "To judge from the supply we should say that the work will not stop for want of rock." But less than two weeks later the same journal noted a "deplorable" lack of building stone. The contractor would either have to increase the supply, or lay off some of his crew for lack of work. As events proved, Thompson chose—or was forced to choose—the latter. By late September there were only sixteen men at work on the site: six stonemasons, two stonecutters, and eight laborers.⁶³ By that time the railroad was delivering stone to the site, augmenting the work of the teamsters. At the prison, Thompson had the south and west walls raised to a height of ten feet, while the north and east walls remained only as foundations at-grade. The laborers

⁶⁰ Still in Town , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, July 4, 1875, 3:1; Prison Work , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, July 10, 1875, 3:1. Though he would later be investigated over the matter, just what Bradley's private interests in the prison might have been remain unclear.

⁶¹ Or so said the Reno paper. In actuality there had been two lower bids, but there was no explanation as to why the Board had not accepted these. One can only wonder of Thompson's status as an ex-Senator somehow played a role in this highly politicized affair.

⁶² Town and County , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, July 30, 1875, 3:2; The State Prison Controversy: The Architect's Report is Sustained , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, August 3, 1875, 3:4; The Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, August 5, 1875, 3:1.

⁶³ It may well be that this force reduction was in fact Thompson's means of avoiding financial loss in the wake of the unfavorable contract decision.

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used several horses to move stone around the site to two derricks that raised the blocks into position. By October, teams were delivering stone from an unnamed quarry somewhere north of Reno, and from the prison quarry at Carson City. But even the Reno newspaper must have known that the project was in trouble, as it penned, "Work at the Prison goes bravely on."⁶⁴

October also found Governor Bradley back in Reno, and saw the first public admission in the Reno news that there might be repercussions. "He leaves for Carson this morning," wrote the *Daily Nevada State Journal*, "and then the Prison scandal will be fully investigated. Governor Bradley expresses no fear as to the result." As October rolled into November, the contractor's workforce swelled again to forty men, and the walls rose to seventeen feet. "It will be an imposing structure some day," said the *Journal*, to which the *Eureka Sentinel* replied:

Yes, if it don't fall down. A correspondent wrote us recently that the new prison is the flimsiest piece of shoddy that has ever been thrown together in the State. The Prison Commissioners, while they have their hands in, should go to Reno and 'investigate' the walls of the new building.

When the Reno paper chose to reprint the *Sentinel* piece, the *Carson Tribune* noted this and, chortling at the discomfiture it would be causing in Reno, wrote that the *Journal's* editor therefore accepted the report as correct. Never one to let the opportunity for a good, parochial journalistic fight pass, the Reno paper then referred to the *Eureka* editor as a "damphool." As for the Carson paper, the *Journal* wrote that, "The remarks about the prison walls are nothing but a mess of lies. Carsonites are so mean spirited and selfish that when they see the walls of our prison they imagine they are looking at the iron railing around the State Capitol."⁶⁵

The new prison faced the Central Pacific mainline, with the Warden's Office and other buildings planned for the front of the enclosure; its rear wall was at the bank of the Truckee River. Mild winter weather allowed Contractor Thompson and his head

⁶⁴ State Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, August 11, 1875, 3:1; Rock , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, August 30, 1875, 3:3; Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, September 11, 1875, 3:2; Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, September 24, 1875, 3:2; Town and County , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, October 10, 1875, 3:2.

⁶⁵ Governor Bradley , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, October 12, 1875, 3:2; The New State Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, October 16, 1875, 3:2; Town and County , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, October 23, 1875, 3:3; Town and County , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, November 2, 1875, 3:3; Reno Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, November 5, 1875, 3:2.

mason, Robert Kirk, to continue his working right to the end of the year, though with the workforce reduced to around twenty. The *Journal*, however, happily reported the west wall—eighteen feet high, five feet thick at the base, and two and one-half feet broad at the top, and including the corner towers with their spiral stairways—as complete. That those dimensions bore little relation, other than the five foot-thick base, to Hoole's original plans for twenty-six foot-high walls with a three foot-wide walkway at the top, seems to have been conveniently overlooked. The rest of the walls were complete up to the water table, a height of five feet. The stone used to this height was a bluish rock brought from a quarry near Peavine; above that the walls were of the warm yellow sandstone from the prison quarry at Carson City. Kirk reported that work would continue as long as the weather held.⁶⁶

If 1875 had been a turbulent year for the politicians and the builders, Warden Hyman's second two-year term had also not been a happy one. In addition to the headaches that must have beset him over the prison location issue, he also found himself suspended and under investigation on questions of mismanagement.⁶⁷ His shoe foreman had resigned unexpectedly, and the replacement proved embarrassingly incompetent, forcing him to generate exhaustive accounts of prison income and expenses for his biennial report.

When the shoe foreman resigned in early 1875, the warden immediately hired a replacement, and almost as quickly regretted the choice. Between January and September 1875 the shop earned just \$3,361.48, or about half of what it should have according to previous production. This the warden laid at the feet of his new foreman. Then, just as he was about to discharge the foreman and hire a new one, he found himself relieved by Milton R. Elstner. Between October 1875 and the end of March 1876, shop earnings fell to an abysmal \$1,899.44. For this he blamed both the interim warden and the incompetent foreman. Restored to his position in April 1876, Hyman immediately fired the foreman and hired H.C. Holbrook as his replacement. Holbrook proved an able foreman, and between April 1876 and the end of the year, shoe earnings rose to \$9,833.85, vindicating—at least in his own eyes—the warden's faith in the enterprise. In addition to these earnings, the prison had sold \$3,394.85 worth of stone to the Capitol Ground Commissioners.

⁶⁶ The Prison , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, December 22, 1875, 3:3; Reno Matters , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, December 30, 1875, 3:3.

⁶⁷ It appears that there were questions regarding the disposal of certain stocks of sugar and butter.

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Obviously preoccupied with the investigation and other problems, Hyman's construction program at Carson City had slowed considerably during this biennium. He had built a stone walk in front of the prison, built a new stone shed, re-roofed the shoe shop with tin, and constructed a new 1,800-gallon water tank. Still, prison population remained high, and overcrowding of cells continued as a problem alleviated only by efficient sanitary measures, cleanliness, adequate ventilation, and a good diet.⁶⁸

The mild winter of 1875-6 had proved a blessing for the contractor at Reno, as crews continued at work on the new prison. However, by the end of April that contractor was no longer Senator Thompson; earlier, he had quietly sub-let the contract to Colonel Richardson and a Mr. Larkin. On April 30, Richardson announced that the outside walls would be complete by June 1, after which "connections" could be made at a cost not exceeding \$10,000 and officials could finally relocate prisoners from Carson City to Reno. It would prove to be yet one more optimistic pronouncement. The final relocation decision lay with the Board of Prison Commissioners and, even at this seemingly late date with much money having been expended on the new facility, at least one of the commissioners remained opposed to the move. In the event, Richardson failed to make his date, and mid-June 1876 found seventy-five feet of the north wall still incomplete. To finish this, he stated, would take about six days, assuming the stone coping arrived. In the interim his crews were at work pointing the masonry on the completed walls.⁶⁹

Earlier, in May, the editor of the *Gold Hill News* had toured the building site, and from his report—reprinted in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, readers gained a clearer picture of the facility. He reported the walls eighteen feet high, topped with a four foot-wide coping that would serve as the guards' walkway. While locally-quarried granite formed the walls, they were faced with sandstone from the prison quarry at Warm Springs. The cell house and Warden's accommodations would fill the north side of the quadrangle. The cell house would be large enough to house 200 prisoners, he reported. Noting the proximity of the prison to

⁶⁸ The Physician's Report remarked on this situation, finding the good conditions remarkable given the amount of overcrowding. Frequent whitewashing of cells kept away that peculiar odor generally found in overcrowded rooms and houses. P.C. Hyman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1875 and 1876*.

⁶⁹ Prison Matters, *Daily Nevada State Journal*, April 30, 1876, 3:2; Reno State Prison, *Daily Nevada State Journal*, June 14, 1876, 3:2; Town and County, *Daily Nevada State Journal*, August 10, 1876, 3:3; State Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 24, 1876, 3:1. What happened after that is not clear, except that early August found the Prison Board still working to reach a settlement with the contractors, with the structure still not accepted. It appears that the height of the guard towers was at issue.

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the Truckee River, the writer foresaw the prison housing a water-powered woolen mill using convict labor to profit the state.⁷⁰

The *Reno Gazette* followed with a similar article in July, again quoting other papers as supporting the project. By this time the wall and guard towers, though a mile and a half distant, could be seen from town. But not all papers reflected the Reno position. The *Carson City Tribune* countered:

The contractors and sub-contractors of the Nevada State Prison walls at Reno have been buzzing round the Capitol for the past two days for the purpose, as we understand it, of securing the pay for the work done. The four walls have been splendidly built on that cobblestone foundation, and there they stand as monuments of legislative and executive humbuggery with a slight tint of political fraud intermingled. We understand that the honorable Board of Commissioners refuse to accept the building (?) from the original contractor, in consequence of some mistake concerning the towers on which the prison guards will have to keep watch and ward over the next centennial Nevada prisoners. It is to be hoped that the very honest gentlemen who have had so many fingers in that State-robbery pie will receive what is their due, and all we wish is that we comprised that honorable Board.

The *Gazette* of course saw this as base provincialism on the part of Carson City and its newspaper, and dismissed the writing out of hand. Still, there was the matter that the construction remained unaccepted.⁷¹

National and state elections were at hand in the centennial year of 1876, and the Nevada State Prison quickly became an issue as claim and counter-claim, charge and counter-charge filled the newspapers and continued into 1877 when the new state legislature came into session. In October 1876 the *Daily Nevada State Journal* complained that Carson City had hired an agent—what we would term a lobbyist today—to travel to the eastern part of the state in an effort to “electioneer” with the incoming legislators to prevent any further appropriation for the Reno penitentiary. Pointing out the unfairness of such action, the editor wrote:

⁷⁰ The New State Prison , *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 5, 1876, 2:2. He also opined that the prison woolen mill would act as an inducement to farmers to raise sheep and thereby create a new industry.

⁷¹ State Prison , *Reno Evening Gazette* , July 24, 1876, 3:1.

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Reno asks naught but justice from the people of the State, and has no money with which to influence legislators. She claims that this is the proper place for the Prison. Here should it be located. Here it can be made self-sustaining, and an institution of profit to the State, instead of a great burden. One Hundred Thousand Dollars have already been expended upon the Reno prison, and there has been more work done for the money than on any other public structure in the State. The State ought not to throw away this work and money, for the benefit of a few selfish Carsonites. Reno will submit her claims to the Legislature, and we believe that body will be composed of such honorable men as will see that her rights and the rights of the State are protected. We are ready for the fight, and will endeavor to prevent by fair means what Carson is trying to procure by foul. Let us try and send our best men to the Legislature.

By the end of the year, however, it appeared that the Carson City efforts had been for naught, and even the *Eureka Sentinel* was of the opinion that Reno would have its way, and that funding would be forthcoming.⁷² But the fight was far from over.

Title to the existing state prison lands at Warm Springs apparently remained unsettled. Two men, local farmer Aaron D. Treadway and Judge Mesick of Virginia City claimed ownership of the property. This was old news, as Treadway had approached brought suit as early as 1870, and had approached the legislature in 1874 seeking a \$20,000 buyout, only to be turned away; still, it was cause for hope in Reno. In late 1876 Treadway and Mesick and had filed suit in U.S. District Court to gain clear title.⁷³ Governor Bradley weighed into the fray in December, granting an interview to the *Reno Evening Gazette* in which he cited the title question. He also unabashedly stated that the walls at the new Reno prison were superior to those at the penitentiaries at San Quentin, California and Jefferson City, Missouri. Finishing the project would, he claimed, give Nevada the finest penal institution on the West Coast, one that would be self-sustaining

⁷² Prison Corruption Fraud: Carson against Reno Moving To Retain The Prison at Carson A Hogging Game, Reno Ready For the Fight, *Daily Nevada State Journal*, October 15, 1876, 3:2; The New Prison, *Daily Nevada State Journal*, December 15, 1876, 3:3.

⁷³ *Carson Daily Appeal*, March 5, 1870, 3:1; The State s Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 9, 1876, 3:3; The State s Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 11, 1876, 3:1.

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and profitable to the state, things that, in his opinion, the Carson City facility could never be.⁷⁴

So the *Reno Evening Gazette* opened 1877 with another penned salvo fired at its Carson City opponents, championing the cause of the Reno prison while disparaging the existing facility at the state capital. The paper again raised the question of title to the existing prison property. It rejected Carson City's claim that the new prison would end up costing \$500,000 as "bosh." It wrote of a fine stone quarry just three miles from the new prison site.⁷⁵ The Reno paper disparaged the existing prison as inadequate and expensive. Noting the expansive Reno site, the editor charged that the Carson City facility had been forced to cut into a hill to expand, conveniently overlooking the fact that that self-same hill was in fact the prison quarry that was supplying stone to the Reno site. The existing prison was costing taxpayers \$75,000 a year to operate. Cut off that appropriation for two years and give us the money, wrote the editor, and we will complete a better facility that will be self-sustaining through operation of its own industries.⁷⁶

The day after airing that editorial, the *Gazette's* editor followed up with an article recounting his visit to the state prison at Carson City. Warden Hyman greeted him politely and conducted him throughout the facility. While he found the inmates well cared-for, and the quarry and Shoe Shop well-run and producing fair recompense for the state, he found the seven guard towers "...such weak looking things that a man with a feeble constitution might push them over"; cells were overcrowded, and most of the rest of the buildings were too small for their required use, writing, "While the buildings are very good and even and conveniently arranged, they are entirely inadequate to the Prison demands." To enlarge the prison, he stated, would cost at least \$150,000.⁷⁷ He reserved the worst for last, concluding by recounting the assertion that title to the prison land was clouded. In the face of this he wondered, how could the state even consider further expenditure on land and facilities it didn't own?⁷⁸ A day later the *Gazette* chided its Carson City rival, asserting that the quality of the prison sandstone was so poor that

⁷⁴ State Prison Again: Governor Bradley's Views, *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 14, 1876, 3:2.

⁷⁵ This was the Ashley quarry, and this assertion should logically have raised the question in someone's mind as to why it was still necessary to quarry and haul stone from the prison quarry at Carson City for facing if the Ashley stone was as good as was claimed.

⁷⁶ Concerning the New Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 9, 1877, 2:1.

⁷⁷ The editor's expertise in estimating prison needs and construction costs was, of course, free from any bias.

⁷⁸ State Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 11, 1877, 2:2. The court case regarding title had resulted in a hung jury, for which the Reno paper blamed jurors from Carson City. The writer also noted that the annual cost of running

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the contractor at the Reno prison could not use it in foundations, or where the prisoners could reach it. Reno granite, it wrote, was "...of the finest quality." It also brought up the title dispute again.⁷⁹

The *Carson Tribune* leveled its editorial guns at the *Gazette* and let fly. "It is wrong for the *Gazette* to claim that our objection to the removal of the prison is on account of a desire to retain it in Carson, and it is far more wrong in that estimable journal to attempt to lead the public astray by stating that the prison can be completed at Reno for anything less than half a million of dollars." The reply from the Reno paper was almost instantaneous:

The State has been induced to buy from citizens of Carson 20 acres of alkali, and inferior sandstone for \$80,000, yet could secure no title therefor, and was asked at the last Legislative session to pay \$20,000 more for the same ground. The Legislature and Governor noting this, resolved that it was wrong to compel taxpayers to buy the same property ten times at an exorbitant price, and so cast about for a new location. They selected a site near Reno, purchasing 207 acres of land with perfect title for \$10,000. This land, bordering on the Truckee, and including water power to the river centre. The same Legislature appropriated \$100,000 with which secure and lasting walls have been built, which are ample for any prison in the world.⁸⁰

In the midst of all this, the state's politicians continued to show more than a little interest in the issue of the proper location for the Nevada State Prison. On January 13, 1877 the Legislative Joint Committee journeyed to Reno to inspect the state of the new facility. After they pronounced themselves satisfied with what they found, Reno responded with a banquet given by leading citizens for the politicians at the Depot Hotel, where toasts were passed back and forth, and conviviality prevailed. At the

the existing prison had included the cost of transporting prisoners from around the state, apparently forgetting that such costs would also apply to a prison at Reno.

⁷⁹ Sandstone vs. Granite , *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 11, 1877, 2:2.

⁸⁰ More Prison Talk , *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 12, 1877, 2:1.

Curiously, this editorial also referred to the state having to pay Farmer Treadway again for the Carson City land; any relationship between Treadway, and plaintiffs Adams and Mesick went unmentioned.

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end of the day, Reno seemed satisfied that justice would prevail in their favor.⁸¹

The *Carson City Tribune* saw things a bit differently. Smelling graft and corruption afoot on the part of the contract and the contractors, it warned, "Like the smothered heat of the volcano; like the lazy looking shark gliding smoothly along in the calm blue sea, so are the State Prison wall men, laying by ready for a spring at the proper time on their unsuspecting prey—the Legislators."⁸²

Following the inspection trip, the Legislature moved to form a prison Building Committee, ultimately appointing Governor Bradley, D.C. [sic] Batterman, and C.H. Eastman.⁸³ Two days later, on February 13, 1877, Batterman also assumed the position of Warden of the state prison. During the next two years he would lower the per diem cost of keeping the prisoners, and continue what had become a rather haphazard program of erecting buildings and structures at Warm Springs as needed, in the absence of a coordinated plan for the facility. This year would also see the culmination of the question as to where the Nevada State Prison should ultimately be located.

By this time Reno could count the *Eureka Sentinel* a firm ally in its cause. Writing that while it recognized the rival towns—Reno and Carson City—each wanted the prison for their own ends, the *Sentinel* concluded that simple economics in the best interests of the state argued for completion of the Reno penitentiary. But the Legislative Joint Committee, in spite of their pronouncements at the site, had not been all that impressed by what they had found at Reno. For an expenditure of \$90,711.87 they felt that the state should have received more than an incomplete perimeter wall. Architect Hoole protested that a mere additional \$15,000 would complete things to the point where the state could move the prisoners in and use convict labor to complete the walls to their full designed height. The Legislature, however, was having none of it. They estimated it would take at least \$250,000 to finish the facility. The editor of the *Gazette* was aghast. He cited the *Sentinel*; he cited the newly-found support of the *Lyon County Times*. The *Enterprise*, he wrote, also backed appropriation for the Reno prison. Only the *Carson City Tribune*, he wrote,

⁸¹ The Prison Committee , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, January 13, 1877, 3:3; The Prison Committee , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, January 14, 1877, 3:2.

⁸² The State Prison Walls , *Reno Evening Gazette* , February 2, 1877, 2:2.

⁸³ Prison Bill , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, February 1, 1877, 3:3; The Prison Bill , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, February 11, 1877, 3:2. Batterman's initials were C.C., not D.C.

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opposed the move to Reno. Again citing the land title question at the Warm Springs site, and in an apparent attempt to mask the issue of local gain, the *Gazette's* chief asked that the question simply be settled in the best interests of the state.⁸⁴ And there the matter finally ended. The Legislature refused any further appropriation; the Nevada State Prison would remain at Carson City. The Reno press went silent on the matter, then later that year turned its attention to the city's wonderful new iron bridge over the Truckee. The state prison at Reno was no longer news.⁸⁵

In a show of optimism in the face of a rising recession⁸⁶, Warden Batterman continued expansion at the Carson City site, building an entirely new boot and shoe shop, a two-story structure measuring 34 by 84 feet. He also added an 18 by 24-foot storeroom for the kitchen, a new 18 by 28-foot blacksmith shop, a coalhouse measuring 14 feet square, a 9 by 14-foot water house, and a bakery. All the buildings were of stone masonry construction using prison stone. He built a new east wall to the prison yard, and an additional gate at the north entrance to the yard. He added eight ventilators to the roof of the main building, built a water tank, a piggery, stone waterways, and stone curbing in the front yard.

While all may have appeared necessary in his view, his timing could not have been worse with regard to the new shoe and boot shop. When the biennium ended, the warden had to report shoe stock on hand in the amount of \$28,269.16, more than \$13,000

⁸⁴ The Press on the New Prison , *Reno Evening Gazette* , February 15, 1877, 2:1; The Prison and Houses of Refuge , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 3, 1877, 2:2; The New Prison , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 12, 1877, 2:2; State Prison Matters , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 20, 1877, 2:3.

⁸⁵ The New State s Prison , *Carson Morning Appeal* , January 28,k 1881, 2:1; \$90,711 Spent on a Stone Wall Embarrassed Reno Very Much in the Palmy Days of 1876: Suburban Penitentiary Plans Went Politically Awry , *Nevada State Journal*, August 1, 1954, 6:1-8; Terse and to the Point , *Nevada State Journal*, August 28, 1901, 1:5. The proposed Reno prison reared its head again in 1881 a legislative committee proposed an \$80,000 appropriation to complete the walls, but nothing came of it. Because tearing down the walls at Reno would have been too costly, they simply remained there for more than fifty years. Some of it crumbled, and builders took stone from it. When winter rain collected inside the walls and froze, Reno children used the yard as a skating rink. Eventually the property, for which the state still held title, was used partly for the Nevada State Hospital crews hauled stone from the old walls in 1901 for construction at the hospital and partly for the NDOT Equipment Yard.

⁸⁶ It was optimism in the face of more than just the recession: in March 1876 the State Assembly had passed a bill appropriating \$40,000 for the prison, but the legislative session ended before it could go on to the Senate. Passed the Assembly , *Daily Nevada State Journal*, March 1, 1877, 3:2.

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over what it should have been. He blamed the situation on the "very general depression of business throughout the State."⁸⁷

The new warden also weathered another attempted riot and escape. On October 29, 1877 there was an uprising that resulted in the death of one prisoner, the wounding of another, and which saw the wounding of the Deputy Warden. The Captain of the Guard shot and killed Ole Johnson, a 35 year-old Dane serving a 25-year sentence for second-degree murder in Nye County. Guards also shot and wounded Daniel Matheny, a 21 year-old farmer from Oregon whose sentence for first-degree murder had been commuted to life imprisonment.

On July 29, 1878 an unnamed prisoner killed fellow inmate William Bethards, a 38 year-old miner from Delaware serving a 15-year sentence for second-degree murder. This event revealed a legal flaw: Nevada courts could not receive testimony of a prisoner in State Prison, for or against another prisoner who had committed a crime. Thus, with only other inmates as witnesses, Bethards' killer could not be tried or punished. Pointing this out in his biennial report, the warden called upon the legislature to amend the law.

Finally, echoing the recommendations of his predecessors, Batterman wished for provisions that would allow the transfer of insane prisoners.⁸⁸

During his second term as warden, Batterman continued to make improvements to the physical plant of the prison, recommended others, and faced some of the same problems as during his first term.

His chief improvement during this biennium was construction of an adequate water works. Prior to 1879, hand pumps raised water from the well in the prison yard. This limited supply was not adequate for cooking and sanitary uses, and certainly would not have fought a fire. Then the State purchased the adjacent Warm Springs Hotel property, giving the prison a virtually inexhaustible supply upon which to draw. Batterman placed a 15,000-gallon tank on the hill behind the prison, at an elevation sufficient to provide water to the highest points of the buildings. He built a pump house measuring 30 by 31 feet and housing a steam pump powered by a tubular boiler. The pump raised the

⁸⁷ Most likely this was part of the general national recession still hanging on after the Credit Mobilier scandal. Likely Nevada was finding, as was California, that completion of the transcontinental railroad was not the boon imagined, that most of the traffic flowed in one direction west and that there was a definite trade imbalance between the two coasts.

⁸⁸ C.C. Batterman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1877 and 1878*.

water to the tank. Tank and pump were both cross-connected to a system of pipes and hydrants in the yard so that either or both could supply emergency needs. To fire the boiler, the prison used sagebrush.

With the recession still adversely affecting shoe sales—the warden had had to devalue the stock on hand—he optimistically constructed a new building for the carpenter and tailor shops. He also built 68 linear feet of 18 foot-high stone wall on the north and west sides of the yard, and 487 linear feet of 6 foot-high stone wall enclosing the grounds in front of the prison, as well as an entrance gate and two stone towers.

Still under construction at the close of 1878 were a new guard tower placed at the angle of the wall and the bathhouse, and four 9 by 10-foot stone cells in the prison hospital. All the prison buildings were in good condition, he reported, except for the main building which needed a new roof.

By the time of the report, inmate population had swelled to 144, leading Batterman to remind the legislature of the inadequate number of cells—53—available. Most prisoners had to sleep three to a cell, and the stone cells measured but 4.5 by 8 feet, and the iron cells only a bit larger!⁸⁹ Small wonder that there was prisoner unrest, and even the warden admitted that the situation approached cruelty. He wrote that he could easily extend the main building to connect with the original shoe shop, giving room for thirty additional cells and a connection with the existing cell corridor. He estimated the cost at \$4,500.

1880 – 1890: Prehistoric Footprints

While this period seems to have been relatively free from escape attempts⁹⁰, on July 1, 1880 a prisoner killed William Chamberlain, a 28 year-old Ohio miner serving ten years for robbery. Witnessed only by other inmates, and with the law still unamended, the crime went unpunished, leading Batterman to strongly urge once again that the legislature take action on both this matter and that of insane prisoners.⁹¹ He then turned the position over to William Garrard.

The legislature must have been pleased to receive Warden William Garrard's first report. Though they had given him more

⁸⁹ This at a time when, as the prison physician noted with approval, the inmates were required to bathe once a week in summer, and every two weeks in winter.

⁹⁰ 51 year-old James Jones, serving five years for robbery and one year for jail breaking, escaped alone on November 13, 1880.

⁹¹ C.C. Batterman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1879 and 1880*.

than \$11,000 less for his biennium than for the previous biennium, he had managed to cut prison costs by more than \$13,000⁹², and turned \$2,026.04 back to the treasury. It was true, he generously noted, that his predecessor⁹³ had had an average of thirteen more prisoners in his charge⁹⁴, and had had the expense of building the water works and making other "substantial improvement."

Garrard went on to explain the difference in his annual expenditures, pointing out that his expenses for 1881 were higher due to the fact that he had had to complete some of the improvements begun by Batterman, roof and repair several buildings and erect some new buildings, purchase a full new set of arms for the armory, and purchase horses and wagons—expenses therefore not required in 1882. The prison, he reported, was now in a state of good repair and could comfortably house up to 150 prisoners.

The new warden took pride in reporting that there had been no attempted escapes from the prison⁹⁵ during his tenure. Possibly the fact that he founded his prison discipline on kindness, inflicting punishment only for infractions, had had some effect on the inmates.⁹⁶

The continued recession caused the prison Shoe Shop to continue to decline as a viable enterprise. The price cuts instituted by Warden Batterman had virtually erased any profits, and Garrard found it impossible to restore the original prices in the existing economic climate, and found himself facing a large number of due debts when he took charge. Lacking time to pursue these himself, he requested the Board of Prison Commissioners to do so. The Board agreed, and set out to recoup more than \$28,500 due the State. After two years of effort by the Attorney General, they succeeded in collecting but \$2,946, but it cost them \$451.50 to do so! In the meantime the warden made an almost complete change of customers to those on whom he could depend to pay their bills, and had more than half the inmates working in the

⁹² Of this savings, \$4,431.32 was saved from salaries.

⁹³ To whom he referred as General Batterman.

⁹⁴ Prison population was 138 when Garrard assumed command, and then climbed to 142 before decreasing to 113, including two women, both housekeepers 42 year-old Mary Boynton from Pennsylvania, convicted of arson in Washoe County, and Annie Peterson, 20, from Canada, convicted of first-degree arson in Lander County.

⁹⁵ Four trustees had escaped while outside the prison, but were quickly caught and returned to the prison, where they awaited prosecution by the Ormsby County District Court.

⁹⁶ The Physician's Report also attributed the general good health of the inmates to Garrard's enlightened management. His only negative comment was toward the continued albeit occasional practice of hanging prisoners up by their wrists.

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Shoe Shop. But even with these measures, he held little hope of collecting the nearly \$28,000 in debts accrued by the two previous wardens.⁹⁷

Garrard ended his report with the first mention of a discovery that would continue to attract interest to the present:

I cannot close this report without calling your attention to the wonderful discovery of fossil foot-prints, that has been made on the floor of the State Prison quarry during my administration. Here we find the tracks of the elephant, the deer, the wolf, and of many birds, but the most wonderful of all, the tracks of man, or rather of many men, covered by from twelve to thirty-four feet of sandstone, supposed to belong to the Pliocene age. The attention of scientific men has been called to this important find, and the subject to-day is attracting the attention of the scientific world.⁹⁸

Warden Frank Bell found that his predecessor had been correct in his assessment of interest in the "Prehistoric Footprints", as he endured 5,779 visitors from all over the world during the two-year period. In addition, Bell reported finding additional fossils in the quarry, which he had placed in the care of State Curator, Professor Young.

Inmate population during Bell's first two years remained fairly steady, rising from 113 to a high of 125 before returning to 115.⁹⁹ He was now also housing some federal prisoners, for which service the prison received a per diem of \$1.00 per inmate.

Bell had continued to reduce prison expenses: from a \$100,000 appropriation for the two years, he had turned \$16,530.13 back to the treasury, not including income from the quarry and other sources. He advised the legislature that they should drop the forthcoming appropriation to \$85,000, undoubtedly welcome news.

⁹⁷ The Warden had gone so far as to place ads in local papers for the prison's boots and shoes, and also invited bids from outside contractors to use prison labor within the prison walls. State Prison Boot and Shoe Factory, *Carson Morning Appeal*, March 20, 1881, 1:2 and May 1, 1881, 1:4; Contracts for Prison Labor, *Carson Morning Appeal*, May 1, 1881, 1:4.

⁹⁸ Garrard, William. *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1881 and 1882*.

⁹⁹ Bell now had four female prisoners: 38 year-old farmer, Helen T. Loveless from Michigan, convicted of grand larceny, Lizzie Lindsey, a 43 year-old housekeeper from Massachusetts convicted of second-degree murder, and housekeeper Eva Greenwood, 37, from Massachusetts, a federal prisoner convicted of selling liquor to Indians joined Annie Peterson; Mary Boynton had been pardoned in 1883.

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Save additions to the walls, there had been no major construction projects within the prison during 1883-4. The new warden reported building 27 feet of 16 foot-high wall on the west side of the yard, and 162 feet of ten foot-high wall on the east side. He laid new stone flagging in the kitchen, cell rooms, and passageways, and filled in large areas of the yard with concrete. Bell also laid a new floor in the prisoners' dining room, re-roofed the main building with new tin, painted the buildings and their roofs, rebuilt the kitchen and laundry ranges, and renewed the wooden sewers in the yard. Beyond the physical plant, he had created a two-acre garden that met all the prison's vegetable requirements—except potatoes—for eight months, and managed to lay in a large supply of ice during both years.

The only major mar on his record of good discipline occurred on April 19, 1883 when two prisoners attempted to set fire to the Shoe Shop; they were quickly discovered and punished. Three escapes had ended in failure, two inmates being returned the following day, and the other remaining free for but a week.

The news regarding the Shoe Shop was less cheerful. While he had managed to further reduce expenses and raise the prices of the goods sold, so that he showed a profit of \$2,652.48, this was more than offset by the staggering amount of debt remaining from previous administrations. During the two-year period, the Attorney General had managed to collect a mere \$390.25¹⁰⁰ from this deficit. Bell admitted that the shoe trade remained "dull."¹⁰¹

During 1885 and 1886, Frank Bell further reduced the expenses of the Nevada State Prison, though his inmate population increased slightly.¹⁰² Beginning the period with 115 prisoners, he ended with 132. In spite of this, and in spite of a reduced appropriation, he returned \$9,180.02 to the state treasury, and recommended the legislature further reduce his appropriate by \$5,000, to \$80,000 for the coming biennium.

As before, his construction program was modest. Using cut stone from the quarry, he built 190 feet of new wall on the east side of the yard, in height ranging from six to ten feet; built a chicken house; and built an ice house. He also remodeled the stock pens, and re-roofed the bathhouses, and reported to the legislature that all the prison was in good repair. His garden continued to

¹⁰⁰ With no mention made of the cost of these collections.

¹⁰¹ Frank Bell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1883 and 1884*.

¹⁰² His expenses included paying George T. Davis for supplying groceries, and George Hark for supplying beef to the prison. *Carson Morning Appeal*, December 27, 1885, 3:4.

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flourish, and produced all the prison's vegetable needs except for potatoes, the soil proving to alkaline for that purpose.

Bell had kept the prison quarry busy supplying stone for the new State Printing Office and Armory buildings in Carson City. By April 1885 the inmates had cut enough stone for the foundations, but there simply were not enough skilled prisoners to properly work and finish the cut stone fast enough; discharge of prisoners with stone working skills had left him with only two or three experienced workers. The warden could only state that he would supply the stone for the buildings as quickly as possible.¹⁰³

The only escape occurred on December 16, 1886 when a trustee simply walked off, only to be captured and returned a few days later.

There was no great good news to report from the Shoe Shop. Bell had used \$22,675.33 from his \$50,000 appropriation, and though he turned more than \$29,000 back to the treasury, he still showed a loss of \$446.10 on the amount used. Too, there remained the matter of more than \$26,000 of uncollected debts from the previous administrations, which Bell regarded as "worthless." Business had remained dull, though the warden had "reason to believe that business will steadily improve from now on..."¹⁰⁴ On this basis he asked for another \$50,000 appropriation for the Shoe Shop. He did so in the face of opposition from outside labor that saw the prison operation as unfair competition, and that called for its abolition.¹⁰⁵

Warden Bell's report notwithstanding, when Frank McCullough assumed command of the Nevada State Prison in 1887 he found the physical plant in want of attention. In fact, such were conditions that they forced him to expend more than the \$80,000 allocated by the legislature. Fortunately the monies collected for housing federal prisoners offset the deficit—though barely. All this was in spite of the fact that inmate population had declined sharply, from 132 in 1887 to just 99 at the end of 1888, the lowest figure in some years. In setting forth his costs the new warden explained that the inequality of expenditures between the two years in question was due to the immediate need for remedial work in 1887 when he took charge.

The state of the prison at that time was such that he had to re-roof the entire main building, put new floors in the guards' room,

¹⁰³ Work at the State Prison, *Carson Daily Index*, April 18, 1885, 3:2.

¹⁰⁴ His reason, however, remained unstated.

¹⁰⁵ Frank Bell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1885 and 1886*; More Prison Economy, *Carson Morning Appeal*, January 24, 1885, 2:1.

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dining room, and prisoners' dining room¹⁰⁶, pour 225 square yards of cement floor in the bakery, kitchen, and cell block, as well as build a new stone cow barn and hog pens.

Beyond these repairs, McCullough also built a combined butcher shop and water building in the yard, using ashlar blocks cut from the quarry. This structure, he reported, proved a boon as it enabled the prison to avoid the spoilage of fresh meat, which had been a constant problem when the butcher shop was located in the main building. Adding to the prison walls, he constructed 35 feet of 12 foot-high wall running west from the east prison gate. This wall formed the south wall of the new cow barn, to the west of which he built a small stone shelter for use by the gardeners and stable hands in bad weather.

In addition to the stone used in the prison construction, the prison quarry continued to supply both rough and dressed stone to the State Capitol Commissioners. All the quarry work, however, supplied work for just eight prisoners.

Three times as many prisoners remained employed in the Shoe Shop, which continued to prove a fiscal millstone. The Board of Prison Commissioners had ordered an independent inventory of the facility by appointed citizens from Carson City. This resulted in a further devaluation of the stock on hand. In spite of McCullough's efforts, operations continued at a loss. The debts from the previous administrations remained, and the warden advised the legislature that these should simply be considered worthless and written off. He wrote that the Shoe Shop had never proved a source of revenue for the State, and that its chief use was as a means of keeping prisoners employed, to the benefit of some after their discharge. This usefulness was enough, in his view, to continue operations, though he recommended the coming allocation be \$25,000, half that of the previous allocation.

Turning to the matter of recommendations for the coming biennium, McCullough reminded the legislators that they had allocated \$1,000 to construction a phone line between his office and that of the Ormsby County Sheriff in Carson City. He had declined to use that fund, seeing no great need for the service. Instead, he recommended they amend the appropriation to allow him to install an electrical line to the prison for the purpose of lighting. He also noted that there was need for a new 30,000-gallon water tank to replace the existing tank. For other recommendations, the warden referred to the reports of the Prison Physician and the Prison Chaplain who sought a hospital

¹⁰⁶ Since Warden Bell had reported putting a new floor in the prisoners dining room just four years earlier, one has to question the quality of the floor installed at that time.

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and chapel, respectively. The hospital seemed the most urgent need. While there had been no outbreak of contagious disease—indeed, the illness rate at the prison was less than that of Carson City—there had been one case of typhoid fever. Lacking adequate isolation facilities, the doctor had been forced to treat this individual in the room of the Captain of the Guard, hardly an ideal situation. In view of these projected expenses, as well as the normal expenses of the prison, he asked the prison appropriation be increased to \$85,000 for the coming two years.

McCullough took some pride in reporting good behavior among the prisoners during his term.¹⁰⁷ There had been no uprisings, and only two escapes—both by the same individual, who in both cases was caught and returned within three hours. Beyond that distraction and the everyday chores of running the prison, he had had to deal with another 5,192 visitors to the prehistoric footprints at the quarry.¹⁰⁸

It appears that the legislature more than took McCullough's recommendations to heart, as instead of the \$85,000 requested, they allocated him just \$75,000 for 1889-90.¹⁰⁹ In the event, the amount proved adequate. Even with the reduced budget the warden had managed to construct a new hay barn abutting the east side of the horse barn, a new storeroom for the commissary, and two new 10,000-gallon water tanks. The lawmakers had also acceded to the warden's suggestion regarding electrical connections, and the prison now sported two electric lights. McCullough noted that there was considerable expense in running them, but he felt sure that they would prove economical in the long term.

The number of inmates housed had continued to decrease, dropping from 99 to 91 over the period. Warden McCullough reported that prisoner discipline remained good, and that he had had to inflict no severe punishment during the biennium. Escape attempts, however, had risen: of eight attempts, two had been successful:

¹⁰⁷ The report of the Prison Chaplain attributed this largely to the warden's fair, even-handed handling of rules and discipline, though he abhorred the continued occasional practice of hanging prisoners up by their wrists as a disciplinary measure.

¹⁰⁸ Frank J. McCullough, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1887 and 1888*.

¹⁰⁹ It appears that one of the results of this reduction was the abolition of the post of Prison Chaplain. Instead, the Prison Board arranged with the clergy of Carson City to provide services, rotating the duty. In the end only three Sundays per month were covered, as the Presbyterian pastor failed to provide his service.

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While working on the new water tanks on the hill above the prison on March 30, 1889, James Murray¹¹⁰ walked off and was not discovered missing until the workers returned to the yard. Recaptured, he returned the following day.

Between 5PM and 6PM on August 15, M.A. Sharp successfully escaped from the prison garden, where he was working after supper.

Jesse Grant, an 18 year-old from Indiana serving two consecutive terms for burglary and housebreaking, made his third escape attempt. He got as far as Truckee where the local constable captured him two days later; he was back in prison on October 14, 1889.

On May-23, 1890, F.C. Davis made an escape around 3:30 in the afternoon. The 18 year-old from California¹¹¹ was in charge of the horse and cart, and his duties allowed him outside the yard. Guards immediately noticed his absence and he was back in prison an hour later. For his troubles, he received an extra one-year sentence for prison breaking.

On the morning of September 29, 1890 Virgil Claus successfully escaped during a rainstorm while at work cutting sagebrush about a mile and a half from the prison. The rain obliterated his tracks, and he remained at large.

James Wells, a 23 year-old bookkeeper from New York serving 5 years for housebreaking, Benjamin Richards, a 47 year-old federal prisoner from England convicted of selling liquor to Indians, and George W. Lewis, 30, from Pennsylvania, under a life sentence for second-degree murder rounded out the escapees, but were recaptured so soon as to warrant no further details.

The Prison Physician reported that health remained good. The prison garden continued to supply all the prison's needs, to the inmates' benefit. And though there had been widespread outbreaks of typhoid fever throughout the Great Basin, the effective prison sewer system, use of disinfectants, and requirements for overall cleanliness had prevented there being

¹¹⁰ There was no James Murray listed among the prisoners, so this may have actually been John Murray, a 23 year-old Pennsylvanian serving 5 years for burglary.

¹¹¹ Davis' occupation and sentence remain unclear. He was listed in the previous biennial report as a telephone operator serving a 13-year sentence for murder, and in the present report as a painter serving a one-year term for grand larceny. He was also listed as having been pardoned in July 1890, though the warden's report at the end of that year stated and he is now serving his second sentence.

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even a single case in the institution. There remained, however, the need for some sort of isolation ward for the sick.

The Shoe Shop continued to run at a loss¹¹², and once more used only about half of its appropriation. Still, McCullough saw its continuation as an imperative in providing inmate employment until some alternative could be found. He recommended the legislature reduce its allocation from \$25,000 to \$15,000.

Visitors to the "prehistoric discoveries" continued to grow, reaching 5,672 in 1889-90, and obviously were beginning to cause problems for the fossils themselves. Warden McCullough reported that they were "fast becoming obliterated", and recommended that some better means of preserving them had to be found.¹¹³

1890 - 1900: A Century Ends

The Nevada State Prison began its third full decade still under the administration of Warden McCullough. The legislature had reduced his appropriation to \$70,000, and the warden had to report a deficit at the end of the biennium, asking that the budget be restored to \$75,000. The shortfall was partly due to the fact that the federal government had not yet paid for the keeping of U.S. prisoners, which amount would bring the warden's budget back into balance when paid. Inmate population had dropped from 91 to 81, before climbing back to 104 at the end of the period.

It appears that this was a quiet period in the prison's history. There was no report of repairs or additions, though the Prison Physician, with the endorsement of the warden, continued to chide the legislature for an appropriation for a hospital. Health and discipline remained good, and there had been but one escape. This occurred on April 22, 1891 when James Douglass, a 56 year-old Scot serving a federal sentence for selling liquor to Indians, escaped from the sagebrush crew at about 8:20AM; he was back in custody by 11:30 the same morning. Like Davis before him, he received an additional one-year sentence for his efforts.

Once more the warden had to report a loss at the Shoe Shop, and though he had not used all of the \$7,000 appropriated, he asked the legislature to increase the coming appropriation to \$7,500. Lacking other employment for the inmates, he would continue to operate the facility.

¹¹² And the debts of the previous administrations were *still* being carried on the books, despite past recommendations that they be written off.

¹¹³ Frank J. McCullough, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1889 and 1890*.

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McCullough again reminded the legislators of the need to provide some security for the prehistoric fossils and footprints. The past two years had seen the number of visitors constantly increase, reaching 6,825. He warned that, unless protected, there would soon be nothing for them to see.¹¹⁴

Frank Bell returned to the prison helm in 1893. On January 1, 1895 Warden Bell submitted his annual report to Governor R.K. Colcord, reporting that maintenance expenses for the prison during the two-year period amounted to \$32,961.71 for 1893, and \$30,032.47 for 1894. The Legislature had appropriated some \$65,000 for this period (\$5,000 less than the previous period), so the Warden had operated within budget. He had also collected funds from the U.S. government for the housing of U.S. prisoners¹¹⁵, from income from the prison shoe factory, and from income from the prison stone quarry. These sources added \$18,993.89 to the prison coffers, resulting in the actual expense of prison maintenance for 1893-94 being \$44,000.29. The warden estimated that an appropriation of \$60,000 would suffice for 1895-96.

During this period the prison housed an average of 89 prisoners.¹¹⁶ Using this workforce, the prison had furnished \$177.40 worth of rock to the Capitol Commissioners, laid 200 feet of cut drain sewers, laid 2,050 feet of stone flagging, and put a new roof on the prison bath houses. All the prison buildings were in good repair, and Bell estimated little expenditure would be required for them during the next period.

Warden Bell had closed the prison shoe factory when he took office. The facility had been operating at a loss, with not enough sales to even cover the foreman's wages. With the shoe factory defunct, Bell had put the men to work at breaking rock for the road repairs. Using these materials and prison labor, he had paved and macadamized the road (now 5th Street) between Carson City and the prison. Still, this attempt at utilizing prison labor failed when city and county officials balked at the expense of teams to haul the rock from the prison, leaving the warden at a loss as to how to employ the prisoners.¹¹⁷

The first report of Warden L.O. Henderson to the Board of Prison Commissioners paints a picture somewhat different from

¹¹⁴ Frank J. McCullough, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1891 and 1892*.

¹¹⁵ Most of whom had been convicted of selling liquor to Indians.

¹¹⁶ During this period there were 5 escapes (2 successful), and three deaths from natural causes. The cost to feed, clothe, and guard the inmates averaged about \$0.78 per day per inmate.

¹¹⁷ Frank Bell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1893 and 1894*.

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that of his predecessor, insofar as the condition of the physical plant is concerned. With an appropriation of \$63,000, Henderson had remained within budget, but had expended all \$3,000 of his Prison Repair Fund.

While Warden Bell had reported the buildings and grounds in good repair, Henderson found the walls, buildings, and general prison surroundings in poor condition when he assumed management. He expended the repair fund on matters of "absolute necessity." He replaced the old water tank with a new 3,800-gallon tank, and built a wagon shed, tool house, lime house, and stone closet. He had had to repoint all walls and buildings, which had taken a great deal of lime and cement. Henderson converted the old Tailor Shop to a "very complete hospital." The Blacksmith Shop and Carpenter Shop had required new corrugated iron roofs, and a new iron door at the west end of the cell room provided ventilation to relieve the ever-present problem of "tainted air." Wherever stovepipes penetrated roofs, drums were inserted to guard against fire. Under Henderson's supervision, they had laid 1,550 feet of stone flagging, including new floors in the prison storeroom and the former hospital. Roof work included a new shingle roof on the building occupied by the officers and guards, a new tin roof on the commissary and bakery, and repairs to the old roof on the kitchen, which also received a new cement floor and new steel range. He moved the tailor shop into the old shoe shop building. All the buildings received new coats of paint, kalsomine, and whitewash on interiors and exteriors, as appropriate. At the time of the report, the warden had the inmates digging an ice pond, estimated to provide an annual saving of \$300 - \$400. Having expended his entire repair fund, Henderson reported that he anticipated the coming need to replace the engine used to pump water from the spring to storage tanks on the hill for the facility's water supply.

Beyond work inside the facility, Henderson also placed about 500 loads of cracked rock on the road between the prison and Carson City, and planted between 60 and 80 young trees on each side of the road, "...which makes said road one of the nicest driveways in the State." The prison also supplied building stone to the State Orphans' Home.¹¹⁸

Warden Henderson's budget for the previous biennial period had been cut to \$58,000, yet he was still able to return a small amount to the treasury. Work on the physical plant had continued

¹¹⁸ During this period, the average number of inmates had dropped to 75, but now included women: Alice M. Hartley, an English portrait painter serving an 11-year sentence for second degree murder, and Kate Duffy of Nevada, Mary Dolan of Ireland, and Margaret Crouch of Scotland, all imprisoned for selling liquor to Indians. There had been five more escapes, one successful. L.O. Henderson, *Biennial Report of the Warden of State Prison, 1895 96* .

under Warden Henderson's administration, and he spent his entire repair budget of \$1,500. As he had noted in his previous report two years earlier, he had had to replace the pump engine. While doing so, he had constructed a new engine/boiler room, constructing the room such that the large amounts of dust from the fuel burned—sagebrush—would not settle on the new machinery. They had also torn down the old wooden lavatory used by officers and guards, and replaced it with a stone lavatory connected with the sewer, also replacing the old wooden sewer with a stone sewer. About the new lavatory, Henderson reported, "It is now...an ornament to the place..." There was still work to be done, though. The warden noted that most of the shingle roofs leaked, and he suggested replacing them with corrugated iron. The latter, he stated, not only would last longer but offered greater fire protection. The Library, he recorded, needed new books and some of the old books required re-binding. He also wanted a room fitted in the Hospital for use by the doctor when receiving inmates for treatment.¹¹⁹

Mention of output from the stone quarry was conspicuously absent.¹²⁰

1900 – 1910: Into the 20th Century

Once again the Legislature had given Warden Henderson a budget of \$58,000 for the previous biennium, and once again he had been able to return a small amount to the state treasury. There was no mention by the warden of building or physical plant improvements, or of activity at the stone quarry.¹²¹ However, the Physician's Report noted that the office called for in the previous report had been fitted up in one of the stone buildings in the Yard for the doctor's use in receiving and interviewing inmates.¹²²

Though the Legislature had next cut his budget to \$57,000, Warden Henderson once more returned a surplus to the treasury.

¹¹⁹ To this point, the doctor had used the Guard Room, which led to some embarrassment when visitors were present. Inmate population had continued to drop, averaging 65 during the period, as had escape attempts, down to two neither successful. Another woman, Lottie Carson from England, was incarcerated for selling liquor to Indians, but Alice Hartley, the English portrait painter, received a pardon and was released after serving 1.5 years of her 11-year sentence.

¹²⁰ L.O. Henderson, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1897 8*.

¹²¹ The detailed account does make it clear that the quarry was working, noting monies returned to the State Treasurer for the sale of stone, including stone curbing in various dimensions, and rough ashlar masonry.

¹²² There were six escape attempts during this period, one successful. Prison population continued to drop, now averaging just 64 inmates. L.O. Henderson, *L.O. Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1899 1900*.

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The daily cost of clothing, guarding, and feeding the prisoners had by now increased to \$0.92 per inmate, while the inmate population had continued to drop to an average of 59. Work in the stone quarry had continued, yielding a small payment to the treasury for stone curbing and rough ashlar building stone.¹²³

The 1903-4 biennium brought a new warden, and new problems. Inmate population had risen to 101 on December 31, 1904, the highest since the administration of Warden McCullough in the early 1890s. Warden J.L. Considine extrapolated that population could rise to 188 by the end of 1906, and advised that the prison was incapable of housing such numbers. Considine had also received a new problem when the Legislature passed a law in 1901 requiring that prisoners under the death sentence in Nevada be housed at the State Prison. The six prisoners so housed had, he reported, required extra expense in guarding in a facility unsuited for their incarceration. The result of the burgeoning inmate population, coupled with the extra expense of housing and guarding the condemned, forced him to report a deficit of just over \$14,000, despite a budget of \$58,000.

Considine reported some improvements to the prison. An electric motor had supplanted the steam engine in the pump room, guaranteeing an adequate water supply at any time in case of fire. He had installed an electrical alarm system connecting the guardroom and the warden's sleeping quarters, officers' quarters, and guards' quarters. With electricity available at the prison, the warden had also installed incandescent lighting outside as a deterrent to night escape attempts. The burden of condemned prisoners had led Considine to construct and fit up five cells in the Hospital to house them. The prison now also had new and more sanitary quarters for horses and other livestock. The main building had been re-roofed with steel, and the Warden's Quarters sported new paint and wallpaper. These efforts had consumed the \$3,000 repair budget.

Outside the prison proper, a large force of inmates had been hard at work on the road to Carson City, and they had placed several hundred loads of broken rock.

Work in the stone quarry had increased as a large number of prisoners worked to supply stone for the new Orphans' Home. The warden conservatively estimated the value of this stone at \$11,000. Because this excavation had increased the size of the Yard, Considine recommended another day guard be hired to

¹²³ L.O. Henderson, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1901 1902* .

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watch the unprotected area.¹²⁴ He also recommended that the guards' pay be increased from \$60 to \$75 per month.

The warden concluded his report with the observation that the prison was rapidly becoming outdated, writing,

The cell-room is crowded to an unhealthy degree, and the number of prisoners, as before mentioned, increasing at a rapid rate. This cell-room is an antiquated affair, a relic of barbarism, a disgrace to the State, and totally unfit for occupancy by human beings. In view of these facts I would recommend a separate appropriation for the construction of another cell-room in one of the buildings in the Prison yard.¹²⁵

With his second report, Warden Considine confirmed that his prediction had proved correct: inmate population, which had averaged 79 for the previous biennium, had reached an average of 106. It would have been even higher, he noted, but for the fact that no Federal prisoners had been tried in Nevada for the past year. Per capita cost for the prisoners had risen to \$1.05. Despite this, he had handled his \$86,115 budget well, and had a small surplus. The Legislature of 1905 had also given him \$10,000 for new construction, and \$8,000 for repairs, and he had used all but \$63.15 of these monies, mostly for the construction of a new cell house with a capacity of 136 (as opposed to the capacity of the old cell house, which was 92).¹²⁶ More ominously, he had constructed a gallows, and had carried out seven executions on it.

Work in the stone quarry continued apace, as the inmates labored to provide stone for the new Supreme Court and Library Building.¹²⁷

Perhaps one of the most bizarre proposals for the prison surfaced during 1907 when Senator Frank Brossemer of Eureka County introduced a bill to establish a State Turkey Farm at the Nevada State Prison. Inmates would have, under the provisions of the bill, provided all the necessary labor, and the farm would have

¹²⁴ There had been but 2 escape attempts, neither successful, and one of which resulted in the prisoner being shot and killed. The warden attributed the paucity of attempts to the fact that he had purchased two purebred bloodhounds.

¹²⁵ J.L. Considine, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1903 1904*. Considine, a native of Gold Hill, later became a newspaper editor, and died at age 78 in San Francisco in 1951. John Considine Dies in Bay Area, *Nevada State Journal*, February 10, 1951, 3:3.

¹²⁶ Cells Almost Built, *Nevada State Journal*, August 5, 1906, 1:6.

¹²⁷ J.L. Considine, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1905 1906*.

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provided a free Thanksgiving turkey to every family in the state. Washoe County Assemblyman Al Holmes favored the idea, stating rather optimistically that it would "...be practically no trouble to raise the 15,000 or so birds required each Thanksgiving...." Holmes even felt that there was plenty of ground at the prison on which to raise the grain necessary to feed the birds, and that it would make Thanksgiving even more popular!¹²⁸ In the event, it appears nothing came of the proposal.

When Warden W.J. Maxwell submitted his report on January 1, 1909, the Nevada State Prison was in a state of continuing change. Maxwell, in charge only since October 2, 1908, was the third warden of the biennium. Prison population had continued to burgeon, and had increased from 104 at the end of 1906 to 217 at the end of 1908. The new warden warned the Board of Prison Commissioners that the facility was now completely inadequate, writing, "Improvements are necessary and should be made."

Some improvements had been made during the previous two years. There was now an eight-foot electrified wire fence at the back of the prison yard. Three new guard houses watched over the prison: one at the gate, and the others on the south and west walls. The new guardhouses also allowed surveillance of all the outhouses. Entrances to the water house and butcher shop had been changed from the north side of the building to the south, to give guards an unobstructed view into both facilities. The large number of prisoners now warranted an extra guard in the dining room during meals. In addition, the authorities were clearly worried about the potential for assault, and had placed an iron door on the armory. The warden had also instituted regular rifle practice for the guards.¹²⁹

Drugs were becoming a problem, with 25 percent of the prisoners using opium and other drugs. Most had become addicted during their confinement, and the warden attributed the problem to the fact that there was no employment for most of the inmates.

Work was underway on a new cell house with a capacity of 84 prisoners. Its completion was due later that month.

Inmates were at work clearing an additional 46 acres of land acquired for the prison, and Warden Maxwell hoped that the soil would prove of sufficient quality to allow potato production for prison use.

¹²⁸ State Turkey Farm , *Nevada State Journal* , November 25, 1907, 6:1-2.

¹²⁹ Escape attempts had increased along with the inmate population. Of 13 attempts, five were successful, and one prisoner had killed himself to avoid recapture.

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The stone quarry was still producing both cut stone and rubble.

Maxwell recommended that the number of available cells be increased by at least 100, and that the Warden's apartments, armory, and guards' quarters be removed from the cell-house proper.

Reminding the Board that the prison had been built in the 1860s¹³⁰, the warden pointed out that many of the walls were dilapidated, with mud having been used instead of mortar in their laying-up. Recognizing that repairs and improvements could well cost as much as erecting a new facility, he recommended that new guards' quarters be built opposite the prison entrance, and that the new quarters include a reading room and billiard room for their rest and leisure. The present facility, overburdened by increased numbers of guards, was totally inadequate. This building should, he stated, also contain the armory.¹³¹

The large number of prisoners demanded an enlarged dining room, which in turn required improvements to the kitchen and bakeshop. The hospital was by then inadequate, and needed an isolation ward to avoid contagion from such diseases as tuberculosis, then present among some patients. The increased population had led, in 1908, to construction of a ward and dispensary in the second story of the old shoe factory. The prison doctor recommended two small isolation buildings with toilets and heating stoves be built within the prison grounds.

There were then five women prisoners among the inmates, and Maxwell foresaw an increase in their numbers. He recommended a separate ward, a separate yard, separate lavatory and toilet, and appointment of a Prison Matron.

Laundry facilities were little more than a barrel in which clothes were pounded with a huge wooden dasher, with smaller articles being scrubbed by brush on rocks. The new warden recommended installation of a new laundry.

Heating was still by solid fuel—wood and coal—and Maxwell called for the installation of a heating plant to reduce fire danger. The old spring was no longer adequate for water supply, and he pressed that an artesian well be dug. The electric system was unreliable, the electric pump for the water system inadequate, the water tanks old and rotten, the pipes too old and too small. A new water system and electrical system were needed.

¹³⁰ Admittedly an exaggeration, as the building programs of the intervening years had left little, if any, of the 1860s prison extant.

¹³¹ The present armory fronted both the yard and the prisoners dining room, rendering it vulnerable and a likely point of attack.

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Addressing personnel problems, the warden asked for additional guards for the yard and for the armory as the inmate population grew and potential control problems arose. He advocated two weeks' paid vacation for prison employees after a year of service.

Looking to the inmates, Maxwell proved to be a social reformer. He recognized that lack of employment, idleness, and the growing drug problem, combined with the present penal system often meant that prisoners were morally worse after their incarceration. He advocated the state appoint a committee to address the problem of inmate industry and employment. He wanted an indeterminate sentence system, such that a prisoner's conduct could influence the length of his sentence, improving behavior and adherence to prison rules. He desired a separate cell house and dining room to keep young offenders from mingling with hardened criminals. The Nevada State Prison was struggling into the 20th century.¹³²

During Warden Maxwell's first full term, prison population dropped, which must have allayed some of his concerns regarding the old facility. From a high of 225 prisoners on June 1, 1909, the number decreased to a low of 170 on November 1, 1910, before climbing back to 189 at the end of the reporting period—still well below the 217 inmates on hand on January 1, 1909.

It appears that the Legislature had paid some attention to previous reports and investigated prison conditions, for they had finally budgeted for a new prison, allocating some \$205,000 for the purpose. Combined with other budget items—including \$15,000 for repairs of the existing facility—Maxwell had received a whopping \$469,171.98. In addition, at a special session in February 1908, the Legislature had appropriated \$54,000 for prison maintenance. Maxwell had had nearly \$17,500 left from this source, and had expended it on maintenance during this reporting period.¹³³ Maxwell had also managed to reduce per capita prisoner costs to \$0.92 per day.

In terms of improvements to the physical plant, Maxwell had carried out only the most necessary repairs, given that the Legislature had provided for purchase of a new prison site and

¹³² W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1907 1908*.

¹³³ It is interesting to note that of the \$205,000 allocated for a new prison, Maxwell had expended \$31,439.55, but the report does not indicate the nature of this expenditure. It is possible that some of this fund was used to purchase the prison farm.

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construction of a new facility.¹³⁴ Most important of these repairs was the installation of a new pump and pipeline, after inspection had revealed the condition of the existing line to be so poor that it would have been impossible to fight a fire at the prison. While carrying out these repairs, the prison had had to borrow a hand pump fire engine from Carson City. Once again, prisoners repaired the road to town and kept it sprinkled during the summer months, using a sprinkling cart provided by the county. At the west side of the prison, Maxwell had constructed a 112,000-gallon reservoir to collect and cool water from the hot springs. This water was then used to irrigate State land across the road to the north of the prison which had been cleared, and which the prison used to grow beets, cabbage, carrots, and other vegetables (though still not potatoes. This was not, however, the only land used by the prison for farming.

1910 – 1920: The Prison Farm

The Board of Prison Commissioners had purchased, for \$25,000, the 1,140-acre Schultz farm and turned it over to Maxwell's care on April 28, 1910. The farm was south of the prison, between it and the Stewart Indian School. The Board's purpose in the acquisition was to utilize it for farming to reduce prison maintenance costs, and also to provide a site for the new prison.¹³⁵ Upon taking control of the property, Maxwell found the fences in dire need of repair, and the irrigation ditches filled up. Setting out to make the necessary repairs, Maxwell was able—in spite of it being late in the growing season—to raise 400 tons of hay, valued at \$10.00 per ton. Afterward, he stocked the farm with 110 head of cattle, 60 head of hogs, and six horses, as well as with the necessary farming implements. The farm proved short of water, so Maxwell applied to the State Engineer for the floodwaters of Clear Creek, intending to build a small dam to supply enough water to irrigate the farm and surrounding lands. Prison trustees provided farm labor. These men were under the general supervision of a foreman and assistant for work purposes, but otherwise had full liberty of the farm after working hours. Though prohibited from leaving the property, they were free except for a morning and evening check by the foreman.¹³⁶ Maxwell saw this as an opportunity to provide for rehabilitation. The Virginia & Truckee Railroad, whose tracks abutted the west side of the farm, allowed the construction of a freight platform to serve the farm.

¹³⁴ They even went so far as to retain the services of Nevada's premier architect, F.J. DeLongchamps, to design the new prison. DeLongchamps designed a complete new facility with radiating wings, one that would never be built.

¹³⁵ Site for New Prison Bought By Commission, *Nevada State Journal*, January 6, 1910, 1:4.

¹³⁶ Working on New Prison, *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 29, 1910, 7:1.

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The warden continued to be concerned about his prisoners. He advised the Board that, in his view, his prison housed two types of inmates: law-breakers, and criminals. The two groups should, he felt, be segregated and should have meaningful work. "Idleness," he wrote, "especially in a prison, does more, in our opinion, toward making criminals of these law-breakers than anything else; still we should have, for the better class, more suitable employment than breaking rock" There certainly had been plenty of that: during the biennium the prisoners had cut no less than 20,000 cubic feet of rubble rock, and broken 1,000 cubic yards of crushed rock. The prison supplied cut rock to the Methodist Church of Carson City.¹³⁷ Beyond this, the prison had donated 1,907 cubic yards of refuse rock to the county.

Beyond seeking more gainful work for the inmates, Maxwell urged the Board to pressure judges to consider sentencing less serious law-breakers to county jail, rather than state prison where they would be exposed to hardened criminals. It would also reduce transportation costs he noted, citing the case of two prisoners with six month sentences who had had to be transported long distance to Carson City, only to be released five months later with their sentences shortened by good behavior. Maxwell also wanted the Board to pressure judges not to send him prisoners with infectious or contagious diseases, since these both threatened the prison population as a whole, and required extra expense to house separately.

Closing, the warden noted the poor condition of the existing prison walls, and urgently recommended construction of the new prison, which would then allow him to carry out the Legislature's proposed prison reforms.¹³⁸

The years 1911-12 brought a new warden, in fact, *two* new wardens. Raymond T. Baker took over the reins in 1911, and served as warden until George W. Cowing relieved him on May 10, 1912. The two-year period was another one of some upheaval at the Nevada State Prison, as the wardens dealt with rising costs brought on by Legislative action which authorized the employment of prisoners on public roads on the honor system, but with what proved to be inadequate Legislative funding. There was still no new prison, and the prison administrators were faced with "...throwing good money after bad..." as they continued to spend money to repair and maintain the old facility.

¹³⁷ And was still waiting payment at the time of the report.

¹³⁸ Maxwell also noted that the laundry system remained as antiquated as previously noted, and that the prison was still heated by stoves. The new prison, with a new laundry and modern heating system, would further reduce costs. W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1909 1910*.

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The road camps saw prison inmates working on Nevada highways in the Carson City area: on the road between Carson City and Glenbrook, on the road down the east side of Washoe Lake from Lakeview, and on the Reno - Carson City road at the south end of Reno. For this work the Legislature had budgeted \$20,000, with the counties involved providing \$1.00/man/day. It was nice in theory, but the initial \$20,000 ran out on September 30, 1911, leaving the wardens to absorb the costs from the regular prison budget. The problem was unforeseen costs. It cost more to feed and clothe the men on road work than in prison. There were the costs of a superintendent and extra guards who had to be hired. There were the costs of hauling food and laundry to and from the road camps, increased automobile maintenance, travel expenses, hunting for escapees, paying rewards, and more. After calculating known costs, Warden Cowing advised the Board that he could maintain a 30-man road gang over the next two years on a budget of \$25,000, providing the counties paid their share.

Prison population had continued to fluctuate, from a high of 189 on January 1, 1911, to a low of 126 in late 1912, then back up to 155 at the end of 1912. The warden had had to deal with an increased number of escape attempts, seventeen in all: three from the prison, six from the Prison Farm, and eight from Road Camp 4; six of these were successful.

Regarding the prison itself, the administrators faced continuing to make do with the old facility. Cowing again pointed out the crude laundry facilities and the exorbitant costs of heating with stoves.¹³⁹ The problem of separate quarters for infectious diseases persisted, and he had had to exhaust the Repair Fund to put a new corrugated iron roof on the hospital. If the old prison were to continue to be occupied, he wrote, then the prison wall should be continued around the south side of the facility to prevent escapes. The water mains were in poor condition again, as was the 5,000-gallon wooden water tank above the kitchen. Cowing recommended replacing it with a galvanized iron tank. He also recommended a separate kitchen for the guards' dining room,¹⁴⁰ and a new oven in the bakery. Finally, he wanted a direct road built between the prison and the Prison Farm, since to get from one to the other meant going by way of Carson City.

¹³⁹ This was exacerbated by the prison layout of individual buildings, which precluded effective installation of a central heating system.

¹⁴⁰ At that time, the guards' meals were prepared in the prison kitchen and then carried to the guards' dining room by trustees. This meant that the trustees and the cooks, who were yard prisoners, mingled in the kitchen, affording opportunity for the trustees to smuggle contraband, including drugs or even arms, to the yard prisoners.

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Cowing saw the farm as a valuable adjunct, potentially able to meet all the prison's needs for beef and pork, potatoes, seasonal vegetables, grain, hay, and ice. However it would require work and expenditure to make this happen. The farm required proper equipping and stocking, and an adequate water supply. Other than a slaughterhouse, a stone cellar, and one barn, the rest of the buildings were useless. The warden noted that the farm required a new building to house kitchen, dining room, and sleeping quarters, suitable buildings to house cattle, horses, pigs, and machinery, as well as about four miles of barbed wire fence to separate pastureland from hay fields. The cattle and dairy herds were inadequate, being too small and containing too many below-standard animals. Cowing advised building up the herds using high standard stock, and recommended legislation allowing cash sales of farm products and pasturage on the farm to be reinvested in equipment and stock. Regarding water, unlike his predecessor, he recommended pumping, rather than damming Clear Creek to store floodwaters.¹⁴¹

By way of improvements, Warden Cowing had built a small stone building to shelter the hogs at the farm, feeling that the loss of one litter of piglets due to winter weather would have resulted in a loss of more than the cost of the building. He recommended another be built, as well as an icehouse to allow the cutting of ice from the reservoir, which could save the prison some \$300.00 in the coming year.

The warden closed with a familiar petition: that the Board find some means of suitable employment for the inmates (though he had no suggestions for such industry). He warranted that the Farm would continue to require additional labor, and that some could be employed for a limited time if the decision were taken to complete the prison wall around the south side. Neither of these offered a long-term solution to the problem, and he concluded, "This subject should receive some attention in the near future."¹⁴²

On March 17, 1913 Warden Denver S. Dickerson¹⁴³ assumed control of the prison when Warden Cowing abruptly resigned,

¹⁴¹ Cowing also had a personnel problem with regard to the Farm. The prisoners working there received fewer credits and less pay than those on the road gangs, though they worked as hard and as long. This was causing some resentment, and the warden wanted to equalize the credits and pay.

¹⁴² George W. Cowing, *Biennial report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1911 1912*.

¹⁴³ Dickerson, born in Millville, Shasta County, California on January 24, 1872, also served as both Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Nevada, and was the first Nevada governor to have been born in the West. A Democrat, he entered politics as White Pine County Clerk in 1903, becoming County Recorder from 1904-6. He also edited the *White Pine County News* in 1904-5, and owned the *Ely Mining Expositor* from 1906-13. His reputation as a

and found the facility in chronic need of repairs and improvement. He made those that he could with the existing budget, and called the Board's attention to those he felt imperative.

With a \$2,500 budget from the Legislature to equip the prison hospital, the new warden had remodeled the old carpenter shop, placing steel gratings on the windows, installing steel doors, laying new flooring, and installing metal ceilings. He equipped the new hospital with new operating equipment, and completed the project for \$1,053.98.

Following up on Warden Cowing's suggestion, Dickerson had provided for separate kitchens for the prisoners and the guards. The prisoners' kitchen was moved into the building with the prisoners' dining room, and the old kitchen became the guards' kitchen. He also erected a new commissary building, housing the butcher shop that previously had been in the center of the yard. The old bakery oven, previously noted as requiring replacement, was demolished to make more room in the bakery building, and a new bake oven constructed in the old commissary building.

Dickerson was finally able to report that the prison had a new, modern steam laundry, installed at a cost of \$1,659.33. He estimated that the savings accrued in clothing, no longer subject to the wear and tear of the old laundry, would pay for the new equipment in three years. For an expenditure of \$115 he had replaced the dilapidated water tank over the kitchen, noted in the previous report, with a new concrete tank of the same capacity, which, he opined, "...will last as long as the prison walls stand."¹⁴⁴

Other improvements accomplished included removing a group of shacks and an old board fence from near the prison entrance, replacing them with a fence of woven wire; removing the chicken houses from marshy ground to dry ground and adding four new chicken houses; and placing a tennis court and lawn area in front of the prison, in an area formerly used as a truck garden.

humanitarian and reformer during his first term as Warden of the Nevada State Prison led President Woodrow Wilson to appoint him federal inspector of prisons, during which time he was also an executive officer of a prison welfare society. At the state level, he also served as Nevada Inspector of Pharmacies before his second appointment as Warden.

¹⁴⁴ That he had chosen a concrete tank instead of a galvanized metal tank for a rooftop installation might, at first glance, seem to be courting trouble in terms of weight and roof loadings. However, this was a 5,000-gallon tank, meaning that the weight of water alone was 20 tons; the additional weight of the concrete tank would have been negligible.

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Left undone, however, was work that Warden Dickerson considered "...an absolute necessity": construction of a larger cell house and 100 additional cells. Prison population had risen to 191, forcing Dickerson to place two prisoners in the small cells and three in the larger cells. The crowding can only be imagined, as the small cells were but 4.5 by 7 feet! There was, the warden reckoned, scarcely sufficient air space for one man, let alone two.¹⁴⁵ The inmates, he wrote, should have individual cells for health and morality reasons. Dickerson stated that the carpenter shop—a large stone building in the yard—could be enlarged into a "splendid" cell house into which the existing 69 small cells could be moved, and he could use prison labor to fabricate and install the additional 100 cells that he required. Virtually the only expense would be the steel and locking devices.

Prisoners continued to work the quarry, cutting stone for the Capitol extensions. When that job was complete, they began cutting stone for the new building at the Prison Farm, a two-story structure measuring 40 by 70 feet. At the time of Dickerson's report, all the stone was at the farm, ready to be put up.¹⁴⁶

The problems of the Road Camps disappeared when the Legislature of 1913 refused any further appropriations. The prisoners at work at the camp returned to prison, and the road camp shacks were moved to the Prison Farm for use as temporary bunkhouses.¹⁴⁷

The 1,180-acre Prison Farm at that time had 350 acres under cultivation, with wild hay growing on another 250 acres. The remainder was in use as pasture. During the previous two years, prisoners had cleared, leveled, and seeded 180 acres, and that work would continue for several years before the farm would be in "first-class condition." Water remained a problem. Under Dickerson's direction, they had hand-dug three wells—one near the farmhouse and two at the northern border of the property. The "well" near the farm house was more a pond, 50 feet wide,

¹⁴⁵ Dickerson obviously had other concerns than air space, writing It is impossible to prevent revolting practices where two or more occupy the same cell. Physical health was another concern, and an epidemic of chicken pox that broke out in the cell house in 1913 eventually infected half the prisoners, many of the guards, and even the warden's family. Had it been an outbreak of smallpox, scarlet fever, or diphtheria the consequences were obvious.

¹⁴⁶ Dickerson praised the prisoners for the quality of their stonework, and for their spirit, writing that they could not have done better work had they been working as free men.

¹⁴⁷ Disagreeing with his predecessor, Dickerson agreed with the Legislature's decision, writing that he viewed the use of convict labor in road building as a losing proposition, and that free men could build better roads for less cost.

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80 feet long, and 17 feet deep, and irrigated 20 acres.¹⁴⁸ At the time of writing, they were sinking another well at the piggery, this time using a machine supplied by the Truckee River General Electric Company, which promised to solve the quicksand problem. All the wells struck water at shallow levels, between seven and twelve feet.

Lacking sufficient range near the farm forced them to pasture all their stock, then amounting to 300 cattle and 40 horses; this was all that the pasture would support, and it was insufficient to supply the prison with all its beef requirements. Given this situation, Dickerson suggested that instead of trying to supply the prison's food needs, the Farm should be stocked with registered, pureblood stock to be raised and sold on the open market, and for breeding purposes.

The warden also wrote regarding the honor system in use at the Farm, where no attempt was made to guard the prisoners.¹⁴⁹ Over the previous two years, 105 prisoners had worked at the farm, and there were only three escapes (one of these was recaptured in Idaho). Dickerson saw this as a vindication of the system, and the selection process used whereby prisoners worked their way from prisoner to trustee, and ultimately to the Farm.

Finally, the manner of executions at the prison had changed, with shooting replacing hanging, a method the warden found "...a trifle less barbarous...."¹⁵⁰

Warden R.B. Henrichs' first biennial report was, of necessity, brief: he had only held the position for 26 days, having relieved Warden Dickerson on December 5, 1916. Thus he had no working knowledge of the prison for the previous two years. He could, however, address the ongoing needs.

Henrichs, like his predecessors, faced uncertainty as to when—or whether—a new prison might be built.¹⁵¹ If the Legislature intended to appropriate construction funds, then he proposed that expenditures on the old prison would be a waste of money. Lacking such appropriation, however, left him facing the same old problems: the prison still needed a new cell house, with the same population levels, it still had the same overcrowding conditions of which Dickerson had written two years earlier. It

¹⁴⁸ Quicksand at a depth of seven to ten feet had caused great difficulty in digging this well.

¹⁴⁹ In fact, the Farm superintendent and his assistant were unarmed.

¹⁵⁰ D.S. Dickerson, *Biennial report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1913 1914* .

¹⁵¹ Work on New Prison For Nevada Has Been Started , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 17, 1916, 8:1-2. Plans had already been drawn, but that was all the work started.

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still lacked proper quarters for female prisoners.¹⁵² Adequate work for the inmates remained a chronic problem. Prisoners had been employed on the Capitol grounds for much of 1915, working at grading and improving the grounds, hauling crushed rock and sand, and filling in the walks. Henrichs noted rising costs of shoes, and advocated installation of shoe-making machinery at the prison—this in spite of the fact that the previous shoe-manufacturing at the prison in the 1890s had never proved successful or profitable.¹⁵³

Henrichs' second report in 1919 mirrored his first as the Legislature continued to fail to act on the prison's long-term problems: obsolete and inadequate housing facilities for the inmates, and lack of suitable employment for the prisoners. Of the former, he wrote:

The urgent need of a more appropriate and modern cell house is so self-evident that it is superfluous to enumerate in detail the only too obvious defects of the structure now in use. Proper ventilation, sewer system, lighting system, sanitary lavatory arrangements—in fact, everything that is universally considered essential in an even moderately modern prison—is conspicuous by its total absence.¹⁵⁴

Laboring under inadequate funding and legislative indifference, Henrichs had managed a few improvements during the biennium. He had installed fifteen additional skylights and windows in the cell house and prisoners' dining room and kitchen, and had replaced the old wooden floor in the dining room with a concrete one. He had plastered and painted throughout the prison, including the guards' quarters, general offices, and Warden's offices. There was a renewal of the piping and electrical system at the prison, utilizing piping removed from the prison ranch when that facility's water system was overhauled. He had tarred and sanded the roof of the main building in attempt—less than successful by his own admission—to stem leaks, and had re-floored the hospital and installed an operating room.¹⁵⁵ He pointed that out the cost of these continued repairs, when

¹⁵² Though there was currently only one female prisoner, conditions were such that she was practically in solitary confinement except for a few hours a day, since she had no separate facilities.

¹⁵³ R.B. Henrichs, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1915 1916* .

¹⁵⁴ The appended Physician's Report had echoed that of the warden on this matter.

¹⁵⁵ Though the Physician's Report quickly pointed out the inadequacies of both hospital and operating room, noting that sterility was virtually impossible.

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combined with the projected cost of a new prison, only emphasized the need for the Legislature to take action.

Regarding inmate employment, the warden noted that the problem was particularly acute during the winter months, when there was no agricultural work and the quarry could not operate. He had managed to employ a number of prisoners on nearby ranches and farms during the harvest season, finding the arrangement satisfactory. The quarry had provided employment from June to October 1, when it produced 10,000 feet of cut stone and another 8,000 feet of rubble. But the winter months brought enforced idleness, and Henrichs implored the Board of Prison Commissioners to provide some sort of manufacturing shop for the prison to alleviate the problem.

The inflation of the war years—some 40% from 1917 to the end of 1918—had led the warden to increase the guards' pay from \$75 to \$90 per month to meet living expenses, and to allow him to be able to recruit suitable men.

The Farm was the one shining spot in Henrichs' world. Now sporting a modern dairy barn completed in 1917, and completely fenced, it was not only paying its own way but was also showing a profit under foreman, Tom Kearns. The Farm was now supplying all the prison's dairy and butter requirements, and was so productive that the warden was seeking other sales outlets for dairy products. During the previous summer Kearns had harvested 40 tons of wheat, 250 tons of hay, and about \$5,000 worth of vegetables. Under him, the farm had produced 450 turkeys, 65 calves, 7 colts, and 100 hogs.

Kearns had made improvements as well, building four miles of fence and 20 new gates, building and repairing watering troughs and connecting these to the main water system. He removed the slaughterhouse from near the dwelling to a more suitable location, and then installed a concrete floor and water system in it. He began construction of an addition to the slaughterhouse designed solely for processing hogs. He installed an electric pumping plant and concrete water tank to assure adequate water for the house and barns, dug and cleared irrigation ditches and installed head gates, and repaired any outbuilding that was suitable to store farm produce. Finally, he installed a new office system to better record the Farm's transactions.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ R.B. Henrichs, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1917 1918* ; The High Cost of Living Hits State Institution. State Farm a Paying Proposition , *The Carson City News*, 2/5/19, 1:5-6.

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The year 1919 finally saw the beginning of construction of new facilities at the Nevada State Prison.¹⁵⁷ On April 1, 1919 the Legislature appropriated \$520,000 for a State building program, and it also created the office of the State Architect¹⁵⁸ of the State of Nevada, with a salary of \$5,000 per year.¹⁵⁹ On April 10 the State Engineer, J.G. Scrugham appointed Nevada's most successful architect, Frederick J. DeLongchamps to the position. DeLongchamps, of course, had plenty of previous experience with the prison, having designed the proposed new penitentiary a decade earlier. Those plans, however, were not simply dusted off. Instead of a coordinated facility designed as a whole from the outset as in 1910, the State Architect designed a series of individual buildings to be erected at the existing site. For the effort, the Legislature had appropriated \$100,000. The Prison Board left it up to the architect to determine which site—existing prison or Prison Farm—would be the least expensive to develop.¹⁶⁰ DeLongchamps submitted his plans in November 1919. By that time, however, in a perverse reversal of trends, prison population had dropped so precipitously that his plans for a 200-cell facility met objections. The consensus among Prison Board members was that the architect would have to scale down the plans.¹⁶¹

1920 – 1930: The Gas Chamber

First, however, the Prison Board had to consider the question of whether to relocate the facility, or undertake construction on the present site.¹⁶² On January 6, 1920 Governor Boyle and Secretary of State Brodigan, in their roles as members of the Prison Board, met at the prison to consider the question. With them was Harvey Payne from the State Engineer's office, who set to work surveying the prison in order to fully map the facility. The Board was considering whether to build at the present site, or to relocate the Nevada State Prison to the site of the Prison Farm. Buildings at the existing prison were scattered around the site, requiring more guards and precluding any use of a central heating plant. The survey and mapping by the State Engineer would, hopefully, enable the Prison Board to determine whether

¹⁵⁷ Ironically, inmate population was at its lowest for many years, having averaged just 94 over the two-year period.

¹⁵⁸ Judging by DeLongchamps' first biennial report, the office may have initially been called that of the Supervising Architect. However, by the time the prison plans were prepared, DeLongchamps' name appeared as State Architect in the title block.

¹⁵⁹ State Plans For Building, *The Carson City News*, 3/22/19, 1:3.

¹⁶⁰ Will Start Work On New Prison This summer, *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 18, 1919, 5:1-2.

¹⁶¹ Board Will Order Revision Of Plans for New Prison, *The Carson City News*, 11/20/19, 1:3-4.

¹⁶² Big Building Program Proposed for This City: State and County Work the Heaviest in the Past Decade, *Carson City News*, April 13, 1919, 1:1-2.

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a general remodeling or a new facility would be cheaper.¹⁶³ That question remained an important matter. In March 1919 the Assembly had passed an appropriation of \$100,000 for prison construction, then immediately threatened to pull the bill back for reconsideration. Some members of the legislature opposed any appropriation if the money would be used other than for rebuilding the existing prison. The Assembly finally amended the bill to leave the matter of site to the Prison Board, and passed it along to the Senate.¹⁶⁴ There the matter stood as the Board deliberated.

While all this was going on, the Prison Board decided to allow private contractors to quarry stone from the prison quarry. The contractors would do the work themselves at their own expense, and would pay the state sixty cents per perch of unfinished stone for the privilege.¹⁶⁵

The Prison Board met in late March 1920 to approve the plans, having determined to remodel the existing prison. Because the proposed work would cut down on the size of the prison yard, and would remove existing buildings in the yard, the prison would realize administrative cost savings because fewer guards would be required under the new arrangement. The yard would be leveled, using waste material from the quarry, which would be kept busy providing stone for the Memorial and county buildings in Carson City. These modifications would quell any further calls to relocate the facility to the prison farm site or elsewhere and would, according to the Board, meet the facility's needs for the next fifty years.¹⁶⁶

Working to plans provided by the State Architect¹⁶⁷, workers broke ground for the foundation of the new cell house in April 1920, with engineer, W.J. Boudwin in charge of construction.¹⁶⁸ The cell house would be a four-story building of reinforced concrete construction, with walls two feet thick. Each story would contain 32 cells placed back to back, with a six-foot utility

¹⁶³ Prison Board Studying New Building Problem , *Carson City News*, January 7, 1920, 1:1-2.

¹⁶⁴ New Prison Bill Passed By Assembly Members , *The Carson City News*, 3/15/19, 1:1-2.

¹⁶⁵ Will Lease State Stone Quarry to the Contractors , *The Carson City News*, 2/4/20, 1:3-4. It is unclear whether the primary intent of this action was to add to the state s coffers, or to assist in seeing the new Ormsby County Court House completed. Two months later the prison installed a new rock saw at the prison as demands for stone for new state and county buildings and for the prison itself increased. Stone Cutting Machinery Arrives , *The Carson City News*, 4/1/20, 1:1.

¹⁶⁶ New Prison Will Be Built On Site of Present Buildings , *Carson City News*, March 27, 1920, 1:3-4.

¹⁶⁷ Though drafted principally by architect, Edward E. Hoxie.

¹⁶⁸ A dearth of skilled labor would hamper Boudwin until late 1921.

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corridor between them and a 4-1/2 foot corridor for guards and prisoners along the fronts of the cells. Each reinforced concrete cell would measure 5'2" wide by 9'2" deep by 8' high. The corners of the cells were rounded to allow the cells to be washed down, and the floor sloped to drain to the corridor. The cells each had a flush toilet, combination washstand and drinking fountain, one bunk, electric lighting, and adequate ventilation to the utility corridor. The utility corridor was open the full four stories to the roof ventilators.

Using convict labor, Boudwin began by trenching through solid rock for the concrete foundations, sewer lines, steam heating lines, and water lines.¹⁶⁹ Afterward they built the forms and poured the reinforced concrete foundation. When it came time to begin to erect the cell house proper, the engineer faced the problem of constructing a building with that contained a myriad of small rooms. To simplify the task and reduce the cost of forms, he devised a collapsible form of shiplap slabs bolted together.¹⁷⁰ In the forms he provided for expansion, the rounded corners of the cells, plumbing and ventilation runs, bunk bolts, cell fronts, and doors with their operating system. Boudwin built a series of sixteen such forms, so that he could cast half of one floor at a time. His workers would set up the forms in one end of the cell house, set the steel and fill the forms with concrete. After two weeks of setting time, the forms were unbolted and taken apart, moved, re-erected, and the process repeated, which took about six weeks. His foreman was a black convict called "Slim", who had been in charge of similar work at Folsom Prison¹⁷¹, and his work force consisted of nearly every available prisoner. The new cell house would form the north half of the east wall of the Yard, while a fifteen-foot wall would close the south side; closing the west side of the yard would be the proposed two-story Administration Building.

The new cells would have home-built cell fronts and locking devices.¹⁷² To avoid having to pay patent royalties, the State Engineer and State Architect, on the basis of what the latter had observed at Folsom Prison, had designed cell fronts that would utilize the old cell gratings, doors, sheet metal, and structural steel, and a totally new locking device and door suspension system. These were finish-machined in the prison shop by the

¹⁶⁹ Prison Cell House Being Constructed at Prison , *Reno Evening Gazette* , May 27, 1920, 6:1.

¹⁷⁰ Collapsible steel forms would have cost \$1,600 each.

¹⁷¹ Officers Gain Information From Folsom Prison Visit , *The Carson City News*, 7/22/20, 1:1-2. In July Governor Boyle, Warden Henrichs, and State Architect DeLongchamps visited Folsom Prison to gain ideas for use in the construction project underway at the Nevada State Prison.

¹⁷² The Virginia & Truckee Railroad s foundry cast the locking devices.

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convicts themselves. They also fabricated all the window-guards and other ironwork required.

Because the overall plan aimed at cutting costs by minimizing the number of guards required for each shift, the contractor also cleared the yard of all obstructions.¹⁷³ This included dismantling the women's building and the condemned cell house, though the materials recovered were used in construction of the new cell house. In addition, he began construction of a new wall, two feet thick and fifteen feet high of rubble masonry, around the yard. To continue construction during the winter months, he built a temporary wooden shelter that the masons moved along the path of the wall.

By mid-December 1920, Boudwin had also begun excavation for the trustees' quarters, commissary, dining hall and kitchen, and had completed a portion of the masonry wall. He hoped to complete these facilities at about the same time as the cell house, so that the prisoners could be housed in the new buildings while remodeling of the old main structure took place. At that time a portion of the front wall of the old Administration Building remained in place, while he was busy tearing the back wall down and so that he could rebuild to the new design. The end of 1920 saw work progressed to the point that the warden optimistically projected completion the following summer.¹⁷⁴

Beyond the long-awaited commencement of construction of the new buildings, administration of the facility continued much as before. Work went on at the quarry, where the new rock saw meant that operations could continue on a year-round basis. Previously it had proved impossible to work the quarry by hand once cold weather set in, since the sandstone would shatter under the hammers. While the new saw could cut blocks of sandstone fully eight feet square, that first year it mostly produced five inch-thick slabs for use as stone veneer in the construction of the County Building and the Memorial Building, both in Carson City. Combined, the two buildings used 2,452 feet of machine-cut rock and 3,601 feet of hand-cut rock, all supplied by the prison quarry.¹⁷⁵

Prison maintenance continued to be a headache for the warden, as price increases drove the per diem cost per inmate from \$1.17 in December 1918 to \$1.73 two years later. The only bright spot was that prices had begun to decline in the autumn of 1920, and

¹⁷³ Obstructions in the yard required more guards on the wall, in order to ensure all areas were in sight.

¹⁷⁴ Pouring Concrete at Prison For Modern Cell House , *Carson City News* , December 19, 1920, 1:3-4.

¹⁷⁵ No Crop Failure at Prison; Rock Saw About Installed , *The Carson City News*, 8/20/20, 1:1-2.

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the administrators hoped that they might stabilize soon enough allow a reasonably accurate estimate for appropriation purposes.

While prison population had dropped—reaching a low of 99 at the end of 1920—this brought its own set of problems. Because of the arrangement of the buildings at the prison, the warden found it necessary to employ about twenty prisoners on the outside (in addition to the fifteen at the Farm). With limited numbers from whom to choose, it was becoming increasingly difficult to select trustees.

The Prison Farm remained a success story, and had become nearly self-sustaining. The State Food and Drug Administrator, S.C. Dinsmore inspected it in 1920 and found the dairy farm and milk room to be models of their kind, and the rest of the farm buildings and facilities well-maintained and sanitary. By this time the farm was producing all of the fresh meat and milk used by the prison, and nearly enough butter and vegetables to serve the prison's needs. During the biennium, trustees leveled a 25-acre field at the entrance to the farm and planted alfalfa, and plowed another ten acres as a summer feed area for hogs. In the fall of 1920 they plowed fifteen acres of pasture, planting alfalfa and wheat. South of the farmhouse the men leveled 7.25 acres and planted potatoes, yielding 100 tons in late 1920. Water remained a problem, and a growing problem as intensive farming expanded at the Prison Farm. The short supply of water meant that there was usually only enough for a first crop. Under the management of William Douglas, all fences had been repaired, all ditches cleaned, and a new windmill and water tank at the slaughter house piped water to that building, and to the dairy barn and the hog pens. At the dairy barn a new double unit milking machine was handling twenty cows daily.¹⁷⁶

Governor Boyle opened 1921 by reporting that he was hopeful that the \$100,000 previously appropriated for prison construction would complete the first unit of work. Rather than seek another legislative appropriation to continue construction, he instead announced that he would seek a tax rate increase of one cent for 1921 and 1922 as a means of financing continued work at the prison. The state now estimated that the entire work would require an expenditure of \$241,460, and would take seven years to complete.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ The machine had a capacity of 35 cows, so Douglas was looking to expand the dairy operation. R.B. Henrichs, R.B. *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1919 1920*; No Crop Failure at Prison; Rock Saw About Installed, *The Carson City News*, 8/20/20, 1:1-2.

¹⁷⁷ Boyle Announces Estimates On Prison Construction, *The Carson City News*, January 17, 1921, 1:3-4.

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The warden's report for 1921-22 was brief. During the reporting period the inmate population had grown back to historic levels, rising from 99 at the end of 1920 to 174 at the end of 1922. This, combined with unanticipated demands from the counties for transporting prisoners, and food and clothing price increases, caused expenses to exceed the appropriated amount. Henrichs had, he reported, managed to avoid any increase in staff in spite of the increase in the number of prisoners, ninety percent of whom were kept at the prison. Though there was some speculation in late 1922 regarding his reappointment, Governor Boyle appeared well enough satisfied with building progress that newspapers concluded that Henrichs would continue as Warden.¹⁷⁸

Despite the optimism shown by Engineer Boudwin in 1920, construction of the new cell house and the administration building was still not finished.¹⁷⁹ This situation had drawn the attention of the Legislature in early 1921. A report prepared by Senators Cowles, Penrose, and Kenney recommended continuation of the building program. The report noted that the existing facility was "...in the worst possible repair, is unsanitary and very expensive to guard and maintain." Referring to the State Architect's biennial report, the senators recommended continuing the building program, with financing to be provided by the continuation of a one-cent tax levy for seven more years. This, they felt, would provide sufficient funds to rebuild the prison using a maximum of convict labor. To rush the existing construction to completion, they recommended adding another one-cent tax levy. They also advised against any expenditure for repairs or maintenance of existing buildings, beyond that absolutely necessary, on the assumption that these would eventually be demolished.¹⁸⁰ Because of this the warden had refrained from carrying out repairs on the existing buildings, instead strongly suggesting that replacement of the "ancient buildings and equipment" be accomplished as soon as possible. The one benefit of stretching out the construction process was that up to seventy prisoners were kept gainfully employed.

By September 1921 crews were pouring the roof of the new cell house, having finished the interior of the first floor, and inmates were beginning finish work on the second floor, plastering and painting cells and corridors. Authorities were confident that the cell house would be ready for occupancy that winter. But by this

¹⁷⁸ The remainder were housed at the Prison Farm as trustees. Warden's Report, *The Carson City News*, 11/29/22, 1:1-2.

¹⁷⁹ The warden reported construction has progressed in keeping with the appropriations made. Weather would have had a delaying role as well, as the concrete could not be mixed and poured during freezing weather.

¹⁸⁰ Recommend Continuation of Building Program at Prison, *Carson City News*, March 17, 1921, 1:3-4.

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time the vagaries of prison population must have been haunting the Prison Board. Having had the State Architect alter his plans to reduce capacity according to the Board's projections, they now found themselves with a newly-burgeoning inmate population that had reached 130, and newspapers reported that the capacity of the new cell house would be reached in a very few years.¹⁸¹

Crews had begun pouring concrete in the second story of the commissary wing. This building, abutting the north end of the new cell house, would house the commissary department and ice plant on the first floor, with trustee barracks and dining room on the second. The contractor hoped to finish this wing, which formed the northern wall of the Yard, within the following year. This wing would also contain quarters for women inmates, including cells without bars, a work room, a lounging area, and provisions for a separate cook.¹⁸² Work would also begin shortly on the Warden's Residence, using salvaged stone and lumber from the old prison buildings.¹⁸³ Then, bad weather and lack of funds forced construction to a halt in March 1922, with the new cell block still not ready for occupation.¹⁸⁴

As always, the Prison Farm drew the warden's compliments for its contributions in both providing meaningful work for the trustees, and in providing most of the food for the prison. Farm management had brought still more land under cultivation, planting more crops—alfalfa, redtop, timothy, and rye—for hay and silage. With proper management the soil was becoming ever more productive.

Lastly, the Legislature had passed a law that would affect the prison for all the years to come: the provisions of Chapter 46, Statutes 1921 required the execution of inmates under the sentence of death by the administration of lethal gas. The Gas Chamber would join the buildings of the Nevada State Prison.¹⁸⁵

The law posed some problems for the Prison Board, whose members had to admit they knew virtually nothing of the method of execution, nor of what type of facility might be required. They

¹⁸¹ New Cell House at Prison To be Occupied this Winter , *The Carson City News*, September 8, 1921, 1:3-4.

¹⁸² To Build Apartments For Lady Prisoners , *Eureka Sentinel*, 12/24/21, 2:1. The prison had just paroled its last two female prisoners, partly because of a lack of suitable quarters.

¹⁸³ New Cell House at Prison To be Occupied this Winter , *Carson City News*, September 8, 1921, 1:3-4.

¹⁸⁴ Building Work Ceases at Prison , *The Carson City News*, March 1, 1922, 4:5.

¹⁸⁵ R.B. Henrichs, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1921 1922* .

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did not even know what type of gas could be used for executions. Thus, the Board asked the State Architect to study the problem, and work an execution cell into the ongoing construction at the prison. Some members felt that the forms being used in the new cell house could be utilized to build an execution chamber, while others favored cutting a cell into the solid rock of the quarry face in the Yard. In their uncertainty, the administrators announced that they would not yet dismantle the prison gallows, last used in 1911, nor the "shooting gallery" where executions by rifle fire took place and last put to use in 1913.¹⁸⁶

In early 1923 the Nevada Supreme Court heard arguments regarding the constitutionality of the gas execution law. The chief argument against the law was that execution by gas constituted cruel and unusual punishment. The court disagreed, finding it no more cruel and unusual than any other customarily-used means of capital punishment. Interestingly, the judges surmised that part of the reason that some found the method repugnant was that, "The revulsion on the part of many to the idea of execution by the administration of gas is due to an erroneous impression. The average person looks upon the use of gas with horror because of the experiences incident to the late war." The court concluded that the law was constitutional, and ordered the Mineral County court to fix the date of execution of Gee Jon and Hughie Sing, the first two men to be sentenced to die by the new method, and to issue the proper orders to the Warden of the State Prison.¹⁸⁷

Construction work at the prison dragged on into 1924, but continued to provide work for the inmates. Since the inmate population had dropped (127 at the end of 1923, 137 at the end of 1924), this meant that, between the construction project, the Prison Farm, and normal work around the prison, most of the prisoners were employed, temporarily alleviating a perennial concern. Nonetheless, Warden Dickerson, who had returned to the position, reminded the Board of Prison Commissioners that the problem would return with the end of the construction project.¹⁸⁸

Weather was the chief cause of construction delays. While the part of the new building to be used as the employees' kitchen and

¹⁸⁶ Architect to Study Needs Of Gas Cell at Prison , *Carson City News* , April 6, 1921, 1:3-4. Condemned prisoners at that time had the choice of death by hanging or shooting.

¹⁸⁷ Lethal Gas Execution Law Is Declared Constitutional , *The Carson City News*, January 7, 1923, 1:1-3. The two men had been incarcerated at the Nevada State Prison since early 1922.

¹⁸⁸ Dickerson suggested that the Board should provide the prison with the equipment required to manufacture automobile license plates, which would provide a few prisoners with employment.

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dining room was completed in 1923, the roof had not been laid by the time winter set in, and could not be poured in freezing weather. Until the new building was complete, demolition work on the old building could not begin. Until that demolition was finished, work could not begin on excavating for the remainder of the building. Each delay occasioned another, snowballing to drastically impede the whole project. Still, authorities expected to have construction complete by the end of 1925.¹⁸⁹

Inmates were now earning some recompense for their labors in prison construction. In May 1923 the Prison Board adopted a daily wage scale whereby skilled men earned fifty cents, their helpers received thirty-five cents, and common laborers got twenty-five cents. The prison also instituted a system of credits whereby good behavior coupled with work time would result in a reduction of one's sentence.¹⁹⁰ The inducement must not have been sufficiently attractive: in July four inmates in one of the construction crews made good their escape through the roof of the Machine Shop.¹⁹¹ The lax security brought about by the mass of ongoing construction led to further escapes, and the situation would come to a head at the end of the year.

By August 1923 the new cell house was still incomplete, and crews were laboring on the upper floors to finish the interior work. Overall, new building work was sixty percent complete, and most materials were on hand at the prison; the warden reported most work ahead on, or ahead of, schedule. A new rock crushing plant was producing all the necessary aggregate for the concrete. Six paid free employees were overseeing the work. Because the mineral-laden water of the prison springs was so deleterious to the piping system, the Prison Board had arranged to pipe in water from the state water system at the Children's Home in Carson City, and crews had laid and were creosoting the wooden pipes to bring the water to the prison.¹⁹² Finally, by October the new cell house was ready for full occupancy, and crews were slowly working their way west in the course of demolishing old buildings and building new ones.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ The warden noted that they had been lucky to avoid any major contagious diseases, as the construction had left the prison without any hospitalization facilities, and any cases requiring surgery had had to be sent to the State Hospital in Reno.

¹⁹⁰ Wage Schedule Adopted for Prisoners Work on Building, *The Carson City News*, May 11, 1923, 1:5-6.

¹⁹¹ Prison Board Held Meeting, *The Carson City News*, July 12, 1923, 1:1.

¹⁹² Prison Construction Progress, *The Carson City News*, August 19, 1923, 1:3-4; Prison Construction Criticised, *The Carson City News* August 18, 1923, 1:1-2. One of the paid employees had just quit, telling the Governor that he could not in good conscience accept his wages as there was so little for him to do.

¹⁹³ New Cell House at Prison Now Nearing Completion, *The Carson City News*, October 27, 1923, 1:3-4.

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In 1923 the prison shifted its herd of pigs from the prison proper to the Prison Farm; removing the old hog pens at the prison, they converted the area to raising Belgian hares. They augmented the number of horses and cows at the farm, and, acquiring incubators from a chicken farm near Yerington, began to seriously pursue poultry production.¹⁹⁴ But for the first time, the Prison Farm failed. Light winter snows had resulted in water shortages; this, coupled with an extremely dry summer, meant that the farm's crops almost completely failed. The hay crop dropped precipitously from 300 tons to 80 tons, and for the first time the farm had had to purchase hay to feed the stock.¹⁹⁵

Transportation costs continued to plague the prison administrators. During the previous two years these had amounted to \$10,432.31, an expenditure over which the warden had no control. The reason for this was that the prison was required to pay the county sheriffs to transport the prisoners from the various counties throughout Nevada. But the term of the prisoners' service—that point when the prisoner became part of the prison's appropriated budget—did not begin until he or she actually entered the prison. Thus the cost of transport was outside the budget. Dickerson suggested that the law be amended to have the term of service begin with the date of sentencing, and that there be a separate appropriation for prisoner transport.¹⁹⁶

Prison transport made headlines in 1924, but in a negative fashion. On the last day of 1923, two prisoners stole the prison's Lincoln touring car and made good their escape. The next day, Carson City papers reported that the Captain of the Guards and two guards gave chase in the prison Buick, but had been unable to catch the more powerful Lincoln which raced through Dayton and disappeared in the direction of Yerington. The two prisoners, John Cole and William J. "Jimmie" Clark were well-suited to this form of escape. Cole was an experienced auto mechanic who had worked in the industry, while Clark was a well-qualified electrician. Cole was at work overhauling the Lincoln when prison officials sent Clark to help him. The two took advantage of the situation and roared off. To make matters worse for their pursuers, Cole had experience as a racing driver,

¹⁹⁴ Improvements are Planned At State Prison and Farm , *The Carson City News*, May 13, 1923, 1:1-2. Conveniently for the prison, one of the former owners of the chicken farm from which they bought the incubators was now an inmate.

¹⁹⁵ Interestingly, the warden's report noted the run-down condition of the farm , without elaborating. It is not known whether this statement related to the crop failures, or to the physical plant. Given that just two years earlier the farm had been in top condition, this statement is puzzling.

¹⁹⁶ He also suggested a separate appropriation for payment of discharge allowances, and noted that prison management had neither control over these two expenditures, nor any means of knowing how much they would amount to from year to year.

and the Lincoln was always equipped with extra parts. While authorities believed the pair had headed east toward Wadsworth, others thought they would make for Mexico; everyone felt that the fugitives were better equipped than the authorities for a prolonged cross-country chase. Those who thought the escapees had headed south were correct. They made it as far as Searchlight, Nevada, where the car broke down. They tried to continue on foot, but were discovered and recaptured south of Searchlight.¹⁹⁷

As 1923 ended, the number of escapes had brought about a political crisis. It led Warden Thomas Salter to resign his position. In a letter to Governor James Scrugham, Salter wrote:

“I hereby tender my resignation as superintendent of the Nevada State Police and ex-officio warden of the state prison.

“I am prompted in this course by a desire to relieve your administration of any embarrassment due to criticisms directed at me personally, relative to the management of the state prison. These criticisms might be made in good faith, but are nevertheless unjust.

“The construction work now going on at the prison, dismantling the old cell block, roofs and walls has made it impossible, with the utmost vigilance, to prevent escapes. The prison at present is not secure and can not be made so until the new cell blocks and other parts of the prison have been completed.

“I feel, however, that in justice to you and to myself that I should retire at this time.”

The position of Warden was a gubernatorial appointment, and was something of a political plum. This time, however, Scrugham convened the whole Prison Board to appoint Salter's successor, likely in an attempt to avoid any perception of political cronyism. They turned to Denver Dickerson—then serving as State Inspector of Pharmacies, who accepted the invitation to return to his old job.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Convicts Escape from Prison In High-Powered Automobile , *Carson City News*, January 1, 1924, 1:3-4.

¹⁹⁸ Denver S. Dickerson is Named Prison Warden , *The Carson City News*, December 18, 1923, 1:3-4. In addition to his prior service as Warden, Dickerson highly placed in the Democratic Party in Nevada had also served as Governor and Lieutenant Governor. An experienced newspaper man, he always had good relations with the press.

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One of Dickerson's first actions as 1923 came to a close was to move a number of inmates into the new cell house. Only the first two floors were ready for occupancy, a reflection of how slowly the construction work had progressed. The two condemned prisoners, Gee Jon and Hughie Sing, remained under separate guard in the old building. Asked when the new cell house might be ready for complete occupancy, the Prison Board declined to offer a guess.¹⁹⁹

During 1924 the prison conducted its first execution by lethal gas. Gee Jon and Hughie Sing, Chinese Tong members, had been convicted of murder two years earlier. The execution followed a number of attempts to obtain a stay. On January 7, 1924, a year after finding the law permitting the use of gas for executions constitutional, the Nevada Supreme Court denied a writ that would have prohibited the death sentence. Even at this late date, there was still no gas chamber in which the execution could take place. Warden Dickerson explained that he would take no action to build one until the case had worked its way through the court system. Attorneys for the condemned announced they would continue to pursue other means, including a vacation of the original judgment. Two days later Judge J.E. Walsh fixed February 8, 1924 as the date the sentence would be carried out, as the attorneys still worked to have the sentence commuted to life in prison.²⁰⁰

By late January, Dickerson had begun adapting one of the old buildings in the yard, a stone structure that dated to 1888, for use as a gas chamber. He had also ordered hydrocyanic gas from Los Angeles. In the building's east room, once used as a barber shop, he installed a steel cage measuring 11' by 10' and eight feet high. This held the condemned prisoner who was strapped in a chair while four pounds of hydrocyanic acid gas was pumped in from an adjacent room. Windows and doors would be sealed with wax to protect those outside. Efforts were still underway to save the pair, with petitions and letters being sent to the Governor. On Friday, January 25, 1924, the State Board of Pardons agreed with arguments that Gee Jon's death sentence be carried out, but that Hughie Sing's sentence be commuted to life in prison.²⁰¹

February 1924 arrived with Gee Jon's attorney still seeking to have his client's sentence commuted, arguing that the district attorney had prejudiced the jurors in the case. The Board of

¹⁹⁹ Dickerson Puts Prisoners in Lower Half New Cell House , *The Carson City News*, December 21, 1923, 1:1-2.

²⁰⁰ Chinese Slayers Denied Writ; Execution Within 30 Days , *Carson City News*, January 8, 1924, 1:4-6; February Eighth Date Set For Execution of Chinese , *Carson City News*, January 10, 1924, 1:3-4.

²⁰¹ Preparations for Execution; Petitions Signed for Chinese , *Carson City News*, January 23, 1924, 1:1-2.

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Pardons, however, saw no reason to reconsider. A week later, on February 8, with both legal efforts and time exhausted, Gee Jon became the first person in the United States to be executed by lethal gas.²⁰² Death, the warden reported, occurred in six minutes, though the prisoner was unconscious after five seconds. Based on this first use, the warden advised the Board that the method was "impracticable."

The warden's reasons revolved around the gas itself. It could not be handled by prison staff, but instead required an outside expert. Should that outside help fail at a critical moment, Dickerson warned, the prison officials would be unable to carry on. Too, the gas was both highly explosive, requiring it to be kept at low temperatures, *and* temperature-critical for administration, needing to be pumped at 75° Fahrenheit. This latter requirement had caused a problem at the initial execution, since they were unable to raise the temperature in the chamber (it was February) above 52° when the electric heater failed. This resulted in the gas failing to volatilize and forming a pool on the floor of the chamber. It was nearly three hours before the pool evaporated and officials could enter the room. The explosive nature of the gas posed a problem in that the only place on the West Coast where it was manufactured was in Los Angeles, making transport by car to the prison during the summer months extremely hazardous. Because it was inherently unstable and quickly deteriorated, it could not be stored at the prison for long periods. Finally, Dickerson found the method of execution no more humane than death by hanging or shooting. The *real* suffering of the condemned, he noted, occurred as the condemned waited for the sentence to be carried out.²⁰³

In mid-1925 the county undertook to improve the road between the prison and Carson—present East Fifth Street. The prison supplied all the crushed rock, and the state loaned a water wagon. This was the first of a series of projects along this roadway.²⁰⁴ Later, in September, Warden Dickerson announced that the prison was nearing completion. The new cell house was—at last—fully occupied, with most cells holding two men; a few cells were used for solitary confinement, and there were two special cells for the condemned.²⁰⁵ In a departure from the original plans, the trustees would now have their own dining

²⁰² Death Chamber Described; Again Ask Clemency for Jon , *Carson City News*, February 1, 1924, 1:5-6; Gee Jon Executed At Prison Yesterday , *Carson City News*, February 9, 1924, 1:1-2.

²⁰³ D.S. Dickerson, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1923 1924* .

²⁰⁴ Improving Road From Town To Prison , *The Carson City News*, June 7, 1925, 1:2.

²⁰⁵ One specially-reinforced cell was home to a prisoner named Delaney, who had thirty prior escapes from jails, prisons, and hospitals under his belt.

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room and kitchen. This change was the result of overcrowding of the main dining room; prison population had reached 200, and the main dining room only had a capacity of 155, a legacy of the shortsightedness of an earlier Prison Board. The new Warden's Office and Main Office were due for completion around Christmas.

The new building arrangement allowed heating from a central steam plant. The Captain of the Guards had his own suite of rooms. When construction was finished his guards would enjoy their own sleeping quarters, dining room and kitchen, and barber shop.²⁰⁶ All in all, Dickerson must have been pleased. He would not, however, live to see final completion. On November 28, 1925 Warden D.S. Dickerson died while in office, and W.J. Maxwell, Superintendent of State Police, took his place.

Following Christmas festivities that included a program given for the inmates by local talent from Carson City²⁰⁷, Maxwell carried on with the construction work. In March 1926 he let a contract for a new oil-fired heating system to replace the existing coal-fired plant. He also continued a second season of road improvements on East Fifth Street, and began a program to clean up the prison grounds outside the walls.²⁰⁸

By 1927 Maxwell was at last able to report completion of the new west wing at the prison. Of stone masonry and reinforced concrete construction, it measured 366 feet long, forty feet wide, and thirty-two feet high. It contained the hospital, dentist's office, guards' quarters, cells for the condemned, commissary, kitchen, dining rooms, women's quarters, heating plant, dungeons, cold storage, and administration offices. Gone were the old cell house, administration building, and guards' quarters, removed to make way for the new structure. At the end Maxwell lacked sufficient State funds to finish the building: the new guards' quarters could not be completed and fitted out. This was a real problem as there was no question of retaining the old guards' quarters. Built in 1873 of adobe and sandstone, it was dark and dank and nearing collapse. He arranged an agreement with the federal government whereby the Nevada State Prison would care for a number of federal prisoners for a federal payment of \$1.25 per day per prisoner. This provided enough extra money to allow completion of the new guards' quarters, complete with new furniture.

²⁰⁶ Prison Nearing Completion , *The Carson City News*, September 4, 1925, 1:3-4.

²⁰⁷ Christmas at the State Prison , *The Carson City News* December 27, 1925, 1:3-4.

²⁰⁸ Award Contract for Oil & Heating Equipment at the State Prison , *The Carson City News*, March 11, 1926, 1:5; Improving Road and Prison Surroundings , *The Carson City News*, October 24, 1926, 1:4.

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The aggregate changes at the prison were sufficient to require a general overhaul and upgrade of the prison's electrical system. Under the direction of F.N. Dondero, Superintendent of Construction since January 1, 1926 these changes were completed. They included new electrical service to the prison, new switchboards, and alterations to interior and exterior lighting.²⁰⁹ The prison yard was now adequately and uniformly lit, easing the burden of the guards on night duty. Extensive improvements were also made to the prison water system, from water storage to the fire system to plumbing in the Warden's Residence.

There were more improvements as well, many built using salvaged materials. Where the old barn and adjoining stone buildings had stood, a new thirteen-stall garage built of old timber and salvaged corrugated iron now housed the prison cars and those of the guards on duty. Separate two-car garages of similar construction flanked the north and south ends of the main garage. Using salvaged materials, Dondero had installed four new cells in the dungeon, closed off with a padlocked iron door. An auto repair shop now abutted the blacksmith shop, and he built a stone cutting shed east of the blacksmith shop to protect the cutters from both the sun and inclement weather. Dondero installed sixteen new cells in the fourth floor of the cell house, using bars salvaged from the old cells. There was a series of regrading efforts both inside and outside the walls to correct drainage deficiencies; there were new concrete walks in the prison yard. Defective portions of perimeter walls were torn down and rebuilt. Lawns were graded and planted. Kitchen improvements were made.

In connection with the oil-fired heating system, Dondero had installed a new 15,000-gallon oil tank and an oil house.²¹⁰ The old oil house then became a garage for prison trucks, and gained a 45 by 25 foot addition to house wagons. Painting was carried out throughout the prison. Roadways—including the county road north of the prison—were graded, surfaced, and widened.²¹¹

Even with all this, Dondero had to admit of much unfinished work. Though not listed first, chief among the incomplete tasks

²⁰⁹ Changes to interior lighting included provision for two 10-watt lights per cell. It is difficult to imagine what the pre-existing condition must have been like, as this was considered an improvement to provide satisfactory lighting for the inmates!

²¹⁰ As noted, previously coal had been used for fuel, delivered in railroad cars on the prison spur. Much of this more expensive fuel disappeared due to theft during the cars' overnight stays.

²¹¹ The list of improvements and alterations from this biennial report is too exhaustive to repeat in whole, and the interested reader is referred to the original report.

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was completion of a new gas chamber. Much of the problem with the existing execution house lay in the fact that the gas chamber within it was too large, allowing the gas to disperse too much. The superintendent reported that he had enough cut stone on hand to complete the new "Lethal Gas House", but that it remained to be built. Other work yet to be done included repointing of all the masonry walls, building a new freestanding guards' bath house instead of placing it in the basement beneath the Warden's Office, providing an auxiliary electrical generating plant, and various bits of grounds work.

Beyond the work at hand, Dondero recommended a new horse barn be built, since it remained necessary for the prison to have saddle horses and teams on hand, and the old barn was too small. He also advocated completion of cells on the fourth floor of the cell house, due to increasing prison population.²¹² Water supply remained inadequate at the Prison Farm, and he recommended a survey of Clear Creek with the intent of building a reservoir there. In addition, a number of buildings at the farm required, in his view, repairs and new roofs. Finally, Warden Maxwell recommended tearing down the "old shacks" in the Yard where the inmates sheltered during wet weather, and replacing them with a single, purpose-built structure that would also contain a chapel, library and reading room, and study room.

Warden Maxwell's report dealt with more than prison construction. During the summer of 1926, forest fires had threatened Carson City. So close were they to town that the Capitol building was sprayed with water as a shower of sparks and smoke swept over the community. A number of prisoners volunteered to help fight the fires. They were organized into squads with guards and sent against the conflagration. Five men died fighting the fires that summer: two of these were prisoners, and another was a guard. Construction Superintendent Dondero was on the fire line too, and risked his life attempting to save these men and in saving others. Maxwell recommended that the State erect a monument to the fallen, and that it grant parole to the surviving prisoners who had fought the fire.²¹³

Much of Maxwell's biennial report consists of his theories on modern penal administration, on the opportunities to identify and reform inmates who could be reached, on the proper role of the Board of Pardons and Parole Commissioners in this reform process, and on the proper treatment of hardened criminals. For the latter, the warden espoused creation of a "...general penal

²¹² Inmate population was back up to 157 at the end of 1926.

²¹³ Subsequent reports give no indication as to whether either of these recommendations met with favor.

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colony under national supervision...²¹⁴, where all the states would send such inmates for life, or until such time as they could be "...redeemed under sound scientific treatment."²¹⁵ Each state would reimburse the federal-government for the costs of confinement of their own prisoners.

Addressing Nevada's method of capital punishment, Maxwell differed with his predecessor: he found the use of gas to be the most humane method of execution, particularly since the other methods usually left the bodies disfigured, to the shock and horror of relatives who later had to claim them. He looked forward to the completion of the new gas chamber so that such executions could be carried out more efficiently.²¹⁶

By the time that M.R. Penrose²¹⁷ penned his first report in 1929, more construction had taken place at the prison. The prison's latest warden was able to report completion of the new stone and cement execution building, finished the previous October.²¹⁸ Equipped with steam heat, electric lights, and hot and cold water supply, this contained two condemned cells, night guard's room, bathroom, and the gas chamber itself. The building was located in the east end of the yard, near the cellblock and the tunnel to the prehistoric footprints.²¹⁹

As recommended by Warden Maxwell, a new stone and concrete building housing the library and equipped with steam heat and

²¹⁴ Where such a national penal colony might be located he did not say, and it is difficult to imagine any of the populous states lining up to house it.

²¹⁵ It is now well known, he wrote, that such a class is mentally diseased. There is little doubt but that many of them under such scientific treatment or operations could be cured of these criminal tendencies. Maxwell also played the role of Santa Claus at Christmas time, distributing gifts, and bags of candy and oranges to the inmates. Observe Christmas At State Prison, *The Carson City News*, December 28, 1927, 1:1.

²¹⁶ By this time, the gas was available in powdered form, capable of being shipped by common carrier and alleviating the prior problems of transporting and handling the liquid material. W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary, 1925 1926*. In addition, Maxwell had carried out a special execution by gas in April 1927 when he vacated the cell house, sealed it, and gassed the interior to kill the masses of bedbugs that inhabited the facility. Gas Treatment For Prison Cell House Today, *The Carson City News*, April 15, 1927, 1:1.

²¹⁷ Matt Penrose was born in Virginia City on November 7, 1881 to a pioneer Nevada family. After his education he worked at railroading for three years before going into ranching at Yerington. In 1916 Lyon Counted elected him to the State Senate, where he served eight years before Governor Fred B. Balzar appointed him Warden of the Nevada State Prison in January 1927.

²¹⁸ Death House at State Prison Completed, *Sparks Tribune*, October 18, 1928, 2:2.

²¹⁹ Lethal Gas House For Nevada Prison, *The Carson City News*, February 1, 1928, 1:6; Build New Gas Execution Chamber, *The Carson City News*, November 29, 1928, 1:3-4.

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electric lighting had replaced the old shacks—or “bullpens”—in the yard.²²⁰ The five old guard towers had been demolished and replaced by three new ones—one at the main entrance, one atop the wall at the south end of the main building, and one atop the south end of the cell house—of stone and concrete construction, equipped with electric heaters and telephones. Though it was virtually new, had been necessary to re-roof the main building as the original roof leaked badly; this required 32 barrels of tar and nine cubic yards of gravel.

The prison now sported new stone and concrete walls and three large arches at the front; the arches each had massive iron gates. The gates guarded the main entrance to the prison yard for all trucks and vehicles, and the old gate at the rear of the cell house had been closed. New walls had been built, and others heightened to lessen the chance for escape. Penrose had also begun a program to beautify the exterior prison grounds.²²¹

Prisoners had extended both tunnels leading to the well-known prehistoric footprints, equipped the tunnels with electric lights, and built iron railings to prevent the footprints from visitors' feet. During the excavation they also discovered thirteen additional tracks of ground sloths and three more mammoth tracks.²²² Penrose had also continued work on East Fifth Street, now using prison labor.²²³

A new, more direct, road between the prison and the Prison Farm was under construction. Unfortunately, the Farm remained in “deplorable” condition due to lack of water. The grain crop had failed in 1928, and the Farm was no longer even coming close to meeting the needs of the prison. Apparently having given up on placing a reservoir on Clear Creek, as so many before him had recommended, Penrose instead endorsed drilling wells on the property.

The law pertaining to prisoner transport had been changed, apparently according to Warden Dickerson's recommendations. Penrose reported that costs of transport had dropped from \$56.75 per prisoner under the old system, to \$48.87 under the new. The

²²⁰ Warden Calls for Books for Library at the State Prison , *Carson City News*, January 6, 1928, 1:5.

²²¹ Including 108 federal prisoners, inmate population stood at 261 by the end of 1928. Beautifying Grounds At State Prison , *The Carson City News*, April 13, 1928, 1: 3

²²² Find relics of the Days of Civil War , *The Carson City News*, February 2, 1928, 1:6. They had also discovered a newspaper dating from 1862, and a tin type from the same period, though no one could explain how these items came to be in the cave.

²²³ Improves Highway to State Prison , *The Carson City News*, June 29, 1928, 1:5.

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prison had acquired a screened Dodge truck for the purpose, and had amortized the cost within a year.²²⁴

In his previous report, Penrose had asked for a budget of \$136,000 to operate the prison during the following two years. Using this amount and the federal monies for housing federal prisoners, he had been able to both operate the prison and carry out further construction, *and* to revert nearly \$4,000 to the state treasury at the close of 1930. However, by the first day of 1931 the number of federal prisoners had dropped to 43, and the warden was uncertain of his budget needs in the face of reduced federal reimbursement.

In 1929 he had completed construction of a new stone masonry library, connected to the "bullpen" and the blacksmith shop.²²⁵ The west end of the library held the shelves, and the building was equipped with new tables and chairs. Public donation provided over 3,100 books to equip the library, and all were indexed. A librarian and one assistant checked the books in and out using a library card system. A new rock-bordered lawn fronted the building.²²⁶

1930 – 1940: Years of Retrenchment

A new chain link fence topped by barbed wire now enclosed the south and east sides of the yard, replacing an old barbed wire fence on wood posts. Most of the outside walls had been repointed, and all woodwork, floors, radiators, and inside piping had been repainted. And a new prison landmark had appeared: prisoners had graded the hillside at the southwest corner of the prison, and laid a field of uniform cobblestones measuring 32 by 48 feet, painted to resemble the U.S. flag, complete with flagstaff. They had also planted about 100 cottonwood trees along the south side of 5th Street, from the prison to the outskirts of Carson City. The Carson Valley Bank donated the sixteen-foot trees, which prisoners planted at thirty-foot intervals. The prison cared for them after planting, using prison spring water. Penrose hoped to extend the line of trees clear to Carson City, and to

²²⁴ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary, 1927 1928* . Many Changes and Improvements Noted at the Nevada State Prison , *The Carson City News*, July 17, 1928, 1:1.

²²⁵ It appears that the bullpen was the former new building that had housed the library until completion of the purpose-built library building, and that the former building had then reverted to use as a shelter and lounging area for use during inclement weather.

²²⁶ Prison Has Regular Library In Operation , *The Carson City News*, November 23, 1929, 1:6.

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plant the north side of the road as well, if enough trees were available.²²⁷

Dr. Anthony Huffaker, the prison doctor for many years, reported that his hospital now had an operating room equipped with operating table, steam autoclave, and necessary supplies, obviating the need to send prisoners to Reno for surgery.²²⁸

At the Prison Farm, a 230-foot well had been sunk, producing a flow of 880 gallons per minute. A diesel-powered Western Deep Well Turbine pump raised the water to the surface for use.²²⁹ A new 20 by 40 foot frame building on stone foundation and with corrugated iron roof housed well, pump, and engine. Three other farm buildings had received new corrugated iron roofs, and there was a new floor in the kitchen. In August 1929 the prison purchased a new United tractor, which took the place of several teams of horses, easing and speeding up farm operations. Though water remained a problem, the Farm had achieved higher production than in the preceding biennium.

Though his previous report had indicated that the Dodge truck used to transport prisoners would serve for some time to come, this had not proved the case. Penrose had had to surrender the warden's Buick sedan to that purpose, though he had subsequently obtained a new Buick for his use.²³⁰

During 1931-32, Warden Penrose devoted much of his time to the construction of the combined cell house/license plate factory, and the operation of the latter. Construction began in early May 1931, as soon as the plans were available. The two-story building, of reinforced concrete construction with a facing of prison sandstone, matched the other prison buildings stylistically. Prisoners cut the stone from the prison quarry, dressed it, and laid it. The new building joined the main building on its south side. The first floor space devoted to the license plate factory was ready for occupation by November 18, 1931, though the necessary machinery did not arrive until a week later.²³¹ The

²²⁷ Setting Out Trees On The Prison Road , *The Carson City News*, April 4, 1930, 1:5.

²²⁸ He also noted that the favorable climate at Carson City had led to the federal government transferring many of its tuberculosis-infected prisoners there.

²²⁹ Consider Deep Well For Prison Farm , *The Carson City News*, March 22, 1930, 1:3; No Decision On Well For Prison Farm , *The Carson City News*, March 25, 1930, 1:6.

²³⁰ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary, 1929 1930* ; Improvements At State Institution , *The Carson City News*, May 1, 1930, 1:1.

²³¹ Work for Prisoners , *Lovelock Review Miner*, July 24, 1931, 2:2. The Legislature had appropriated \$17,000 for the machinery, supplies, and equipment. Total cost of the building, including the machinery, was

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second floor, intended for cells, remained vacant for the time being.

To manufacture license plates, Penrose equipped the factory with:

- One squaring shear;
- One punch press;
- One embossing press;
- One numeral coating machine;
- One electrically-heated baking oven;
- Four oven trucks; and,
- More than 51 steel dies and insets.

Rounding out the equipment were prison-made drip tanks, drain boards, and tables. Each piece of machinery was individually motorized.

License plate manufacture began on December 2, 1931 and continued until December 23, during which time the factory turned out 26,719 sets of plates, which satisfied the needs of the counties. Work resumed on December 28, continuing to January 14, 1932 during which time more than 13,000 additional sets of plates left the prison.²³² Warden Penrose reported that the factory had employed an average of 34 prisoners, with an average daily production of 1,150 sets of plates. Increasing the number of baking ovens, he stated, could double this number.

Besides the factory/cell house, the prison began construction of a new stone guard post atop the west wall. This would eventually replace guardhouse number 3, which would be demolished, and would provide security for the large iron gate between the two yards.

In order to keep the prisoners in line approaching the dining room, Penrose laid a new stone walk to the dining room steps. This would also aid the guards in counting the prisoners.

At the southeast corner of the rear yard, inmates tore down the old quarry building and its saw equipment, hauling away all loose stone and clearing up the area. This, the Warden noted, would give that portion of the yard a neat appearance and avoid providing a possible hiding place or loitering area for inmates.

During this reporting period, the prison had kept eighteen men employed on the rock crusher, supplying 900 loads of rock to

\$22,903.46. License plate manufacture by prisoners avoided the criticism of outside labor, which opposed direct manufacturing competition by inmate labor.

²³² Cost of manufacture was 6.75 cents per set.

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Carson City and another 300 loads to Ormsby County. Beyond all this, Penrose reported that he had maintained all buildings and grounds "...in first-class condition...", had painted the Warden's residence, and had replaced the worn-out bread oven in the bakery.

Though water supply—even with the new well—remained a perennial problem at the Prison Farm, the Warden noted that production was increasing. He had ninety acres planted in barley, rye, and wheat, sixty-five acres in alfalfa, and 200 acres provided wild hay; there were forty-six dairy cows providing milk. Still, the poor hay crop of the previous season had meant that the Farm had had to purchase "...many tons..." of hay.

There was one other bit of bad news as well. The increase in the number of prisoners incarcerated during this biennium meant that there had been a concomitant rise in expenses. There were a record number of State prisoners. At the same time, income from housing Federal prisoners had dropped by nearly \$39,000, forcing Warden Penrose to report that he expected the facility to be nearly \$22,000 in the red within the next twelve months.²³³

It required legislative action to deal with the prison's budget shortfall. In March 1933 the Legislature appropriated \$20,000 and also reimbursed the prison support fund another \$7,500, giving the warden sufficient monies to carry through the rest of that fiscal year. So effective were Penrose's economies that he was able to return nearly \$900 to the state's coffers at the end of 1933.

To fund the prison through FY 1934/35, the lawmakers voted a \$170,000 appropriation. But as the Great Depression deepened, even that would prove insufficient. As in the previous biennium, the increasing numbers of State prisoners, coupled with the loss of revenues from housing Federal prisoners, proved a financial hardship. Housing Federal inmates had provided the Nevada State Prison with much-needed funds when the facility accepted the first allotment in mid-1925. For the next two years there had been an average of seventy Federal prisoners housed at Carson City. Then on May 15, 1927, federal authorities transferred forty-six of these to the United States Penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington. Numbers remained low until October 1928 when new Federal inmates arrived at Carson City, and the number gradually increased until peaking at 109. After June 28, 1932—about seven years after the program began—the facility received no more Federal prisoners. After that date, those still housed at the Nevada State Prison either finished their terms or received paroles, except for six transferred to McNeil Island on

²³³ M.R. Penrose, *Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary For the Period January 1, 1931, to June 30, 1932, Inclusive.*

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November 18, 1933. The last Federal prisoner left the prison on December 31, 1933.

Over the seven years the housing program had been in operation, the Nevada State Prison had housed a total of 334 Federal inmates, receiving \$217, 148.51 from the U.S. government for their care. The expansions of the previous years now left it with excess capacity, so the warden determined to acquire more Federal prisoners if at all possible. To this end he sent a telegram to U.S. Attorney General William D. Mitchell, stating: "Prison board authorizes reduction charge for keeping Federal prisoners to one dollar per day, provided number sent Nevada State Prison is immediately increased. Seven men now sentenced Federal Court here awaiting disposition. Wire answer and instructions." The reply, six days later, was not what Penrose wished. The Federal government, with its own fiscal problems and its own institutions, failed to find the reduced per diem charges sufficient inducement to reinstate the program. Instead they wired, "We note reduction in rate, but at present time do not feel obligated to use Carson City to any extent for Federal prisoners." An era had ended, and its ending would only add to the Warden's fiscal headaches.²³⁴

The cost of transporting prisoners brought Penrose new concerns as the effects of the Great Depression began to tell at state level. This two-year period had seen the necessity of transporting 191 prisoners. The old 1927 Buick sedan that had been converted for that purpose now had more than 200,000 miles on it and was no longer fit for service. The prison had therefore converted the warden's 1930 Buick sedan, with only 30,000 miles on the odometer, for transporting prisoners. The problem was that the 1933 Legislature had passed a law limiting the cost of all autos for state use to \$1,000, and Penrose doubted that the lawmakers had stopped to consider the prison's unique needs.

During this biennium, the prison had carried out a modest building program. They completed the second story over the license plate factory, using prison-quarried stone and rock²³⁵ and reinforced concrete; prisoners supplied the labor. This new space measured 43.5 by 84 feet, and it remained vacant upon completion. Warden Penrose reported that he had constructed the addition with the idea of using it as a cell block in the future, should the need arise, or as room for any future prison industry

²³⁴ Interestingly, during this period the Warden of the Federal Penitentiary at Alcatraz wrote to his counterpart at the Nevada State Prison to seek the latter's methods of preventing escape, as the federal government intended to incarcerate its most desperate prisoners at the San Francisco Bay facility, and wanted to ensure the highest security possible.

²³⁵ For some reason, identified as limestone in the report.

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as might become available.²³⁶ The factory itself continued in operation, now turning out smaller-sized plates at less cost to the state. The factory employed about twenty prisoners, but only ran for about a month and a half each year, so it hardly provided meaningful employment opportunities.²³⁷ Beyond employment in the license plate factory, only the rock crusher offered a paying occupation for the inmates, and during this biennium it only operated between November 4 and November 25, 1932.

In addition to the building addition, there were minor changes made to walls, and the yard area received new walks, lawns, and flower beds. In October 1933 the prison gained a hothouse built over an open stream of water flowing from the hot springs to the pond. The warden reported that the hothouse was full of plants year-round, these being used for transplanting into prison flower beds and borders. The prison had also put in new lawns on the north and south sides, installing sprinkling systems at the same time. The hillside lawn surrounding the cobblestone flag likewise received a new sprinkling system, with water pumped from the old warm spring in front of the prison. A new stone pump house built over the spring housed the pumping equipment.

The prison farm continued to suffer from lack of sufficient water, though it had three sources: Clear Creek—which also supplied the Stewart Indian School, the prison well which produced 880 gallons per minute, and two springs. The farm was now milking about 45 dairy cows, and Penrose was looking forward to a third cutting of forty acres of alfalfa. In addition to this the farm had planted up forty acres of barley, thirty acres of wheat, and had a truck garden planted to corn, cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips, onion, radishes, swiss chard, lettuce, cantaloupes, and watermelons. Farm buildings remained in good repair according to the report, though the warden noted that new plaster was needed in several rooms of the main building. With operating costs exceeding farm income by \$4,600, Penrose reported that the cost of running the farm was about \$0.33 per prisoner, which he considered good value. He had reduced costs by suspending the ten cents per day pay to inmate trustees at the farm, reasoning that their fellow prisoners at the prison proper were doing equal amounts of work without pay.

²³⁶ A representative from the U.S. Department of Commerce valued the License Plate Factory building and its second-story addition at \$40,000. As the actual cost of erecting the building using prisoners and large amounts of prison stone amounted to only \$8,758.71, Warden Penrose estimated the State had saved nearly \$31,000 over the cost of having contractors handle the construction. Apparently the fact that only half the building had a use did not figure in the equation.

²³⁷ During this period the state considered using copper instead of steel for its license plates, but abandoned the plan when copper proved more than twice as expensive as steel.

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During this biennium there were two escape attempts, one of them successful. George Williams, serving a two-to-fourteen year sentence for grand larceny, escaped from the farm on July 13, 1932, but was returned to custody on September 9. In addition, two long-term escapees, both of whom had escaped in 1927, were returned to the prison in 1934. Two other prisoners died in the gas chamber in 1932 and 1933²³⁸, and as Penrose departed there were two other prisoners on death row.²³⁹

On May 15, 1935, halfway through the biennium, William L. Lewis succeeded M.R. Penrose as ex-officio Warden of the Nevada State Prison.²⁴⁰ The new warden reported that, in the face of an increasing prison population, he had managed to stay within his appropriated budget by making maximum use of the resources of the Prison Farm, and by "eliminating waste."

To that end, Lewis had made changes in the License Plate Factory. He had switched to heavier-gauge steel that handled better on the cutting and pressing machinery. He also eliminated the closing of the factory during the noon meal hour. Closing for the lunch hour had required duplication of such daily preparations as warming the enameling oven, and continuing operation eliminated these and increased production by nearly 600 plates per day. The vacant second story he put to use as a school and recreation room, at no extra expense.

During the summer of 1935 the warden carried out the re-roofing of the main buildings at the prison, and later that year saw to the cleaning, painting, and kalsomining of all the buildings. Installation of new laundry equipment increased efficiency while reducing power needs and eliminating the cost of maintaining the old, nearly worn-out equipment. Lewis also undertook improvements to the prison kitchen, had linoleum laid over the bare concrete floor of the hospital, and generally renovated the facility using prison labor to save costs.

Fourteen trustees and a Superintendent lived at the Prison Farm, these being supplemented by prisoners under guard during the haying season. In 1935 the farm had produced 350 tons of hay, with the result that no additional hay purchased were required. Lewis reported that he expected the 1936 hay crop to be double that of the previous year, and that the farm had already provided eleven tons of barley and 3.5 tons of wheat. Culling of the dairy herd, combined with the introduction of new bulls, promised to build the herd into a greater asset. The farm continued to meet the prison's needs for milk, butter, pork, poultry and eggs. There

²³⁸ The Warden's Report gives a rather graphic account of one execution.

²³⁹ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1932, to June 30, 1934, Inclusive.*

²⁴⁰ The report gives no reason for the change.

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was even excess cream to ship to private markets. Though there were expenses incurred in building repairs and the rebuilding of corrals, the new warden had the farm operating at a profit once more.

Lewis had had to contend with three escapes, one of which was successful with the prisoner still at large at the time of his report. Offsetting that was the return of an escapee who had been at large for fifteen years. There had been one execution in the gas chamber.

Prisoner transportation continued to plague this warden. With 212 prisoners requiring transportation to the prison during this two-year period, the 1930 Buick was simply wearing out, requiring repairs on nearly every trip. Lewis reminded the prison board of the inadequacy of the limitation set by the Legislature, and strongly urged that they take steps to remedy the situation. Noting that—on paper—the prison vehicle inventory appeared to show the facility well-equipped, the warden pointed out that in fact there was only one light truck dating from 1935 that served any useful purpose. Beyond this the prison fleet consisted of the worn-out 1927 and 1930 Buick sedans, a Ford sedan of similar condition, and two ex-World War One heavy trucks acquired second-hand from the Highway department. Warden Lewis asked for one new truck and one new car to alleviate the situation.

The school operating in the space over the License Plate Factory appears to have been Lewis' own doing. Based on information gained during the censoring of prisoners' mail, personal contact with the inmates, and observation, the warden concluded that few of these men had enough education to be of use to themselves or to society. Lacking funds for an education program, Lewis appealed to the federal Works Progress Administration, which supplied a teacher. To furnish the second-story schoolroom, the warden had benches made, and reclaimed others from the prison scrap pile. The teacher, C.E. Mitchell, begged such other equipment as blackboards and books from various sources. Operation began in January 1936, with attendance being voluntary. How long he would be able to carry on the work of preparing inmates to better return to society would, he noted, be up to the WPA. The enlightened warden concluded by pointing out that, regardless of federal funding, the prison school *should* continue, and urged the Prison Board to seek appropriation to that end.²⁴¹

The mid-point of the second half of the decade brought the specter of overcrowding to the Nevada State Prison. In his

²⁴¹ Wm. L. Lewis, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive.*

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second report to the Prison Board, Warden Lewis pointed out that the prison population had increased from 170 in 1934/35 to 229 by June 1938, an increase of nearly thirty-five percent. During the same period, prison appropriations had *decreased* by three percent. Since the existing cell house could only hold 266—and this only by placing two prisoners to a cell—a dangerous situation faced the facility. Doubling up inmates in cells would not allow for the segregation of dangerous prisoners. Increased appropriations, Lewis noted, were required in order to avoid the problem facing him.

There was little else to report during this period. Under his direction, an old building at the rear of the prison was rebuilt as sleeping quarters for the night guards, away from the noise of the main building. Lewis had continued improvements at the Farm, rebuilding the old slaughterhouse and most of the fences, and building new pens for hogs and a new chicken house. Farm production remained good, but the warden pointed out the need for an appropriation for a new roof on the farmhouse. Purchase of a new car had, at last, improved the prisoner transportation situation.

There had been six escapes, with all escapees being recaptured, six transfers to the state mental hospital, three deaths due to natural causes, and one execution in the gas chamber.²⁴²

Little changed during Lewis' third term as Warden. Prison population reached an all-time high of 301 in May 1940, forcing him to send many prisoners to the Prison Farm until enough inmates were paroled to afford sufficient space at the prison proper. Once more, he begged for sufficient funding to erect larger buildings.

Out at the Prison Farm, a fire started by deficient wiring had destroyed the roof of the creamery, which Lewis replaced with a metal roof. In the wake of this event, he also saw to the rewiring of all farm buildings. Lacking sufficient funds, little else was accomplished: trustees rebuilt about eight miles of fence, and repaired the old machine sheds. The farmhouse, Lewis, *still* needed a new shingle roof, but he lacked the requisite \$250 to carry out the repairs. Production figures were down from the previous biennium, but there was no explanation given for this.

There had been four escapes—three from the Prison Farm and one from the prison. The escapees from the farm were quickly returned to custody, lost their trustee privileges and were

²⁴² One was apprehended in Texas, where he remained, serving a long prison sentence there. Wm. L. Lewis, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1936, to June 30, 1938, Inclusive.*

returned to the general prison population. The escapee from the prison remained at large.²⁴³

1940 – 1950: Wartime Delays

The new decade brought a new warden, as Richard H. Sheehy assumed command of the Nevada State Prison in 1940. Overcrowding remained a problem²⁴⁴, with prison population averaging 260 during the biennium, and reaching a new high of 305 on November 9, 1940. The 1941 legislature finally saw fit to address the situation, appropriating \$265,000²⁴⁵ for new construction intended to relieve cramped conditions, and to segregate young prisoners from the older, hardened inmates. With the money in hand, the Prison Board instructed Sheehy to begin preliminary work immediately. The warden hired Reno architect, Edward S. Parsons, and by mid-1942 the Prison Board had approved all plans and specifications.²⁴⁶ A new, "climb proof" fence had already been completed, and prisoners had cut and shaped a large stockpile of building stone. The end of the biennium saw the warden merely waiting a priority on necessary building materials in order to let the construction contract. It would prove a long wait.

During the same period the new warden continued improvements at the Prison Farm, installing new linoleum in the foreman's living quarters, repairing plumbing, and finally managing to get the farmhouse roof re-shingled and painted. Sheehy asked for more appropriations to increase the size of the beef herd, and increase the number of hogs and sheep to the point where the farm could supply all the meat required by the prison.

Elsewhere, prisoners used refuse rock unsuitable for use in buildings to construct a new stone wall on the north side of the main highway passing the prison. The prison reclaimed an acre of swampland west of the main entrance by filling it with 2,000 cubic yards of rock and good soil, and planted it to vegetables. A

²⁴³ No mention was made of the operation of the school, and one can only surmise that the WPA failed to continue federal funding and that no state funds were forthcoming. Wm. L. Lewis, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1938, to June 30, 1940, Inclusive*.

²⁴⁴ Crowded Prison Conditions Shown , *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 26, 1941, 7:2-4.

²⁴⁵ \$225,000 Asked For Buildings At Prison In New Bill , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 10, 1941, 2:1; Nevada Building Program Given Legislature, Governor , *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 10, 1941, 7:1. This bond issue was to be paid for by a tax levy of nine mills on every hundred dollars.

²⁴⁶ Additional Facilities at State Prison Sought , *Reno Evening Gazette* , February 10, 1941, 2:2-5.

new artificial well built of colored stone "beautified" the women's recreation yard.

Three escapes—all from the prison proper—marred Sheehy's first term, though all were quickly recaptured. He transferred four inmates to the state mental hospital, and lost three to death by natural causes.

With the United States now involved in World War Two, the Nevada State Prison was doing its part in the defense effort. The prison donated forty-four tons of scrap iron and 500 pounds of scrap rubber to the war effort. In addition, inmates built cots, stretchers, and other items for use by County Councils of Defense throughout Nevada. The prisoners even purchased defense bonds and stamps, to the tune of an average of \$7.00 per inmate.²⁴⁷

At the end of his second term in 1944, Warden Sheehy had to report that the Prison Board had suspended any plans for new construction for the duration of the war, due to the impossibility of obtaining materials or labor. Expansion of the prison would have to wait for the end of the war and would be, he noted, one of the state's most important postwar construction projects. In the interim, he had prisoners continue to cut and stockpile stone for the job. The warden certainly had a good labor force: average monthly population of the prison for the biennium had been 238. Sheehy reported a substantial increase in the number of younger prisoners, with forty-three percent under 30 years of age, and the largest age group among the inmates being 20 to 25 years old.

Normal maintenance activities continued at the Prison Farm, where trustees renovated the living quarters and build a new receiving room in the milk barn. Crews also repaired fence lines, and resurfaced and maintained the road into the farm.

There were two escapes. One prisoner was quickly returned while the other, serving a life sentence, was found dead. The warden transferred three more prisoners to the state mental hospital, and executed three others in the gas chamber; five others died of stroke, heart failure, and cirrhosis of the liver.

Wartime inflation drove up costs of food, clothing, and other materials. This, coupled with increased maintenance costs of

²⁴⁷ This figure was reportedly the highest for any penal institution in the U.S. Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive.*

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older equipment, led Sheehy to seek a budget increase for the coming biennium.²⁴⁸

The end of the war did not lessen Warden Sheehy's problems at the Nevada State Prison. Indeed, unsettled conditions in the aftermath of the war, combined with a growing state population, saw the average monthly prison population grow to 241. By mid-1946 he was still waiting to begin construction of the new cellblock, and urged the Prison Board to take "vigorous steps" in order that construction could begin as soon as possible. The architect now estimated that an additional \$250,000—over and above the funds already on hand—would be necessary for the construction project. That was not all: Sheehy also needed an increased budget to meet continuing increases in the costs of clothing, food, and repairs; to hire at least three additional guards; and to see to salary increases reflecting the increased cost of living.

At the farm, the warden had seen to the construction of a new cow barn and new potato cellar. New concrete head gates improved the irrigation system. Water remained a perennial problem, though, and the Governor's office conducted a meeting involving the prison, officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the State Engineer's office with a view to building a dam on Clear Creek to supply water to the Prison Farm. To that end, engineers were at work taking measurements on the creek for this long-sought, long-postponed project.

The increased number of inmates, together with an understaffed guard force, resulted in an increased number of escapes. Eleven prisoners—many of whom were dangerous—managed to escape. Of these, two were taken into custody in California prisons, one committed suicide rather than be recaptured, and seven were returned to the prison; one remained at large at the end of the reporting period. Five transfers to the state mental hospital reduced the warden's burdens a bit, as did three natural deaths and one execution; these would prove of little help to the problem.²⁴⁹

By the latter 1940s, the national trend in prison populations was upwards, and Nevada was no exception. By the 1946-48 biennium, the average had reached 298 prisoners in a facility with a supposed maximum capacity for 260. However, Warden Sheehy could at last report construction underway on the new

²⁴⁸ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive.*

²⁴⁹ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1944, to June 30, 1946, Inclusive.*

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cell house, and on additions and alterations to the existing prison buildings, using the plans previously prepared by Reno architect, Edward S. Parsons. In May 1947 the Boudwin Construction Company of Reno submitted the successful bid for the construction contract, while the state contracted with the Southern Prison Company of San Antonio, Texas for the prison fittings and equipment. The Prison Board had divided the job into three segments. These were:

1. Construction of the new cellblock;
2. Additions and alterations to the existing facility; and,
3. Construction of a new third story to house women's quarters, the hospital, and a new gas chamber.

With the bids in hand, the Board found that there were insufficient funds to undertake all three elements. Accordingly, they only accepted bids on items 1 and 2, directing that these should be completed by December 15, 1948. The contractors began work in May 1947. Warden Sheehy strongly noted the need for a new gas chamber and new death cells, so was clearly interested in seeing item 3 go forward as soon as possible.

Trustees carried on general maintenance work at the Prison Farm, also building a new slaughterhouse to conform to the specifications of the State Board of Health. The proposed dam had still not been built, though all parties seemed to be in agreement regarding the need for its construction. The Stewart Indian School, with rights to fifty percent of the water of Clear Creek, was vitally interested in seeing the project go forward. The Prison Farm, with rights to twenty-five percent, stood to be able to put much additional acreage under cultivation.²⁵⁰

On the administrative side, escapes continued to plague the warden. During the period 1946-48, no fewer than thirteen men had managed to flee the prison and the farm. Eleven were quickly returned²⁵¹, but two remained at large. Natural deaths had claimed two prisoners, and Sheehy had transferred seven to the state mental hospital.²⁵² Two executions further reduced the prison population.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ The remaining 25% was divided among other, unnamed, users.

²⁵¹ One of these was in turn paroled to Canadian Immigration authorities.

²⁵² Of these, three were returned to the prison and one escaped from the mental hospital but was recaptured. Of the three returned, one was later transferred to Washoe General Hospital where he died.

²⁵³ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1946, to June 30, 1948, Inclusive.*

1950 – 1964: Toward the Present

As the decades reached mid-century, Warden Sheehy was finally able to report that the long-needed, war-delayed new construction at the Nevada State Prison had gone forward. Contractors, Walker Boudwin Construction Company had completed the new cellblock, as well as alterations and additions to the existing buildings.²⁵⁴ In addition, Sheehy had solved a long-standing sewage problem at the prison. Burgeoning prison population and prison expansion had left the old system, which basically drained the prison's sewage into an open ditch, which was totally inadequate and constituted a health hazard. During the previous biennium, the warden had had a new system built that utilized a new concrete pump house to pump the sewage to a series of five settling ponds on higher ground. The Nevada State Board of Health had certified the new system. It was well that these construction programs had gone forward: average monthly population at the prison now stood at 303. Condemned prisoners were on the increase, and at one point Death Row housed no fewer than nine men.²⁵⁵

In spite of this, the warden had still more recommendations for the Prison Board with regard to construction needs. He called for the State Planning Board to study the need for enlarging the dining rooms and renovating the kitchens, including the installation of new kitchen equipment.

Sheehy continued improvements at the Prison Farm, installing new milking equipment in the milking barn, increasing the hog herd and making improvements to their facilities, building new fences, and improving sewage disposal. The water problem, however, remained unsolved. Progress was being made, and the state had made preliminary surveys on the adjoining farm with regard to impounding the waters of Clear Creek. The prison administration had filed an application with the State Engineer to carry the plan to fruition.

During this period, four inmates had escaped, one from the Warden's residence, two from the farm, and one from the prison itself; all were quickly recaptured. Sheehy had transferred only one prisoner to the state mental hospital, and one had died of natural causes.²⁵⁶

The 1950s brought a new warden to the Nevada State Prison as Arthur E. Bernard assumed responsibilities. For the first time in

²⁵⁴ Nevada State Prison, *Nevada State Journal*, February 9, 1950, 12:3-6.

²⁵⁵ By the time of the report, three of these had been executed, and one had had his sentence commuted.

²⁵⁶ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1948, to June 30, 1950, Inclusive*.

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many years, he was able to report a drop in prison population as the monthly average took a substantial drop to 268. In spite of this, the new warden had continued to carry out a fairly ambitious building program at both the prison and the farm.

At the prison, he had carried forward with his predecessor's recommendations, enlarging the trustees' dining room and building a new dining room for the guards. He had also completed a new trustee dormitory, a new guards' bedroom, and a new storeroom for prisoners' possessions. The Yard now had a new shower and lavatory. Ancillary structures included a new Plumbing Shop and a new horse barn with eight stalls. The Prison Library had a new extension, and there was a new four-car garage for prison vehicles. The warden also saw to the remodeling of the Butcher Shop. For his own comfort, he had carried out remodeling of the Warden's Residence, including the installation of a new furnace. Bernard had accomplished all this using prison labor and prison materials.

In 1951 Bernard also completed the new gas chamber. Of steel and glass construction, the new nine foot-square chamber had a "submarine type" door, with electrical controls operated from an adjacent control room that also included a witness area with two windows into the execution chamber. Design of the facility, which cost a mere \$5,000, was the work of State Planning Board Inspector, Jack Cooney.²⁵⁷

There was further work in the planning stages. Bernard reported that he intended to remove the buildings from the chicken yard, fill and grade the area, and build a series of residences for the guards, again using prison materials and labor. He also reminded the Prison Board that much of the prison's equipment was antiquated. To this end, he recommended completion of a study of the Boiler Room, Laundry Room, and kitchens with an eye to re-equipping all these as soon as possible.

The new warden had not ignored the Prison Farm, carrying out a fairly ambitious program. He had completed renovating the Ranch House and almost completely rebuilt the Superintendent's Quarters. Improvements included new floors and new floor coverings on both floors, and complete interior and exterior repainting. The Superintendent now enjoyed new furniture, and there were new beds for the inmate trustees. A new hot air heating system replaced the seven oil stoves formerly required to heat the residence; these were discarded. To improve sanitation, a new 3,000-gallon septic tank located five hundred feet south of

²⁵⁷ New Gas Chamber At Prison Is Ready To Operate: All Modern Features for Executions Included, *Nevada State Journal*, July 22, 1951, 12:3-5. Cooney drew much of his design from that of the gas chamber at San Quentin Prison in California.

the residence replaced the open cesspool that had been near the west side of the house.

Besides the farm residence, work was also underway at the Dairy Barn, where moving the milking machine to a central location enabled construction of a refrigerated meat-storage unit in its former location. The farm now had a new, eight-farrow pig pen, and work was underway on a large sheep barn, a combined machine shed/blacksmith shop/machine shop, these being built with stone from the prison quarry and with prison labor.

Inmates had also replaced hundreds of feet of old water lines, and would continue this work as time—and pipe availability—allowed, as would the replacement of thousands of feet of fence. New pole corrals replaced barbed-wire corrals.

The new administration had put an additional 80 acres of land into use for hay, increasing the cut by a substantial amount. However, this new land was sandy and of poor quality, and as the proposed dam on Clear Creek remained unbuilt, there continued to be insufficient water for irrigation. Bernard noted in his report that the state could save thousands of dollars within a short period of years by purchasing 200 acres of good land with a sufficient water supply. This would eliminate his present annual need to purchase many tons of hay, as well as all grain and hog feed used at the farm. While he admitted that farm operating costs appeared high, he reminded the Board that these included \$20,000 for new equipment.

On the subject of funding, the warden recommended the Board increase the budget to cover increased food and equipment costs, and that they raise guards' salaries to the levels of other State employees working similar hours.

If escapes had dropped off at the end of the previous administration, they positively exploded during Bernard's first term. Nineteen inmates had fled, and five remained at large when the warden submitted his report.²⁵⁸ The prison had also lost three inmates to death by natural causes, and had executed a further four inmates of Death Row.²⁵⁹

Warden Bernard's second report in 1954 is interesting for its change in style. Whereas previous reports had been largely narrative in form²⁶⁰, this one was remarkable for its brevity, with

²⁵⁸ Only two of these had escaped from the farm, and one wonders at the conditions and situations at the prison that allowed seventeen successful escapes. There is no explanation in the Warden's Report.

²⁵⁹ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1950, to June 30, 1952, Inclusive*.

²⁶⁰ Excluding, of course, the various statistics and tables appended thereto.

the warden simply listing the improvements at the prison and the farm and concluding with the notation that all the work used salvaged materials and prison labor.

At the prison, inmates had built a 24 by 45 foot addition to the Recreation Hall in the Yard, a 30 by 50 foot potato cellar, a 12 by 12 foot paint shop, and five two-bedroom residences, using prison-quarried stone for all these; to serve the new homes they built three stone-and-steel septic tanks. They laid a new concrete floor in the main kitchen, and built new showers and lavatories for trustees and working crews using cement and salvaged lumber. They laid new floors and drains in the Butcher Shop, and constructed a new 25 by 50 foot swimming pool for prison personnel.²⁶¹ Using existing funds, the warden also purchased \$20,000 of new equipment for the Laundry, Bakery, and short-line kitchen, replaced the old concrete sinks in the kitchens with new steel sinks, and bought new carpets and furniture for the Warden's Office and the front office.

Over at the Prison Farm, trustees erected a stone-built, three-room building measuring 24 by 40 feet for feed and grain storage. Using cement, steel, and salvaged lumber the built five hog sheds, two grain storage bins, and a hog dipping vat. Bernard now had the farm meeting all the prison's meat and milk needs. He had increased the cattle herd to 325 head, and hogs now numbered 221. Without any extra funding, he had added several tractors to the farm's fleet of motorized equipment. The warden also reported on projects planned for the immediate future at the farm, including a 40 by 165 foot stone and cement feed barn and calving stall for the dairy herd, and a 25 by 150 foot chicken house of stone and cement construction. Dependent on funding, he wanted to add a pasteurizer for the dairy barn. As with earlier reports, the warden reminded the Prison Board of the need to purchase enough additional land to make the farm self-sufficient in livestock feeds.

Bernard also noted that he had a new 25 by 50 foot greenhouse currently under construction, and—reflecting the new tensions of the Cold War—a new Civil Defense lookout tower. Long-term project planning included 25 two- and three-bedroom homes for prison personnel, separate quarters for women inmates away from the Prison proper, and landscaping and fencing for the entire Prison property.

²⁶¹ This latter has now been filled-in and is a lawn area opposite the residences.

Remarkably, from the record number of escapes during the previous reporting period, Warden Bernard was now able to note that this biennium had had none whatsoever.²⁶²

In his 1956 report the Warden returned to a more narrative format for his biennial report, though this was far more brief than most previous reports, and set the general tone for future reports. In a short paragraph Bernard summed up construction at the prison, where one four-room house, a henhouse, and a hog pen had been completed using prison labor and salvaged materials. In addition, he had replaced old stoves and refrigerators with new equipment, and installed a new rock saw. Though the Prison Board had voted to eliminate the "dungeons" at the prison used for solitary confinement, this had not yet happened, and would not happen until the end of the decade.²⁶³

Shortage of salvage materials had curtailed construction at the farm. However, the prison had managed to acquire thousands of cedar fence posts from the U.S. Forest Service on a cost-share basis, and used these to repair and rebuild miles of fences that the records floods of 1955-56 had damaged. These floods had followed on the heels of two exceptionally dry years that had forced the Prison Farm to purchase tons of additional hay at the then-high price of up to \$35 per ton. To defray those costs, Bernard had to sell some of his carefully hoarded cattle herd. With the return of adequate water in 1956, he began to build the herd up again, and looked forward to more reasonable hay production on the farm.

Though he had no projects currently under construction, the warden reported several in the planning stages:

- A new maximum-security cellblock;
- A new women prisoners block; and,
- A new boiler room.

The Prison Board had approved this program, but the appropriation of \$155,000 was not sufficient to carry it forward.

He had also begun long-range planning for the enlargement of the entire facility, and advised that all plans and blueprints were on file with the State Planning Board. Making no mention of

²⁶² Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1952, to June 30, 1954, Inclusive*.

²⁶³ State Prison's Dungeon Is Now Thing of Past, *Nevada State Journal*, December 15, 1955, 10:7. One group of the cells, collectively called the hole by inmates, were in the basement of the administration building, while a second group was cut into the face of the quarry.

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escapes, deaths, or executions, and noting that a substantial salary increase for guards was allowing him to hire a better grade of officers, Bernard closed his report with the perennial recommendation for the purchase of additional farmland.²⁶⁴

As the 1950s entered their third quarter, three escapes and two attempted escapes marred the record of the previous reporting period.²⁶⁵ The administration continued using salvaged materials and prison labor for construction at the prison. In the period 1956-58, inmates at the prison built six two-car garages, one three-car garage, a two-bedroom guesthouse, a large greenhouse, and two new dormitories for trustees. They also paved the entire outside yard with asphalt, finally replacing all the former landscaping elements of lawns and decorative flower beds laid out in the 1920s and 1930s, and similarly black-topped the inside recreation yard.

The Prison Farm continued to see minimal work. Crews placed asphalt paving on 1.25 miles of road, as well as on the ranch yard. Acquisition of fence posts from the U.S. Forest Service continued, as inmates worked at the replacement of further miles of fencing.

Beyond the projects completed, Warden Bernard reported that he had miles of stone wall fencing under construction at the prison, and on lands acquired during the reporting period, and a new road at the east end of the prison grounds was nearing completion.²⁶⁶ He also hoped to have the new maximum-security cellblock and a new heating plant under construction within weeks. Still in the planning stage were the new block for women prisoners, a new recreational and hobby building, and new industrial buildings.²⁶⁷

As the decade of the 1950s ended, the Nevada State Prison gained its twenty-seventh warden when Jack Fogliani, appointed by Governor Grant Sawyer, took over the administration. His reports, though brief in comparison to those of many of his

²⁶⁴ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1954, to June 30, 1956, Inclusive*; New Construction At Prison Planned: Long Range Program Given Approval By Commissioners, *Nevada State Journal*, December 15, 1955, 8:1. Attorney General Harvey Dickerson recommended construction of a new maximum security prison in the center of Nevada, near Tonopah and Goldfield.

²⁶⁵ Two escapees were captured the same day, while the third made his way as far as Texas where he was arrested and imprisoned.

²⁶⁶ There was no mention, however, of where these new lands were or what their use was, though Bernard closed his report again asking for additional farmland, so it does not appear the new lands were at the Prison Farm.

²⁶⁷ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1958, Inclusive*.

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predecessors, returned to a narrative format quite different from the terseness of Bernard's.

Governor Sawyer, his prison commission, and his new warden brought a new era of rehabilitation efforts to the Nevada State Prison. Prisoners enjoyed the best medical and dental care ever offered in the history of the institution. In addition, there was a new, closer working relationship between inmates and prison staff, fostered in the hope that this would promote a better understanding between the two groups and would result in better operation of the prison. There was more, including improved schooling and craft training, and larger and better prison facilities.

Fogliani headed his administration's list of enlightened accomplishments with the establishment of the prison's first Honor Camp, sited at Spooner Summit and opened on November 12, 1959. There, twelve inmates worked a mistletoe removal along Highway 50, and served as a quick-response fire crew in cooperation with the Nevada State Division of Forestry. The mistletoe work finished, the camp moved to the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area near Yerington where the crew worked in a pilot conservation program with the Nevada Fish and Game Commission. When that work ended on April 30, 1960 the inmates returned to Spooner Summit and fire crew work.

In addition to the honor camp crew, the prison also cooperated with the Nevada State Division of Forestry in providing a maximum number of inmates as fire crews who could quickly hit crucial areas. Another special crew worked at Carson Airport with Forestry personnel, mixing borate and loading the state's new aerial fire tankers. In all, Fogliani was able to report that inmates had provided a total of 4,221 man-days of service to the state, and he looked forward to expanding the program.

There was more within the prison itself as the new warden worked to improve the facility to reflect gubernatorial and Prison Commission policies. Major modifications resulted in a new dental office section. Moving the bakery to a second-floor position near the two kitchens provided a better facility, and speeded operations. The prison entered an arrangement with the Sunny Acres Children's Home, whereby the Home's laundry equipment was moved to the prison where it replaced worn-out, outdated equipment. In return, the prison handled the Home's laundry needs, saving funds for both institutions and providing work for prison inmates. The crowded prison barbershop moved to larger quarters in the former Cleaning Shop. Conversion of one of the officers' rooms to storage for inmate clothing allowed conversion of the old clothing storage area into a trustee dormitory.

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Four years after the Prison Board had made its recommendation, Fogliani finally managed to eliminate the "holes." Eighteen new solitary confinement cells in the new maximum-security cellblock, each with its own toilet, replaced the old cells in the basement of the Administration Building and in the quarry face. The old solitary confinement quarters in the Administration Building became the print shop for the prison paper, the *Sagebrush*.²⁶⁸

The Captain of the Guard received a new office, freeing the Warden's Office area for general office use, and for private interviews. A general cleanup of disused portions of the yard resulted in the hauling away of hundreds of loads of rubbish.

Some funded projects within the prison had also reached completion. These included a new 68-cell maximum-security block, the new boiler plant, structural work on the old buildings, and re-roofing. Still in the preliminary stage were projects involving the water supply system, and the industrial building for the license plate factory.

Beyond the improvements to the physical plant, the prison established its first band, "The Boys in Blue." The band played extensively, including dance and entertainment music at the Sunny Acres Children's Home, and a weekly broadcast from KPTL radio. Inmates organized the first basketball team in the history of the Nevada State Prison, playing many outside games and earning a fine record. Fogliani established a work crew program, whereby inmates served the needs of the state, and of cities, counties, ranchers and farmers. For their service they received \$15 per month, and for farm and ranch work the prison received an additional \$4.50 per day, taken in hay, grain, pasturage, or other products to be used at the prison or the Prison Farm. The prison boxing team and the band made contributions to the Carson-Tahoe Hospital, Crippled Children's Fund, Polio Foundation, the local blood bank, and the Community Chest. Inmates also helped the Civil War Veterans Cemetery in Reno, the Carson City Cemetery, and assisted in overhauling the Genoa water system and did highway cleanup work.

The prison hired its first-ever psychologist, though on a part-time basis. It also initiated testing by the State Department of Employment Security, to aid prisoners in securing employment upon release. All these programs, the warden reported, greatly increased prison morale.

Lack of water continued to limit production at the farm, and even hindered sanitation, as there was often not enough water for

²⁶⁸ Cells Replace Prison Holes , *Reno Evening Gazette* , July 17, 1959, 3:1-2.

bathing purposes. Fogliani had managed to have a new chicken house and food-grinding building constructed, fences repaired and the corral improved.

The warden reported on his future plans for the prison facilities. For the prison itself, he looked forward to a new kitchen, dining hall, and bakery; an additional boiler and generators; new classroom and recreation building; expansion of the store; more visiting booths; new building for women prisoners; an office for the Deputy Warden; new quarters for the identification department; new quarters for the carpenter shop, auto shop, and paint shop. He also planned a new guard tower for the west entrance, a new commissary building, a new entrance gate in the east wall, a new guard tower for the east wall, and new fencing around the whole compound.

For the farm, Warden Fogliani announced plans for a well and pump, a dairy barn and milk-processing plant, and the acquisition of 2,000 to 3,000 acres of farmland for a minimum-security prison. The latter he hoped would provide products for his rapidly-increasing inmate population.

By June 4, 1960, population of the Nevada State Prison had swelled to 460, an increase of 13.3% from a year earlier. While establishment of the Honor Camp system helped alleviate the situation slightly, the Warden projected that prison population would reach 800 by March 1969, and 900 by May 1970. The swift increase he attributed to the state's population explosion, and to a high per-capita crime rate.²⁶⁹ Fogliani concluded by telling the Commission of the need to plan for plant expansion to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of prisoners. To this end, he requested they move to purchase land for the minimum-security prison, and give serious consideration to his planned projects.²⁷⁰

In 1962, at the end of his second biennium, Warden Jack Fogliani opened his report with a recital of the continuing efforts to rehabilitate the prison's inmates. Officials encouraged inmates to participate in church activities and Alcoholics Anonymous, partake in group therapy, join the Toastmasters Club, take classes in the arts, and had brought Synanon within the prison walls. Expansion of the Honor Camp system provided a cadre of fit, well-trained inmates accepted and approved by federal, state, and local agencies in fighting forest and range fires. The farm/ranch work crews continued to be successful for both the inmates, and for the farmers and ranchers who hired them. As cited in his

²⁶⁹ The FBI listed Nevada as having the highest per-capita crime rate in the nation at this time.

²⁷⁰ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1958, to June 30, 1960, Inclusive.*

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previous report, inmates continued to contribute to, and provide community services. Having established a pay scale for inmates working outside the prison walls, he now sought to establish a similar scale for those working on the inside.

He had continued improvements at the prison as well. Construction projects during the two-year period included a 20 by 80 foot carpenter shop²⁷¹, a 30 by 60 foot warehouse built of salvaged materials, and a new 20 by 40 foot stone building to house the *Sagebrush*. Workers had removed the 20,000-gallon tank from the old Oil House, and remodeled the building into a two-story warehouse. There was a new cement block gas station. Matrons had gained an office on the second floor of the main building, and there was a new dental office with a second chair. The prison had gained a new water tank and water system, there were structural improvements in the main building, a new boiler and generator, and new guard tower. The prison had acquired eighty acres from the federal government, gained ownership of the prison cemetery grounds, and added seven acres for a security corridor.

At the time of his report, Warden Fogliani noted that he had let the contract for the Industrial Building. The Women's Prison was out to bid, and he would call for bids on the Minimum Security Prison to house 144 inmates immediately following the sale of state bonds for that purpose.

As always, the warden had recommendations for the Commission. He wanted a new guard tower at the northwest entrance to the prison, and recommended relocating the highway that then ran through the prison property. The combined carpenter shop/auto shop still required completion, though the steel and complete roof were on-site. He planned to remodel the old License Plate Factory into identification offices, rooms for therapy classes, and offices for the prison psychologist and psychiatrist. The inmate store and coffee shop required expansion. The prison needed to more than double the number of visitor booths, and needed electrical work to the generator and switchboard system to ensure uninterrupted power in the event of a power failure. Finally, he sought a new Warden's Residence to be located between the Women's Prison and the existing officers' houses.

Fogliani reported his major problem over the past two years to be lack of sufficient personnel to provide for good operation of the prison, farm, and honor camps. Also, he repeated his plea for the

²⁷¹ Not yet complete.

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purchase of sufficient farmland as to allow the prison a semblance of self-sufficiency.²⁷²

Closing to within forty years of the present, we find the Nevada State Prison continuing its efforts to rehabilitate its inmates, efforts that now included an inmate-initiated educational system conducted with the aid of the Ormsby County²⁷³ school system. By mid-1964, this program had granted high school diplomas to eight prisoners.

In contrast, the situation at the Prison Farm forced the warden to admit the operation was far less than satisfactory. While he had 628 head of cattle and 221 head of pigs on hand, lack of an adequate water supply forced him to purchase all of the feed and most of the pasture required for them.

Fogliani reported the completion of the carpenter shop/auto shop at the prison. Remodeling of the old License Plate Factory into Identification Bureau offices, new inmate store, new library, new coffee shop, and reading room was complete. The Deputy Warden and Business Manager now had their own offices, and remodeling of the whole office area at the front entrance was finished. Maximum-security inmates now had their own exercise yard, surrounded by a double security fence. The administration had also completed construction of the new Industrial Building and its security fence, a new perimeter fence, and a new two-story tower at the northwest entrance. The new Women's Prison, to house seventeen, and the new Minimum Security Prison with capacity for 298 inmates, were complete. A new Fifth Street bypass eliminated highway traffic through the prison compound.

There was more to be done, however. Construction of the Chapel lacked \$3,500 for completion, and construction was on hold. More importantly, the highway bypass and completion of the perimeter fence meant that the Warden's Residence now lay within the security fence. He saw this as a safety problem for the Warden and his family. Existing law required the Warden of the State Prison to reside at the site. Fogliani urged the Prison Commission to seek legislation allowing the Warden choice of residence to alleviate the problem.

Money and staffing remained the Warden's chief problems. He reported to the Commission that there was not enough of either to adequately operate the entire system. Fogliani reminded them that he had requested 53 new positions in his 1963 budget, but had received only 37. Looking to the future and the move into the Minimum Security Prison, and to existing "difficult

²⁷² Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1960, to June 30, 1962, Inclusive.*

²⁷³ Now Carson City County.

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situations” at the Women’s Prison, he foresaw increased problems unless the situation was corrected.²⁷⁴

This completes the history of the Nevada State Prison to within forty years of the present, and completes the scope of this undertaking—to document the development of the facility during its period of significance. It will remain for others to complete the history of the facility to the present.

²⁷⁴ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1962, to June 30, 1964, Inclusive.*

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Project Information: The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), with the assistance of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is planning a new freeway on new alignment that will pass just west of the Nevada State Prison, and will alter the historic setting of the prison. This documentation, to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Architectural Data Form (formerly Level III), has been prepared as mitigation for any impacts to the historic integrity of the prison or its setting.

NEVADA STATE PRISON
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Nevada State Prison
3301 East Fifth Street
Carson City
Carson City County
Nevada

Documentation: 20 photographs (2003)

John Snyder, Photographer

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

- Photo NSP-1 Contextual view of Nevada State Prison in setting, view to south from south edge of East Fifth Street. Stone barn at left, and former Warden's Residence visible at center.
- Photo NSP-2 View to south-southwest of former Commissary Wing (1921-25), with Cell Block A (1921-25) and Cell Block B (1947-50) with guard tower at corner.
- Photo NSP-3 View to northeast of former Guard Tower, now preserved just inside the main gate.
- Photo NSP-4 Detail, view to east of main entrance.
- Photo NSP-5 Detail, view to east of typical window in Administration Wing.
- Photo NSP-6 View to northeast from above Quarry, looking over the Yard. From right to left are: Guard Tower at corner of License Plate Factory/Cell House (1931); former Commissary Wing (1921-25) enclosing north side of Yard, with added third story (1947-50) that housed women's quarters/hospital/gas chamber; Cell Block A (1921-25), and portion of Cell Block B (1947-50) enclosing east side of Yard. .
- Photo NSP-7 View to northwest from ground level inside Yard. From right to left are: Sally Port and wall, License Plate Factory/Cell Block with Guard Tower at corner, and Administration Wing (1921-25) combining to enclose west side of Yard; former Commissary Wing, with third story addition at far right.
- Photo NSP-8 Detail, view to west of cast concrete plaque above Yard door of former License Plate Factory.
- Photo NSP-9 Former dungeon cell—known as "The Hole"—in face of prison quarry.
- Photo NSP-10 View to west of stone wall (1957) at hot springs, opposite Administration Wing.

NEVADA STATE PRISON
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- Photo NSP-11 View to east of cobblestone flag (ca.1930) on slope between prison fence and road to prison cemetery.
- Photo NSP-12 View to south along road to prison cemetery, showing row of cottages built 1952-55 for prison staff.
- Photo NSP-13 View to east of typical cottage, with garage just visible at right rear; prison fence visible at top of slope behind, and edge of cobblestone flag (ca.1930) at left.
- Photo NSP-14 View to southwest of historic prison cemetery at south end of cemetery road.
- Photo NSP-15 View to west of typical 19th-century headstone in historic prison cemetery. Inscription reads "JA^s. C. GAZE. BORN. N.ENGLAND. 1807. DIED. SEPT. 1875."
- Photo NSP-16 View to northeast of former Warden's Residence, from roof of prison, showing west façade and south side. Original alignment of East Fifth Street just beyond trees.
- Photo NSP-17 View to east of west façade of former Warden's Residence.
- Photo NSP-18 View to southeast of former Warden's Residence, showing west façade and north side.
- Photo NSP-19 View to south-southwest of former Warden's Residence, showing north and east (rear) sides.
- Photo NSP-20 Former stone barn of indeterminate date and use, lying north of original alignment of East Fifth Street and south of present East Fifth Street bypass. View to northwest.
- Photo NSP-21 Contextual view to southeast. New entrance tower is at left center, with Administration Wing (1921-25) behind it, License Plate Factory/Cell Block behind and to right of telephone pole at center, and former Commissary Wing (1921-25) enclosing north side of Yard, with added third story (1947-50) at left near trees.
- Photo NSP-22 Oblique view to southeast of Administration Wing (1921-25) with main entrance, License Plate Factory/Cell Block at right, and former Commissary Wing (1921-25) with added third story (1947-50) at left.
- Photo NSP-23 Oblique view to northwest over Yard from atop Cell Block B (1947-50). From left to right are License Plate Factory/Cell Block, Administration Wing (1921-25), and former Commissary Wing (1921-25) with added third story (1947-50).

**NEVADA STATE PRISON
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Photo NSP-24 View to west-northwest over Yard from atop Cell Block B (1947-50). From left to right are Quarry, Sally Port, License Plate Factory/Cell Block, and Administration Wing (1921-25).

Photo NSP-25 View to west of Quarry face from within Yard.

Photo NSP-26 View to north of Warden's Residence and workshops from atop former Commissary Wing. Original alignment of East-5th Street/Prison Road is just beyond Warden's Residence, while car visible in middle distance is on present East 5th Street Bypass.

Photo NSP-27 Oblique view to northeast along road from prison cemetery, showing row of cottages built 1952-55 for prison staff.

Photo NSP-28 View to east-southeast showing typical garage for staff cottages, with the sides of two cottages visible at right and left.

Photo NSP-29 View to east-southeast of Kennels.

Photo NSP 30 Former stone barn of indeterminate date and use, lying north of original alignment of East Fifth Street and south of present East Fifth Street bypass. View to northeast.

NOTE: For obvious security reasons, it was not possible to photograph the interior of this working penal institution. On the exterior, fences constrained angles of view and the ability to capture exterior views.



Photo NSP-1



Photo NSP-2



Photo NSP-3

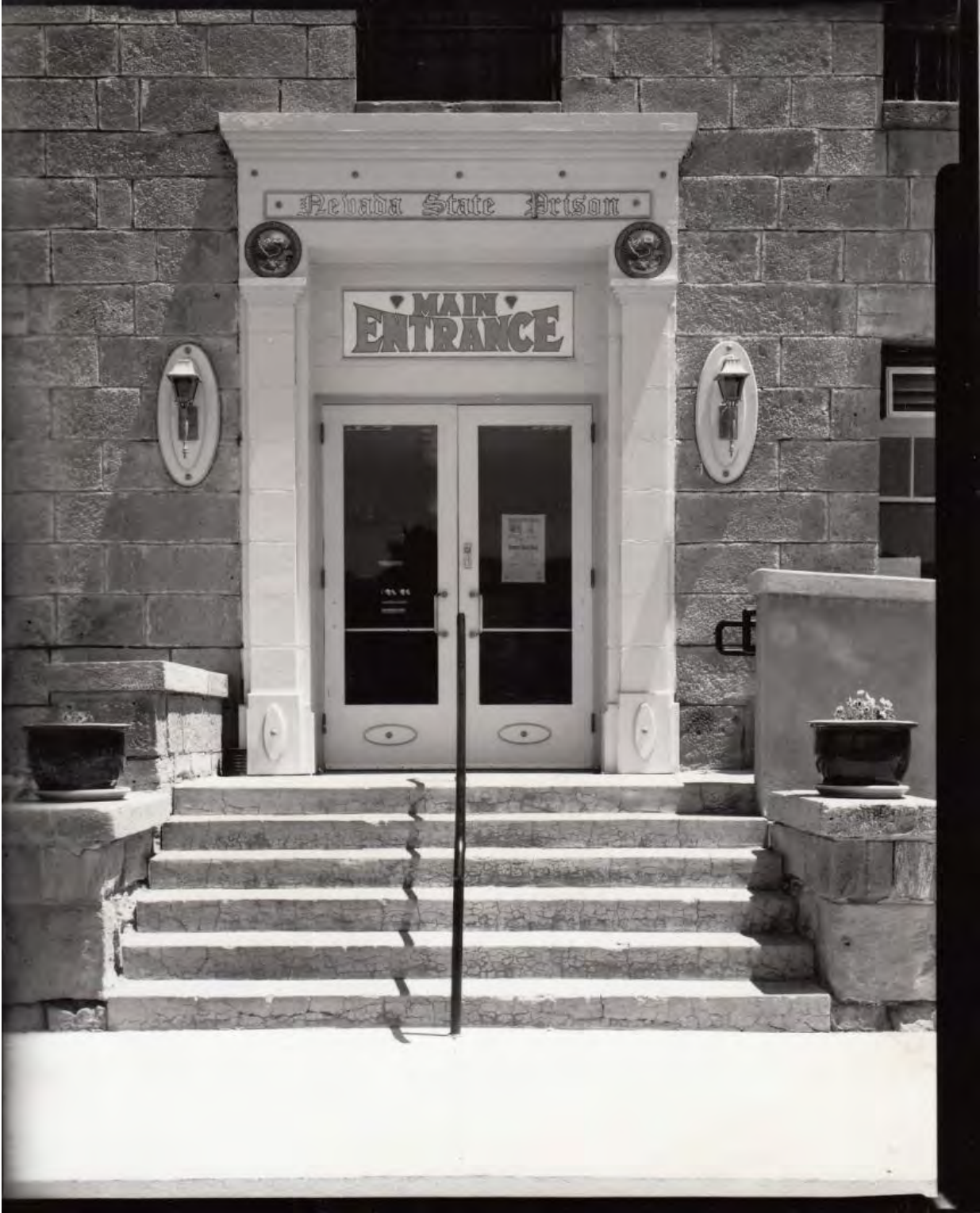


Photo NSP-4



Photo NSP-5



Photo NSP-6



Photo NSP-7



Photo NSP-8

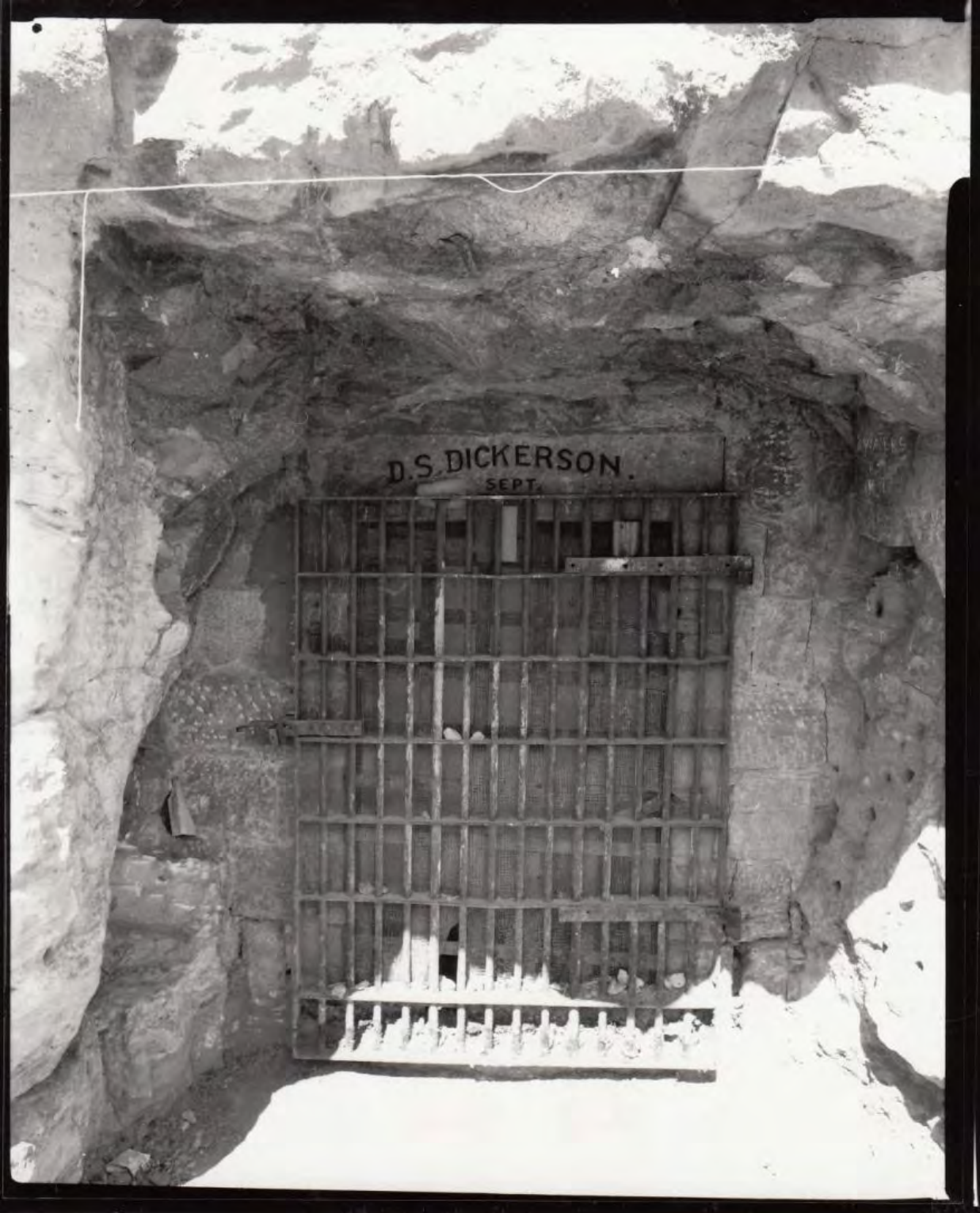


Photo NSP-9



Photo NSP-10

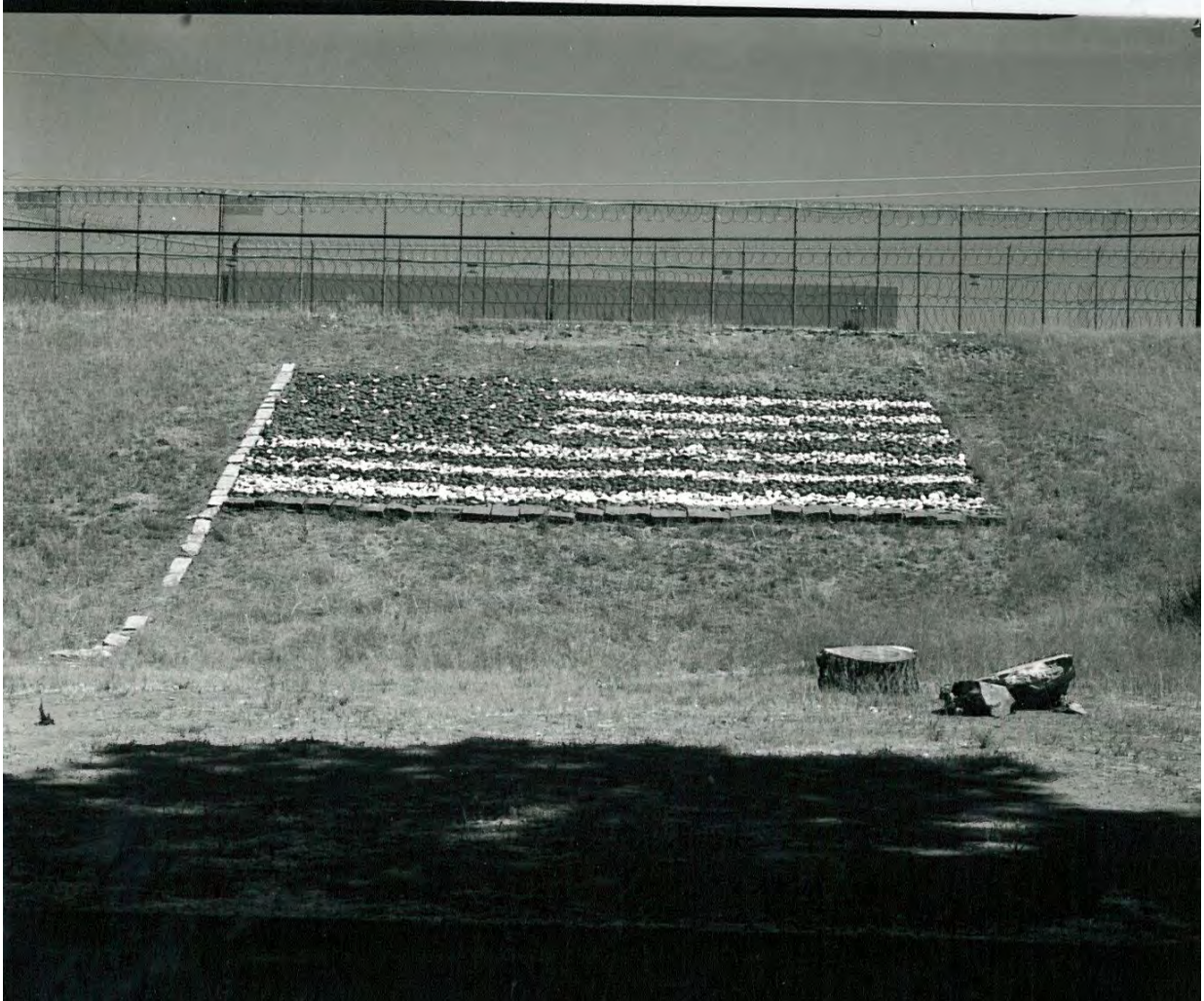


Photo NSP-11



Photo NSP-12



Photo NSP-13



Photo NSP-14



Photo NSP-15



Photo NSP-16



Photo NSP-17



Photo NSP-18



Photo NSP-19



Photo NSP-20



Photo NSP-21



Photo NSP-22



Photo NSP-23



Photo NSP-24



Photo NSP-25

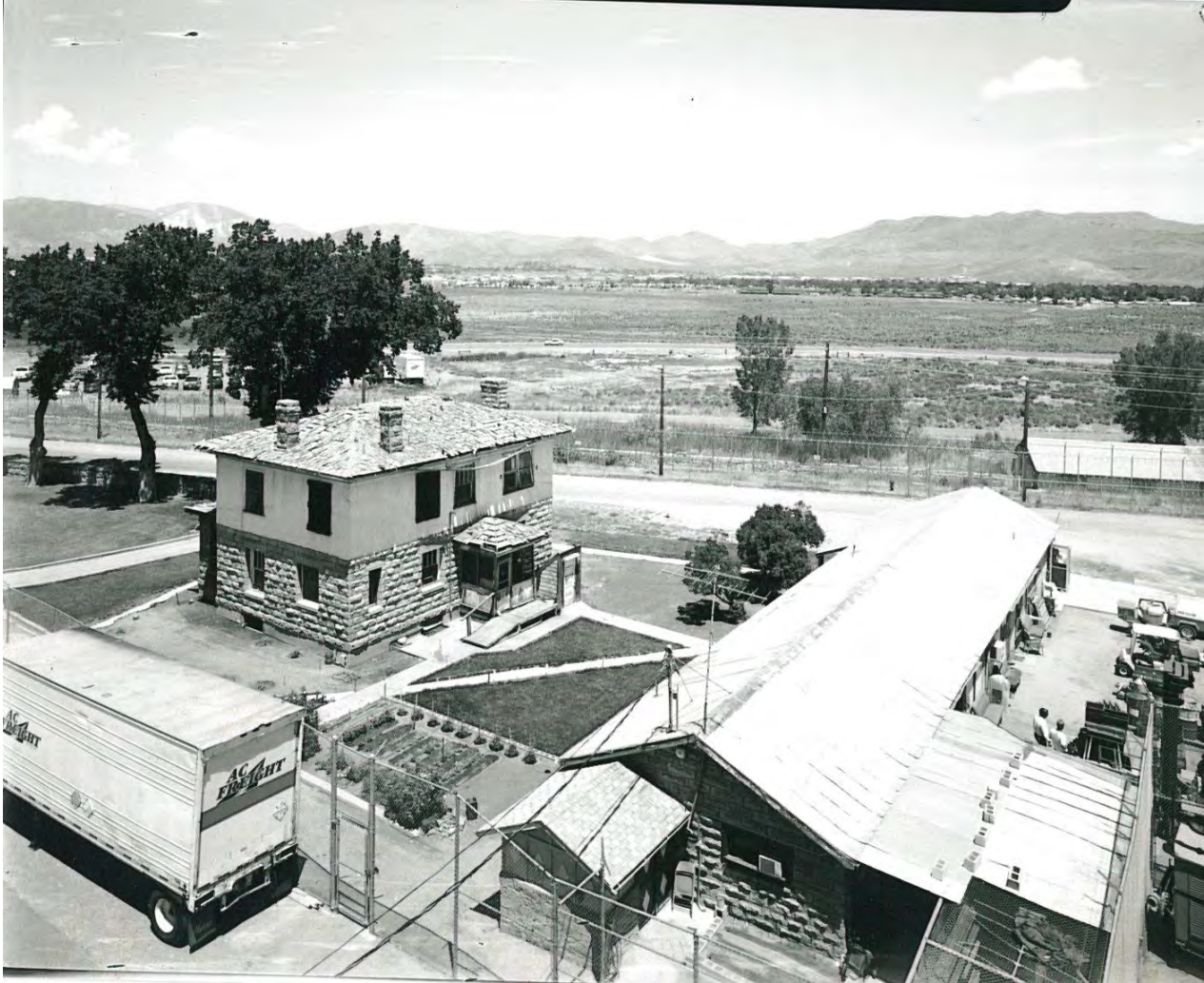


Photo NSP-26



Photo NSP-27



Photo NSP-28



Photo NSP-29



Photo NSP-30

RESOURCE RECORDING FORM SCAN COVER SHEET

Nevada State Historic Preservation Office

S21_15

SCAN COVER SHEET ID (report_resource): **S21_15**



HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

field/map# E15

District Site Building Structure Object
Check one or more

1. Name(s), historic: Nevada State Prison
common: Nevada State Prison

County: Carson City

2. Location, street/road: 3301 East Fifth Street
city/town: Carson City

3. Use/Function,

present: Prison

original: Prison

Public Private Restricted

4. Owner/Address, present: State of Nevada
address: 101 North Carson Street, Carson City NV 89701
original: Abraham Curry
occupied or in use: In use

5. Parcel Number: 10-041-54

6. Acreage (approx. of building site): 20 (125.43 O/A)

7. UTM Reference:

8. Photo/Sketch (may be attached):

9. Plan (may be attached: include approx dimensions and note additions/alterations)



10. Locale/Environment (map; may be attached):
Seim-rural.

11. Description (clarify as appropriate):

a. Exterior Fabric

- stone
- brick
- concrete
- stucco
- weatherboard
- clapboard
- board & batten
- shingle
- shiplap
- Other...

b. Structural System

- masonry
 - frame
 - log
 - metal
 - Other...
- foundation/basement
Stone and concrete

c. Roofing Materials

- wood
- metal
- slate
- tile
- asphalt
- composition
- Other...

d. Describe roof type, doors, windows, porches, and any significant exterior and interior features (use additional sheet if necessary)

Two- to four-story ashlar sandstone masonry prison buildings with flat roofs. Windows are largely barred, but the 1919-25 cell block contains 8/1 double-hung windows on the ground floor. Forming a hollow square, the cell blocks surround a central yard.

e. Associated Structures (use/type):

N/A
related outbuildings and landscape features
Warden's House, Cottages, Pump House, Guard Tower, sandstone quarry with lockdown cells, Chapel/Sally Port.

f. Integrity (include dates):

original site/relocated
Original site.

alterations
Various modernizations, insufficient to impair integrity.

other

N/A
additions
C Block and Kitchen (1967, non-contributors).

g. Condition:

- excellent fair abandoned
- good deteriorated ruins

h. Threats:

Visual impacts from highway project.

12. Significance (use additional sheet if necessary):

a. Architect/Builder/Engineer:

State Prison Board

b. Style/Period:

Institutional

c. Date(s):

1868-1955

e. National Register: eligible non-eligible unevaluated

Justification (include criteria):

d. Main themes of historic resource:

- Architecture Religion
- Economic/Industrial Military
- Social/Education Other...
- Exploration/Settlement
- Arts & Leisure
- Government

13. Bibliography (use additional sheet if necessary):

14. Form Prepared By: John W. Snyder Date 4/23/99

a. Address: P.O. Box 191275, Sacramento CA 95819-1275

b. Organization: P.S. Preservation Services

HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

Continuation

As noted in the background studies for this survey, Abraham Curry, founder of Carson City, had leased his hotel at the warm springs for use by the first Territorial Board, until such time as they could erect permanent public buildings in the town center. The legislative body created the Board of State Prison Commissioners in 1861. In October 1862, Curry sold his Great Basin Hotel to the Board for use as the County Courthouse. That done, Curry leased his property at Warm Springs, including the hotel that had served as the early meeting place of the Legislature, for use as the prison, and the Board appointed Curry as its first Warden. The prison grounds included the sandstone quarry that would be worked by the prisoners. The Board renewed the lease annually until 1864, when the state purchased the building and 20 acres, with Curry receiving bonds in the amount of \$80,000. At this time Robert M. Howland replaced Curry as Warden.

When the state adopted its Constitution in 1864, that document provided for a State Prison, with the Governor, Secretary of State, and the Attorney General as Board of Prison Commissioners, and the Lieutenant Governor as *ex officio* Warden. Legislation passed on March 4, 1865 authorized the Prison Board to take possession of the Territorial Prison.

Fire destroyed the original prison buildings in May 1867, also claiming all the early records of the prison. The State immediately called for sealed proposals for rebuilding the prison. As rebuilt, the facility had a capacity for 112 prisoners. The prisoners themselves quarried the stone for their new home.

Lieutenant Governor Frank Denver became Warden in 1868, and during his term the prisoners quarried the stone to be used to build the new State Capitol building and other buildings in Carson City. If the prisoners occasionally got out of hand, so did the Warden. In 1872 Denver refused to yield the prison to the new Lieutenant Governor, causing the Governor to send 60 men and artillery to force him to do so. The new Warden, P.C. Hyman, added a shoe factory to the prison as a means of helping pay its expenses. By 1881 the facility was housing 151 prisoners, and as early as 1873 the state looked to construct a new facility at Reno to reduce the overcrowding. Though land was acquired and ground broken for the new facility, construction was never undertaken and Carson City remained home to the State Prison. Over the years, the prison has been the site of a number of attempted breakouts which have claimed the lives of prisoners and authorities alike.

In the early years of the 20th century, new construction saw the addition of the Warden's House, and crowding caused the construction of a new cell block between 1919 and 1925. Crowded conditions in the 1950s brought construction of Cell Block B and a series of cottages outside the prison walls. In 1967, the prisoners' casino that formed the south side of the prison yard was torn down to make way for a new kitchen wing. Considerable new construction outside the historic prison since that time has greatly expanded the facility. But the old facility with its massive sandstone cell blocks and interior yard still stands as a historically significant element of Nevada's past.

The Nevada State Prison appears to meet National Register criteria A and C, significant at the State level for its association with significant events in state government, and for its representation of stone masonry prison architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries. Contributive elements include the original 1868 cell block, Cell Block A (1919-25), Cell Block B (1950s), the Warden's House, Pump House, perimeter stone walls, Cottages (1952-55), Guard Tower, Chapel/Sally Port, the sandstone quarry, lockdown cells carved into the walls of the quarry, and the warm springs (see photos).

HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

Photo Continuation



Original Sally Port, view to southeast

Original 1868 cell block, view to west-southwest



A Block, with Gas Chamber at corner, view to north-northwest



HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

CONTINUATION SHEET



Sandstone quarry, view to southwest



Pump House, view to southwest



Lockdown cell in quarry, view to west



Guard Tower and Stone Wall, view to east



Warden's House, view to northeast

HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

CONTINUATION SHEET



1952 Cottage behind Warden's House,
view to north



The hot springs, view to northwest



The Yard, with 1919-25 cell block at left,
1868 cell block with 3rd story addition at
right, view to northeast



1952-1955 Cottages, view to north



The Yard, with Cell Block A at left, Cell
Block B at right, view to east



Prisoners' Cemetery, view to north-
northeast

HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
100 STEWART STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

CONTINUATION SHEET



Typical headstone, Prisoner's Cemetery,
view to west

Board of State
Prison Commissioners

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

BARBARA CEGAVSKE
Secretary of State

ADAM PAUL LAXALT
Attorney General



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Northern Administration
5500 Snyder Avenue, Carson City, NV 89702
Phone: (775) 887-3285 - Fax: (775) 887-3138

Southern Administration
3955 W. Russell Road, Las Vegas, NV 89118
Phone: (702) 486-9938 - Fax: (702) 486-9961

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

JAMES G. COX
Director

February 17, 2015

Ms. Rebecca L. Palmer
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
901 Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-5248

Dear Ms. Palmer,

As the Director of the Nevada Department of Corrections, I strongly support the nomination of the Nevada State Prison for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Nevada State Prison began its 150 year service to the Great State of Nevada in 1862 as the Nevada Territorial Prison and was successfully operated as the State Prison until it was decommissioned on May 18th, 2012.

This historic structure has played a very important role in the history of the State of Nevada as well as Carson City and the surrounding communities. The NDOC is proud of the heritage of Nevada State Prison and believes that the complex should be preserved and recognized by being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

If I can be of any assistance in this endeavor, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James 'Greg' Cox".

James "Greg" Cox
Director of Nevada Dept. of Corrections

JGC:klb



PRESERVE NEVADA

March 2, 2015

Rebecca L. Palmer
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-4285

***Re: Letter in Support of Designation of the Nevada State Prison as a
Historic Place***

Dear Ms. Palmer,

Preserve Nevada is pleased to support the nomination of the Nevada State Prison in the National Register of Historic Places.

Preserve Nevada is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote an appreciation of Nevada's diverse historic recourse and provide for their protection and use. The vision of Preserve Nevada is for Nevadans to understand and appreciate the irreplaceable value of historic buildings and places and their relevance to modern life in our diverse and growing state.

The designation of the Nevada State Prison in Carson City as a Historic Place would serve these worthy goals. Citizens of Nevada as well as of the nation and world would benefit from the preservation of one of the oldest prisons in the nation, dating to Nevada's territorial era, as well as the first to use a gas chamber as a method of execution in the nation. Having a tangible connection to this institution of corrections would not only be of historical value and interest, but has the potential, as William Murtagh wrote, "to engage the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in on this decision.

Sincerely,

Lance Sorenson
Deputy Director, Preserve Nevada

**NEVADA CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER NOMINATION
REVIEW REPORT FORM**

Property Name: Nevada State Prison

Address: 3301 E. Fifth Street

Certified Local Government: Carson City

Date of public meeting at which nomination was reviewed: January 8, 2015

Please check which Register this review is for:

- State Register National Register

National Register Eligibility Criteria: (Check applicable boxes)

- Criterion A Criterion C
 Criterion B Criterion D

Please check the boxes below appropriate to the nomination review:

Commission/Board

- The commission/board recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.
 The commission/board recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.
 The commission/board chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Chief Elected Official

- The chief elected official recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.
 The chief elected official recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.
 The chief elected official chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Attach an additional sheet to make any further comments.

Certify this report with both signatures below


CLG Commission/Board Chair or Representative

Print name: John (Jed) E. Block, Chairman

Signature:  Date 1/15/15

Chief Elected Official or Designee

Print name: Robert L. Crowell, Mayor

Signature:  Date 1/20/15

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Nevada State Prison
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Carson City

DATE RECEIVED: 4/24/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/19/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/03/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/09/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000320

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Return:
Please see the attached
National Register Evaluation/Return Sheet
for an explanation.

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER Barbara Wyatt DISCIPLINE Historic
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE 6-9-15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places

Comments Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Nevada State Prison
Property Location: Carson City, Nevada
Reference Number: 15000320
Date of Return: 7-5-15

Reason for Return

This nomination is being returned for additional information, reconsideration of some points, and technical corrections. The nomination presents an excellent description of the history of prisons and prison reform in Nevada.

Background

The Nevada State Prison is nominated under criteria A and D in the area of Politics/Government. The period of significance begins in 1920, reflecting the beginning of construction of the modern prison, and ends in 1967, reflecting the end of the period of prison operation based on rehabilitation-focused methods.

Issues

1. The period of significance must begin earlier if the quarry is considered a contributing site and the butcher shop is considered a contributing building. Both pre-date the beginning of the period of significance.
2. The earliest construction date needs to be consistently stated—or better explained. On page 5, 1868 is mentioned as the year construction began (first paragraph under *Site Overview*. On the same page, 1862 is mentioned as the first date of the “early period” (second paragraph under *Site Overview*).
3. The site description needs to be more thorough. Near the beginning of Section 7 it would be appropriate to describe the site plan, including circulation, the spatial organization of

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Nevada State Prison

Reference Number: 15000320

the prison complex, vegetation, and other landscape features, including the setting. The 25-acre site is only minimally described as a complex.

4. It is not clear why the cemetery is not considered eligible under Criterion D. The case for Criterion D can easily be made for cemeteries, and may be particularly important when tombstones are missing. The information potential could be considerable at this site. Please see the section on Criterion D in the National Register bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* (page 14). The bulletin states, "While commonly understood to apply to archeological research, Criterion D also encompasses information important in the study of material cultural and social history." This seems to be the case with the prison cemetery and it seems to be an oversight to consider it noncontributing. If the prison as a whole is only important beginning in 1920, the cemetery could have a separate period of significance that relates to the burials. Note that the instructions in NR Bulletin 16 state, "Enter the dates for *one or more periods of time* when the property attained the significance qualifying it for National Register listing" (my italics; see p. 42). With the evaluation of the cemetery as contributing, Social History or some other area might be added as an area of significance.
5. Criterion D has been applied, but Archeology is not noted as an area of significance. Is this correct? Please explain.
6. On page 16, it would be useful to define "Sally Port" and "Synanon labor" or refer to the pages in Section 8 where the terms are explained. Although sally port is commonly used to identify prison entrances, it is not universally understood and an explanation in the context of the courthouse would be helpful.
7. On page 18, please note if the coursed stone wall is a contributing structure or feature.
8. On page 19, please note if the landscape features in the lawn area are considered contributing. By their dates (pre-1967), they seem to contribute. The fountain may be a contributing object or structure; the remainder may be considered contributing small-scale elements that add to the historic character of the west lawn and garden, but are not included in the inventory count.
9. On page 20, the earliest date of the prison trash dump (1907) pre-dates the period of significance (1920). The collection of artifacts prior to 1920 seems to relate to the information potential of the site, but it is problematic that they predate the period of significance. Consider a period of significance for the trash dump.
10. On page 23, the Greenhouse Foundation is considered a contributing structure. Please see pages 15-17 of NR Bulletin 16. Ruins are counted as sites, but they are not counted separately from the site of which they are a part.
11. In the section "Integrity of the District," please reconsider some aspects of the "questionable informational potential of the archeological resources dating prior to 1920"

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Reference Number: 15000320

(p. 26). This seems to be contradicted by the information potential of the trash dump mentioned in the same section—which may not pertain to the nineteenth century history of the site, but could pertain to its history from 1907 to 1920.

12. In Section 8 there should be a section on Criterion A that corresponds to the section on Criterion D (p. 46).

If you would like to discuss this nomination, please call or send me an email. The National Register staff has lacked an archeologist for a few months, which is unfortunate given the questions this nomination raises about the application of Criterion D. Next week we will have an historic archeologist on staff and I will discuss some aspects of this nomination with him and get back to you.

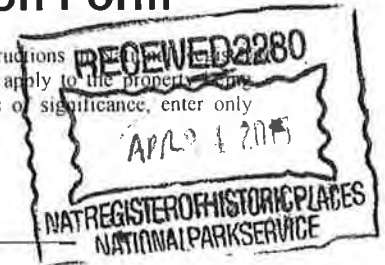
Please feel free to contact me about any of the points mentioned above. You can reach me at 202-354-2252 or at barbara_wyatt@nps.gov.

Barbara Wyatt, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
202-354-2252

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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 the National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Nevada State Prison
Other names/site number: Nevada Territorial Prison
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 3301 East Fifth Street
City or town: Carson City State: Nevada County: Carson City
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 A B C D

Returned

Rebecca Palmer 4/15/15
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Name of Property

County and State

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Returned

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>23</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>32</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

INDUSTRY/Quarry

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

FUNERARY/cemetery

LANDSCAPE

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

FUNERARY/cemetery

LANDSCAPE

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Returned

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classic Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT

OTHER: Mid-20th Century Minimal Traditional

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Foursquare

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: sandstone, concrete, metal, stucco, asphalt, other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nevada State Prison (NSP) campus includes a complex of stone and concrete buildings south of Fifth Street, built along the northwest slope of a hillock overlooking Eagle Valley to the north and west. The complex is anchored by the Prison Yard, around which most of the buildings form a rectangular cluster. The majority of buildings in the historic district are made of quarry sandstone, with more recent buildings constructed of concrete and steel. The southern edge of the main complex is defined by a rock wall of the Quarry, measuring up to twenty feet, topped by a double-run of chain link fence marking the outer boundary of the prison-accessed spaces. West of the main cluster of prison buildings is a landscaped area with a small cluster of housing for prison staff. North of the main cluster, across the historic route of Fifth Avenue, is a scatter of smaller buildings including the Kennel and Butcher Shop. The historic district includes elements of Classical Revival and Modernist architecture, as well as landscaping influenced by the Picturesque style. The spatial organization reflects the earliest developments of the state prison. However, significant demolition and reconstruction in the 1920s, followed by additions to the campus in the 1950s and 60s, have given the district its present character. To the east of the main building cluster, outside of the historic district boundary, are a set of 1980s cell blocks known as the "Hill Units," built on top of the hillock. Together, the thirty-five contributing and four non-

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contributing resources represent developments at the prison that began in 1920 and ended with the closing of the prison in 2012.

The Nevada State Prison (NSP) campus included development from three major phases of development during its continuous use between 1862 and 2012, when the state closed the facility. The first phase resulted in a complete campus that operated between 1862 and 1920, but the few remaining built resources from this period do not retain sufficient integrity. There has not been any archaeological testing to determine whether pre-1920 archaeological remains exist or have sufficient integrity. While absence of surface features combined with significant ground disturbance after 1920 suggests a lack of information potential, future testing may reveal the potential for new information. The second phase, between 1920 and 1940 completely redeveloped the prison complex, resulting in the core of the historic district. The final historic phase between 1940 and 1967 expanded the prison's capacity and modernized facilities. Currently only the early 1960s License Plate Factory remains in active use, although it is slated to close in 2015. The prison execution chamber and courthouse, within the Administration Building, are maintained in the event they may be needed for use.

Narrative Description

Site Overview

The entire prison complex encompasses forty-five acres of land and contains more than forty buildings, structures, and sites, dating from between 1868 and 2002. The nominated area encompasses roughly twenty-five acres, consisting of the prison complex constructed in 1920 and developed until 1967. Although the state constructed a campus in 1868, a major building campaign during the 1920s demolished and reconstructed the historic core of the Prison that is present today. Prison administrators used sandstone from the prison Quarry to construct most of the contributing buildings in the complex including the Administration Building, the Warden's House, the Officer's Cottages, and Cell Blocks A and B. The sandstone buildings are similar in design and construction, predominantly un-adorned but often incorporating Classical Revival stylistic features. They are made from cut blocks of sandstone quarried and finished by prisoner labor. The masonry typically uses a running bond pattern, though some ragwork and random work patterns are also present. Beginning in the 1950s poured concrete, concrete block, and steel began to supplement the traditional stone construction in some cases, although stone was still frequently used. After 1960, the prison completed virtually all construction in concrete or steel.

The NSP's resources resulted from three general periods of development: the early period from 1862-1900, the Progressive Period from approximately 1900 to 1940, and the Modern period from 1940 to 1967. The early period consisted of the prison's first development, but related resources confirmed to date from this period have since been demolished or reconstructed in new forms. The Progressive period spans 1900 to 1940, and encompasses the dominant phase of prison development in the late-Progressive Era into the 1930s. This phase was dominated by a building boom in the 1920s and includes the majority of contributing buildings in the district, including the Administration Building, Cell Blocks A and B, and the Prison Yard. The Modern period from 1940 to 1967 expanded the complex including the establishment of a residential

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landscape along the west side of the prison, and addition of Cell Block C and the License Plate Factory. The majority of the prison grounds have not been evaluated for archaeological resource potential, however, the presence of twentieth century diagnostic surface scatter and refuse piles in the Prison Trash Dump suggest that other sites and deposits may exist within the historic district that may be discovered through future testing.

Nevada State Prison, Resource List

Resource #	Resource Name	Date	Resource Type	Contributing Status
1	Quarry	c.1861-1960	Site	Contributing
2	Butcher Shop	19th Century	Building	Contributing
3	Nevada State Prison Cemetery	1875-1881	Site	Non-contributing
4	Cell Block A	1920-25	Building	Contributing
5	Administration Building	1920-27	Building	Contributing
6	Warden's House	1920-25	Building	Contributing
7	Electrical Shop	c.1926	Building	Contributing
8	Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel	c.1927-28	Structure	Non-contributing
9	Sally Port (Courthouse)	c.1928	Building	Contributing
10	Fifth Street Guard Tower	1929	Structure	Contributing
11	Pump House	1933	Structure	Contributing
12	Prison Yard	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
13	Front Yard and Parking Area	c.1920-1958	Site	Contributing
14	West Lawn and Garden	c.1920-1967	Site	Contributing
15	Prison Trash Dump	c.1907-1967	Site	Contributing
16	Security Fence	1941	Structure	Contributing
17	Cell Block B	1948	Building	Contributing
18	Armory (Property Warehouse)	1950	Building	Contributing
19	Storage and Maintenance Building	1952	Building	Contributing
20	Cottage 1	1953	Building	Contributing
21	Cottage 2	1953	Building	Contributing
22	Cottage 3	1953	Building	Contributing
23	Cottage 4	1953	Building	Contributing
24	Cottage 5	1953	Building	Contributing
25	Cottage 6	1955	Building	Contributing
26	Greenhouse Foundation	1954	Structure	Contributing
27	Boiler Plant	1958	Building	Contributing
28	Kennel	c.1962	Building	Contributing
29	Cell Block C	1960	Building	Contributing
30	License Plate Factory	c.1962	Building	Contributing
31	Two Tower	1962	Building	Contributing
32	One Tower (Main Gate)	1963	Building	Contributing
33	Three Tower	1966	Building	Contributing
34	Culinary and Dining Hall	1966	Building	Contributing
35	Gymnasium and Book Bindery	1976	Building	Non-Contributing
36	Chain Link Security Fence	c.1980s	Structure	Non-Contributing
37	Shed	c.2000	Building	Non-contributing
38	Maintenance Shop	2004	Building	Non-contributing

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Early Prison Development, 1862-1920

Most of the resources relating to the earliest period of prison development have since been demolished. Construction during this period used prison quarry stone almost exclusively, and lined the south side of Fifth Street. Historic photographs from the period reveal that much of the construction was of Classical Revival style, and arrayed along Fifth Street from the current location of Interstate Highway 580 extending several hundred feet east.

Among the first buildings at the site was the Warm Springs Hotel, established by Abraham Curry in 1861 and leased to the Territory of Nevada as a prison beginning in 1862. According to Curry biographer Doris Cerveri, the two-story hotel measured 100-by-32 feet with an adjoining bath house measuring 160-by-38 feet with six pools about twenty-five feet square. Historic photos of the resort from this period show a two-story stone building of side-gable form fronted by a long porch, presumably the hotel portion of the resort.¹ The Hotel was connected to a one-story building of considerable architectural distinction via two intervening stone structures. The one-story building was fronted by a porch and a façade of precisely cut, smooth-faced ashlar blocks, and topped by a stepped parapet with an eagle statuette at its crest. The function of this building is uncertain; it may have been the bathhouse.²

The earliest operations at the Nevada State Prison involved adapting the Warm Springs Hotel to correctional use. The Warm Springs Hotel's row of connected buildings established the public façade of the nineteenth century prison. A report by Warden Howland dated December 9, 1864, described partial completion of a "new addition" that measured 41-by-28.5 feet and eighteen feet high at the eaves. Completed by Warden J.S. Crosman in 1865, the addition contained two tiers of cells, apparently eight cells to each side with a center passage on both floors for a total of thirty-two cells. The cells measured eight feet long and four feet wide and were constructed of stone on all sides with doors of double thickness two-inch planks. The cell doors were secured by an ingenious contraption consisting of "an iron bar which fastens each door at the same moment being worked by a brake from the Guard Room." The cell block, which seems to have been referred to in later years as the "Territorial Addition," survived the May 1, 1867 fire that destroyed most of the rest of the prison. In a report to the legislature following the fire, Warden James Slingerland described the main building that was destroyed as having measured 100-by-40 feet and to have been in deteriorated condition.³ The prisoner dining room may have been adobe, which would explain how inmates were able to dig a hole through its wall and escape in 1865.⁴ The Hotel and bath house had been demolished by the 1920s. The existing stone wall that

¹ Lawrence & Houseworth, "State Prison and Warm Springs, near Carson City," c.1860s, Image #495, The Society for California Pioneers, Online Photographic Database, http://www.californiapioneers.org/lh/search_image.php?id=0495, accessed 12/8/2014.

² Cerveri, *With Curry's Compliments: The Story of Abraham Curry*, (Elko, NV: Nostalgia Press, 1990), 13-14, 26-28; Jennifer E. Riddle, Sena M. Loyd, Stacy L. Branham, and Curt Thomas, *Images of America: Nevada State Prison*, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 12-13.

³ From its dimensions and other evidence the main building may have been the converted ca. 1861 hotel.

⁴ "Warden's Report and Inventory, 1864," Nevada State Prison Papers, Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City; John B. Snyder, untitled manuscript – history of the Nevada State Prison, 2005, 4-5; Myron Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1881), 546, 547, 556.

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separates the pond-like pool from the front parking lot incorporates a number of smooth ashlar blocks that may have been reused from the earliest 19th century buildings.⁵

The early NSP campus appears to have evolved periodically over the 1860s and 1870s. As the complex developed, it featured workshops and other auxiliary buildings or wings that supported the operation of the facility. The blacksmith shop mentioned in the March 1864 deed is also referenced in the December 1864 Warden's Report at which time it contained a bellows, anvil, and other ironworking tools. The 1864 Report also mentions a carpentry shop, kitchen, armory, guard room, office, the prison yard, the cells, and a "cell room" which seems to have been the large space that contained the individual cells. In the Prison Yard, prisoners stockpiled worked stone for use in the ongoing construction of the cell block and perhaps other buildings. The prepared stone included "cut Sills" (window sills or door thresholds), "Ashleigh [ashlar] for fronts of buildings," "cut flag" (flagstones for floors or walkways), and "Moulded caps for Columns."⁶

Historic photographs provide a sense of the prison's physical appearance in the late nineteenth century. The prison complex was not only a prison; it included the residence of the warden and his family and at least some of the guards. The main front building where these apartments were located featured a second-story cantilevered bay window (technically an oriel window) which may have marked the location of the warden's parlor. Unlike most of the prison's windows the bay window and adjacent second-story openings were not barred. They looked onto a landscaped "front lawn" flanked by ornamental watch towers and shaded by trees. A photograph dated to the 1870s, taken from an elevated location above the south Quarry wall, shows an extensive complex of one- and two-story buildings. Most appear to be stone but there are accounts of adobe structures as well. The principal building, distinguished by a cupola with lancet-arched openings, a bracketed cornice, and a domical roof, occupied the site of the present Administration Building and served an administrative function with second-floor staff quarters and a rear wing with small windows that may have lighted cells. The complex appears to have grown incrementally over the course of the 1860s, as funding allowed, with an increase in construction to replace buildings destroyed in the 1867 fire. Another fire occurred in 1870. After the 1870s the complex appears to have grown more slowly until a new phase of construction commenced in 1920, demolishing and salvaging much of the early prison campus.⁷

Newspaper accounts of a large prison break on September 17, 1871 provide incidental detail on the facility. The break began in the upper tier of the cell block which adjoined the apartments of Lieutenant Governor John Franklin Denver, who also served as warden and whose family lived at the prison. An account based on eyewitness testimony stated that the escaping prisoners, numbering around thirty, reached the roof of the main front building and cut a hole through it. Denver, his family, and guests "were seated in one of the Warden's rooms up stairs enjoying a nice little dinner" when "suddenly hearing the tramping of the prisoners along the roof with the

⁵ Cerveri, *With Curry's Compliments*, 26-28.

⁶ "Warden's Report and Inventory, 1864," Reports, Department of Corrections collection, Nevada State Library & Archives (hereafter NSLA); *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, September 19, 1871, Nevada Historical Society Library (hereafter NHSL); Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 12-18; Photos NSP 0006 and 0323, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

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clanking of their heavy chains they at first thought it was an earthquake.” The prisoners jumped down into the upper stair hall and secured the prison armory on the first floor. A gun battle ensued, with Denver shooting from above while guards and the proprietor and bartender from the adjacent Warm Springs Hotel fired at the emerging armed prisoners from outside. The account describes an “outer wall” that enclosed the yard in front of the prison and had provision for guards, either a parapet, platforms, or towers. It is possible the octagonal towers were in place by this time.⁷

By 1875, the prison had expanded further to provide larger facilities. An inventory taken that year describes, in addition to the shops and functional spaces described in the 1864 report, a tailor shop, laundry, bath house, prisoner’s dining room, guard dining room, store room, library, warden and guard lodging rooms, stable and barnyard, magazine (containing blasting powder, caps, and fuse), and Butcher Shop. An account of the buildings that existed prior to the destructive fire of May 1867 described the “old kitchen” as “nothing but a tinder box built of rock.” The 1875 inventory also described the equipage of the cells: 133 bunks, the same number of mattresses and pillows, and sixty buckets. The latter were presumably used as chamber pots and their number, roughly half the number of bunks, suggests two prisoners to a cell and possibly three in some instances.⁸

1. Quarry. c.1861-1960. Contributing site.

The Quarry served as a defining feature within the NSP complex during its historic period. Its walls wrap around the complex more or less continuously from the east side of Cell Block A around to the southeast corner of the Sally Port (Courthouse). The walls vary from a more terraced condition west of the License Plate Factory to sheer cliff faces on the south and west sides of the campus.

The Quarry walls are full of fossilized faunal and floral remains and excavation of stone revealed prehistoric animal tracks beginning in the nineteenth century. During the early days of the prison, prison staff used some of these caves for solitary confinement. During the 1940s, the prison repurposed the caves for prisoner activities such as the *Sagebrush Newspaper* office, a carpenter’s shop, and prison offices. Graffiti and a human face are carved into the stone near some of the cave entrances, which have iron barred or strapwork gates. One has a lintel inscribed with the name of Warden Denver S. Dickerson who served two terms as warden in the 1910s and 1920s.

In existence by 1861, the Quarry has expanded over the years as prisoners removed stone for buildings both at the prison and in nearby Carson City. Generally removing rock southward away from Fifth Avenue, the Quarry likely attained its present shape by 1960, when the use of steel frames and concrete in prison buildings ended the practice of using quarry stone and prison labor for construction. This movement not only provided an additional barrier to escape, but provided more flat surface area for the construction of

⁷ *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, September 19, 1871, and *Nevada State Journal*, September 23, 1871, NHSL.

⁸ “Nevada State Prison Inventory and Account Book, 1875,” Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA; Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, 546, 547.

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new buildings after the Second World War.⁹ Near the south end is an area with modern sweat lodge foundations and other features associated with Native and earth-based religions. A 1962 aerial photograph shows retaining walls along the east side of the Quarry that have since been removed, replacing the sheer cliff with a set of terraces sloping upward and eastward to the License Plate Factory.

The Quarry retains good integrity to the period of significance. However, because of consistent expansion of the quarry, and new construction within the Quarry bottom and over some Quarry walls, it does not retain integrity to the earliest period of the prison's operation. As with many landscape features and the pre-1920 built environment, the quarry reflects the Progressive Era modification and expansion of the prison, and its continued operation until the end of quarrying in the 1950s.

2. Butcher Shop, late nineteenth century, Contributing Building.

The Butcher Shop is the northern-most building within the complex and is located outside of the secure prison fence line. It is a 300-square foot, coursed sandstone rubble building. The west façade includes an off-center door opening. The original door is gone and has been replaced with a wooden door and a re-purposed three-light sash window with a vertical axis. The north side of the building has one off-center opening for a window. The opening is lined with a dressed sandstone lintel, jambs, and sill. The building's front-gabled roof is made of concrete slab supported by a metal ridge beam, likely added in the twentieth century. The Butcher Shop is currently not in use and the interior is in poor condition.

The first mention of a butcher shop is in an 1875 inventory. The building contained a chopping block, a large cupboard with twelve meat hooks, meat spikes, and a "large Force Pump & piping" presumably for hosing down the interior, as well as foodstuffs including large quantities of beans, potatoes, cabbages, and flour. However, an 1887 Warden's Report mentions the construction of a new butcher shop, indicating the building was replaced by that year. Researchers believe this building to be the 1875 Butcher Shop but cannot confirm due to lack of documentation. The concrete roof may be a replacement added along with similar modifications around the campus in the 1920s.¹⁰

3. Nevada State Prison Cemetery. 1875-1881. Non-contributing site.

Early prison staff buried unclaimed bodies of prisoners who died while incarcerated on a hilltop to the south of the prison. There are eleven marked graves and the potential for unmarked graves. Tablet-style stone grave markers with round-arched crests record death dates between 1875 and 1881 as well as brief biographical information such as name, birth date, and in some instances place of birth. The graves are defined by rock borders and were once mounded. One tombstone has a lightly pecked depiction of a cross on its obverse. Two graves are marked by unhewn sandstone blocks. Some graves have

⁹ Snyder, 106.

¹⁰ "Nevada State Prison Inventory and Account Book, 1875," Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA.

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footstones. The area of marked graves is defined by a partial rock border. An undated photo (probably first half of the twentieth century) suggests some tombstones have been moved or replaced. Separated from the cemetery, but possibly formerly part of it, is a broken obelisk tombstone discovered behind Cottage 2. The partially effaced inscription appears to read "Thomas Miller, died Feb. 2d 1865, age 42 years." The tombstone is most likely that of F. Miller, a convicted highwayman who died on February 2, 1865, after being shot in a failed escape attempt. At the time of this nomination, the cemetery does not appear to be eligible under Criterion D.

The possibility of archaeological resources dating to this earliest period of operation was considered by the authors and Nevada SHPO staff at the time of this nomination. Due to the significant amount of ground disturbance from re-grading and new construction that occurred after 1920, there is not an expectation of archaeological resources to yield information about the pre-1920 prison. Historic photographs reveal that the prison campus established in 1920 resulted in the demolition, reconstruction, and re-landscaping of the majority of the prison grounds. In concert with the periodic redevelopment and cleaning of the site for security reasons, especially within the prison's fence-line, the expectation of nineteenth century information potential is low. Future sub-surface testing within the historic district may discover additional archaeological resources that may compel reconsideration of this determination. A field survey of the Trash Dump Site (Resource #15) revealed few pre-twentieth century diagnostic artifacts, leading to the conclusion that there is not sufficient information potential to meet the requirements of the National Register for the pre-1920 period.

Late Progressive Era Developments – 1920 to 1940

NSP administrators commenced a significant building phase in 1920 alongside nation-wide reforms in many aspects of American political, social, and cultural life, a period known as the Progressive Era. As in the previous period of development, prison administrators used prisoner labor for the construction, but contracted architects including the regionally-renowned Frederic DeLongchamps to design new buildings. Sources suggest that architect Edward E. Hoxie was also involved in some designs. State Engineer W.J. Boudwin oversaw the majority of new construction. Other individuals involved with the project in 1920 included W. Heidenreich, likely William M. Heidenreich, a Carson City contractor active in the 1910s and 1920s.¹¹

The developments at the NSP between 1920 and 1927 constructed the core of the prison complex's current form. Historic photos from 1924 illustrate the demolition of the nineteenth-century buildings on the north end of the campus, making way for the construction of the present Administration Building and Cell Block A. Changes in the stonework pattern suggest that construction of these buildings proceeded in stages. The Administration Building and Cell Block A together gave the present rectangular form to the prison yard which, prior to that point, had evolved continuously since the 1860s. The Administration Building perpetuated the general

¹¹ "Prison Construction Claims, July-October 1920," Nevada State Prison ephemera file, NSLA; Drawings NAA1/005, NAA1/061, NAA1/116, Frederic J. DeLongchamps, Nevada Architectural Archives, University of Nevada – Reno (hereafter NAA-UNR); *R. L. Polk and Company's Reno, Sparks, Washoe County and Carson City Directory, 1917*, 237, 260; *Polk's Reno City, Washoe County and Carson City Directory, 1923*, 452.

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outline of the old prison and continued the north-facing front established by the Warm Springs Hotel buildings in the 1860s. NSP administrators removed the last vestiges of the hotel around 1920, the former site now being occupied by the parking lot in front of the Administration Building's west wing and main entrance.¹²

After the remodel, the NSP was described as "modern in every respect, being sanitary and fireproof." The flammable wood roofs and combustible interiors of the old prison had been replaced with reinforced concrete roofs and interiors finished with cement parging on metal lathe. Prisoners landscaped the grounds inside the walls and out, including setting out a large American flag made from painted river cobbles, located on a manicured sloping embankment at the south end of the Sally Port. Nevadans generally thought that prison should be a humane place and the newly renovated NSP became a source of pride for the city and the state.

4. Cell Block A. 1920-25. Contributing Building.

Perpendicular to the northeast end of the Administration Building is Cell Block A. Constructed between 1920 and 1925, it is a rectangular, four-story, coursed sandstone building with its north side connecting with the Administration Building. Entrance to the building is via an exterior metal staircase in the Prison Yard on the northwest corner of the building. The building has a flat roof with a surrounding metal railing to allow guards to use the roof as a patrol space. The cells are arranged "back-to-back" in two rows, facing outward toward the prisoners' corridor and the windows. Each cell has three concrete walls and an open wall with bars facing the exterior, where there are multi-pane sash windows to provide natural lighting. A pipe chase runs between the row of cells, providing electricity and ventilation, and a corridor from which guards could access water and electricity for each cell without opening the cell door.

Work crews commenced construction of the cell block in 1920 using designs from Nevada architect Frederic DeLongchamps. However, construction appears to have been delayed persistently by poor funding and weather until the building's completion in late 1925. DeLongchamps designed the cell block with thirty-two concrete cells on each of the four floors, and sandstone quoins on the southeast and southwest corners. Each cell housed one prisoner (though the inmates quickly found themselves with a bunkmate as the population increased) and was sparsely furnished with a metal bed, a toilet, and a sink.¹³

Warden R. B. Henrichs directed the construction work, which was most active in 1920-21. A period newspaper article noted:

With the cell house completed the new prison will begin to pay for itself through the decreases made possible in the force of guards, at the rate of about \$9000 per year. Construction of the first floor of the cell house has been practically finished and work has been started on the walls of the second story. When completed, under present plans, the cell

¹² NSP Photos 102 and 104, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

¹³ John B. Snyder, unpublished manuscript on the NSP, (2005), 52, 57-58; Drawings NAA1/005 and NAA1/061, Frederic DeLongchamps, NAA-UNR.

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house will be a four-story building, made of stone cut in the prison yard by convict labor, and will have a housing capacity of 125.¹⁴

During the construction of Cell Block B in 1948, attached to the south end of the Cell Block A, construction crews removed the gun posts and quoins on the south elevation. Since that time, a metal fire escape has been added to the west elevation, new flood lights have been installed at the roofline and on the roof, and some window unit air conditioners have been added. Later, prison administrators enlarged the cells of Cell Block A by removing selected concrete partitions between them and inserting new steel partitions as needed. Other than this interior modification, Cell Block A preserves its essential 1920s character. It remained in use for housing prisoners until the State legislature decommissioned the NSP in 2012.

5. Administration Building. 1920-27. Contributing Building.

The Administrative Building served as the official visitor entrance and administrative hub for the prison. The two-story building has an L-shaped footprint and is built of sandstone ashlar with a running bond and some random ashlar pattern stonework. Except for the simple Classical Revival entrance surround, the building has no identifiable style. The main public entrance to the building is on the west elevation of the building and consists of double doors. Surrounding the doors are square sandstone Doric pilasters. The Nevada State Seal is painted above both pilasters. The words "Main Entrance" are painted on wood and attached above the double doors. Flanking either side of the entrance are electrical sconces with wrought iron light fixtures. A simple corbelled cornice above the entrance repeats the cornice on the building. On the northeast section of the building, there is a third story addition of poured concrete with a flat roof, extending east from the midpoint of the north ell to the east elevation of the building where it joins with Cell Block A. The building retains its original wooden one-over-one sashes with either sandstone or concrete sills and lintels throughout. An inscription stone over a doorway on the east elevation identifies the west wing as the prison's first license plate factory which operated in this building from 1931 until 1962. The third floor addition has wooden four-over-four windows but with no lintels or sills. All windows are secured with exterior bars. The roof is flat and composed of tar and gravel. Metal staircases access the second and third stories from the Prison Yard.

Frederic DeLongchamps provided designs for this building, which was constructed in stages between 1920 and 1927. Like much of the prison's built environment at that time, prisoners provided the labor, cutting and laying the stone from the Prison Quarry. In 1950, a third story was added to the east end, constructed with poured concrete and known as the Hospital Wing. A plaque at the top of the stairs near the east end of the addition notes architect Edward S. Parsons provided the plans for the addition, and that Nevada Engineering Construction Company and G. Panicari constructed it.¹⁵

¹⁴ "Prison Plans told at Lunch." *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 16, 1921, NHSL.

¹⁵ Snyder, 52, 58; Drawings NAA1/005 and NAA1/061, Frederic DeLongchamps, NAA-UNR.

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In 1931, Warden Penrose added the NSP's first license plate factory to the south ell of the building. That extension connected the Administration Building to the Sally Port. In Penrose's 1931 report he described the newly-constructed addition:

"The building was planned and erected under my direction. Construction started May 1, 1931 and was finished the latter part of 1932. It is a two-story structure of prison limestone [*sic*] and reinforced concrete, matching other prison buildings. All labor, stone which was cut by hand, crushed stone and rock was supplied by the prison without cost to the state. Only one-half of the ground floor is being used for the license plate factory. The other half, and the entire second floor is vacant, and could be used to house other prison industries which would not interfere with anything in our state. Such industries would not only save the state money, as the license plate factory is doing, but would provide education and more work for the inmates. The several pieces of machinery are the most modern, and are electrically driven. The factory runs about one month and a half each year as no outside work is done. Most states [have] their own plants, the same as ours. An average of 20 inmates are employed during the most part of the time, and about 15 during the remainder, finishing up."¹⁶

The building served as the northwest barricade, keeping the inmates confined within the prison proper. Historic photos show wooden double doors with nearly full-length glazing, however, these have been replaced and covered with plywood. "Nevada State Prison" also appeared above the door in historic photos, but has since been removed.¹⁷

6. Warden's House. c.1921-1925. Contributing Building.

Constructed between 1921 and 1925, the Warden's House is a two-story, Four Square style building approximately forty-five feet wide and thirty feet deep. It has a concrete foundation with a sandstone ashlar first floor, and a stucco second floor, with a low-pitched, hipped, asphalt composition shingle roof. Windows on the front and side elevations are generally symmetrically placed sash windows, although all window openings are boarded over with plywood. All jambs have been retained, but many sashes have been removed. The porch has also been boarded over, with an unlit entry door at the top of the stoop. The rear elevation has ghost marking indicating a gabled hood was placed over the rear entry at some time, but later removed. The rear concrete stoop has also been removed. There are three chimneys constructed of coursed sandstone masonry: two interior chimneys and an exterior chimney on the north elevation.

The as-built house is slightly different than the drawings provided by Frederic DeLongchamps in 1920. While the form and style of the building is the same, DeLongchamp's plans called for a main entry with a half-view wooden door and a twelve-light glaze, with flanking two-by-four sidelights. The second story included two sash windows and what appears to be glazing for a sleeping porch along the northeast corner of the building, with a ribbon of four fixed windows or screens. The designs did not specify beyond sash windows, showing options for either one-over-one or four-over-

¹⁶ Penrose report in c.1931?

¹⁷ NSP Photo 0327, NSP Photograph Collection, NSLA.

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one vertically-divided units. Plans called for two sandstone chimneys, one on the rear of the building and one on the north elevation.

The most significant alteration was the addition of a second story porch. This is evidenced by the replacement of the porch roof with a shallow, shed roof, and the presence of two doorways on the second story of the façade. The second-story doors were French doors and the roof of the front porch was surrounded by a wood balustrade which was removed at an unknown date (post 1950).¹⁸ The French doors and most of the second story windows are missing and the openings have been covered with plywood.

Toward the end of the period of significance, Warden Fogliani oversaw the conversion of the Warden's Residence into an investigation facility. It was then left vacant for many years and the condition deteriorated. The interior suffered extensive water damage and prison labor was used to remove all of the lathe and plaster, down to the studs. The original tongue and groove wood floors, stairway, turned banisters, and some historic trim remain intact.¹⁹

7. Electrical Shop. c.1926. Contributing Building.

South of the Maintenance Shop is a single-story coursed sandstone building known as the Electrical Shop, built in 1926. It was possibly constructed to house the electrical plant for the prison, also completed that year. However, it may have acquired that use in the 1950s when the prison used the building as a shop for electrical, television, and radio maintenance. The Electrical Shop is built into the hillside and has a lower level walk-out on the west façade. The flat roof is concealed by a low parapet wall. Modern wood stairs lead to the upper level which is entered through a wooden door with two-by-six glazing, sheltered with a metal gabled hood. Beside the door is a large, eight-over-eight wooden window. The other windows in the building are narrow, horizontal, single-glazed windows with iron bars on the exterior.²⁰

8. Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel. c.1880-1928. Non-Contributing Structure.

Excavated into the Quarry wall behind Cell Block B is the c1880s Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel. The tunnel entrance is adjacent to the Shed, but has been closed and filled with concrete.

After the discovery of fossilized footprints in the Prison Yard/Quarry in the nineteenth century, prison administrators oversaw prisoners who excavated tunnels into the Quarry walls in an effort to uncover more footprints. The undertaking was successful and resulted in two more tunnels in 1882-83. In 1927-28, prisoners extended the horseshoe shaped Footprint Tunnel and installed viewing stations, complete with lighting. A sloth

¹⁸ Riddle, 36-37.

¹⁹ Snyder, 53, 58.

²⁰ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1926, to June 30, 1928, Inclusive*, NSLA..

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statue was placed at one of the tunnel entrances.²¹ Unfortunately, today the entrance to the Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel is permanently closed by a block of poured concrete. The Footprint Tunnel was filled with concrete in the 1990s due to fears that in an earthquake the tunnel would undermine the stability of the License Plate Factory, built just above it. Before the concrete was poured, the Nevada State Museum advised prison administrators to place sand and wood barriers on top of the prints so that if the cement were removed the prints might remain. The condition and integrity of the footprints is unknown.²²

9. Sally Port (Courthouse). c.1928. Contributing Building.

Connected to the southwest corner of the Administration Building is the Sally Port/Courthouse. The exterior walls are constructed of rusticated ashlar with a running bond. The archways are Classically-influenced with well-defined voussoirs and a keystone with a molded stone cap. The east archway into the Prison Yard is inscribed with the name Penrose, a former warden, and the date "1928." The archways are filled with square concrete blocks and flush metal doors. The building has no windows except for glass blocks randomly placed among the concrete blocks within the arches. A concrete wheelchair ramp has been added to the exterior doorway on the building's north elevation. The flat roof has wood trim around the cap of the stone walls, and is a single-ply membrane.

When constructed in 1928, the building functioned solely as a sally port, a controlled entry corridor into the Prison Yard. It was hollow and roofless, with arched entryways and iron gates on the north and east elevations, providing access between the exterior and the Prison Yard. In 1966, crews of prisoner and Synanon labor filled in and finished the Sally Port for use as a Courthouse. Workers filled in the arched entry points on the north and east elevations and added the metal doors. They added a roof, and finished the interior, creating a 1,475-foot Courthouse for the prison.²³

10. Fifth Street Guard Tower. 1929. Contributing structure.

Near the Administration Building, inside the prison fence line but inaccessible to inmates, is the only remaining example of three free-standing, stone guard towers built in 1929 under Warden Penrose. The octagonal tower is a 10' by 10' structure built of coursed sandstone masonry. Seven of the building's sides have window openings and the eighth has an entry, but all openings are boarded over with plywood. Original windows appear

²¹ There is a lively discussion in national journals regarding the discovery of the footprints at the Nevada State Prison. Despite their significance to late-nineteenth century zoology, the prints are now covered by concrete, and thus non-contributing to the historic district at this time. See "Ancient Footprints: A Record of Post-Tertiary Man-Gigantic Sandals and Small Men," *The Helena Independent*, August 20, 1882, 1; "Find relics of the Days of Civil War," *The Carson City News*, February 2, 1928, 1:6; "Footprints of Monster Men," *New York Times*, August 18, 1882; Mark Twain, "Carson Footprints," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, March 25, 1885, 1; Robert H. Davis, "Nevada Footprints," *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, 4(1893):598-605, available via Google Books.

²² Gene Hattori, Nevada State Museum, personal communication, 2013.

²³ Snyder, 57; Synanon was a prison reform organization that attempted to provide work experience for prisoners in preparation for eventual release. More on the Synanon movement at the NSP can be found in Section 8.

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to have been one-over-one wooden sash units.²⁴ The decorative metal sheathed roof has an ornamental metal weathervane-like finial, a decorative overhanging fascia, and a molded base. A round-arched opening at the base, under a modern wraparound deck, has a decorative wood door on iron strap hinges. The style of the tower mimics those of free-standing stone towers that were built as part of the c.1868 NSP grounds. The original towers were taller and narrower, but were demolished as part of construction in the 1920s. Of the other two 1929 towers, one was located south of the Sally Port above the Quarry, and the other was located farther east on Fifth Street near the current Storage and Maintenance Building.²⁵

11. Pump House. 1933. Contributing structure.

In the parking lot on the west side of the Administration Building and Sally Port is the Pump House. Built in October of 1933 under Warden Penrose, the Pump House is an 8' by 8' structure made of coursed sandstone ashlar with a barrel-vaulted concrete roof studded with small river cobbles for ornament. Prison administrators located the Pump House here above the original springs to source fresh water for the remainder of the prison, as well as the garden and spring house to the west of the building.²⁶

12. Prison Yard. c.1920-1967. Contributing site.

The Prison Yard achieved its present rectangular form in the 1920s with the construction of the Administration Building, Cell Block A, and Sally Port, however, its current form reflects post-war redevelopment of the complex. The Yard includes mostly open unplanted areas, with raised, rock-lined planting beds along its south border, and flat, ornamental planting beds and rectilinear concrete walkways along its north. An asphalt basketball court surrounded by chain link fence dominates the western half of the Yard. Three concrete walkways cross the remainder of the Yard at angles.

The earliest prison campus from the 1860s contained a rear yard for prisoners, defined by the collection of buildings lining Fifth Street. During the nineteenth century, historic photographs reveal the yard as a simple, dirt enclosure surrounded by a high stone wall. However, the redevelopments of the 1920s demolished this and constructed a new Prison Yard into a form of parterre with broad walkways, rectangular lawn areas, and topiary-like coniferous plantings. Prisoners built and maintained most of the landscape features, which included examples of decorative stonework and stone carving. The grass lawn that appears in a c.1930 aerial photo disappeared by 1962, likely as a result of water prioritization amid an expanding prison population. During the first half of the twentieth

²⁴ Calisphere, University of California Digital Library, digital image A8825, <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt5h4nc5w8/?layout=metadata&brand=calisphere>, (accessed April 10, 2015).

²⁵ "Warden Calls for Books for Library at the State Prison", *Carson City News*, January 6, 1928, 1:5; "Beautifying Grounds At State Prison", *The Carson City News*, April 13, 1928, 1: 3; NSP 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

²⁶ M.R. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police For the Period July 1, 1932, to June 30, 1934, Inclusive*, NSLA.

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century, several stone buildings, referred to as “the Bullpen,” defined the south wall until construction crews razed them in 1967 to make way for the Culinary.²⁷

13. Front Yard and Parking Area, c.1920-1958. Contributing Site.

The Front Yard and Parking Area includes the designed landscape covering the northwest corner of the prison along the approach from Fifth Street. The landscape abuts the north and west elevations of the Administration Building. It provided visitors with an ornamental introduction to the prison’s sandstone buildings, and established a visual border between Fifth Street and the complex.

At present, the Front Yard retains the triangular, grass lawn established in the 1920s. The deciduous trees, mostly elms (*Ulmus* sp.) lining its northern edge have matured since their planting along Fifth Street in the late-nineteenth century. There is a coursed stone wall that runs an abbreviated course from the prison entrance 200 feet to the east along the historic route of Fifth Street. A semi-rectangular space adjacent to the west façade of the Administration Building is the open, paved Parking Area. Designed and built by the time of a 1931 aerial photo, the Parking Area is defined by open parking and turn-around space, anchored around an oval planting bed near the main entrance to the Administration Building. Painted stones similar to those used in the American flag structure (described on page 23) border the planting bed, which is now surrounded by an additional concrete curb.

Early historic photos show very few alterations in spatial organization, circulation, and built features in the site. A ca. 1930 pamphlet about the prison stated, “Today [there are] beautiful lawns [and] every conceivable variety of flower . . . lending a soothing touch to offset the necessary ‘Spanish Lace’ that bars the doors and windows.”²⁸ Aerial photographs from the 1930s indicate that the formal appearance of the lawn retained its character into the late Progressive era, with the addition of what appear to be garden or sculpture features (no longer extant). In the 1931 photo, a small grassy strip fronted the access road, and spelled the words “N. S. PRISON” in river cobble. Prison crews paved most of the exterior road and parking areas with asphalt between 1956 and 1958.²⁹

14. West Lawn and Garden. c.1920-1967. Contributing site.

The West Lawn and Garden encompasses landscaping, walls, water features, and various artistic and structural features on the west side of the campus, outside the prison walls. Situated around and west of what became housing for prison guards, this area reflects developments begun as Warden Penrose’s beautification program in the late 1920s and refined under Wardens Bernard and Fogliani in the 1950s and 60s. The construction of this designed landscape provided not only a gardening opportunity for low-risk prisoners outside the prison fence, but also created a residential landscape for prison staff who

²⁷ Snyder, 106; NSP 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

²⁸ *Picture Story of Nevada State Prison*, undated pamphlet (c.1930), Pamphlet HV9475 N32 P53, Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada; “Perils of Fire Faces Many U.S. Prisons.” *Syracuse Herald*, April 25, 1930, 21.

²⁹ Snyder, 106.

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lived on site with their families. The area straddles a service road, and is defined by a the outer security fence running along its east side along the edge of the controlled prison grounds, along its west by an irrigation ditch, hedge, and remnant stone wall, and on the north by a dressed sandstone wall.

The dressed sandstone wall at the northern edge of the lawn runs along the south side of the parking lot. The wall incorporates a stone carved with the name "Warden A. E. Bernard" and the date "1957," and it terminates at both ends at pillars with decorative molded tops. On the south side of the wall is the aforementioned Greenhouse Foundation and a roughly square water pool. The pool has both coursed stone and rock pilings lining its banks, and was in use to support the prison's gardening operation by 1920.³⁰

The landscaped grounds follow the west side of the access road to the Cottages and the Warm Springs Correctional Center (WSCC) and include an open, terraced lawn area to the south of the Armory. Aerial photographs show this area attained its present spatial organization and tree composition by the 1930s, although the grounds were generally used for gardening. Trees are a mixture of cottonwood (*Populus* sp.) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.). A 1962 aerial shows a transition in the intervening years towards open lawns with modest landscape features.³¹

There are several landscape features in the lawn area with unknown dates of construction, although all appear to date from the 1950s or later. On the north side of the lawn is a circular fountain constructed of white, reddish, and green stone with an octagonal walkway border of the same stone. The 1962 aerial photograph shows the fountain in this location. Near the midpoint of the lawn area are stone walkways, a stone-lined swale, and a footbridge paved with white, green, and reddish rock, as well as a double terrace with stone and concrete retaining walls. Just north of, and below, the retaining walls are white river cobblestones that spell out "WSCC" (for Warm Springs Correctional Center). The rise with the terraces appears to be the remnants of a filled-in swimming pool constructed by 1954. The grounds continue as a narrowing triangular lawn opposite the cottages, shaded by cottonwood and elm trees, slightly raised above a marshy area on the west side and ending opposite Cottage 6.

Just south of Cottage 6 is a grotto-like feature with a small sunken pool of cold water, rock faces, sandstone rubble-paved slopes, stone-lined beds and walkway, and a stone bench. The feature appears in the 1962 aerial photo series, and was possibly constructed along with the Cottages in the 1950s.

The steep slope south of the Sally Port was graded, planted at the top with cottonwood trees, converted to lawn, and ornamented with a large US flag formed of painted river

³⁰ Snyder's history relates a 112,000 gallon reservoir constructed west of the prison that captured Warm Springs water for use to irrigate farmland north of 5th Avenue. It is quite likely that the extant pool is the reservoir, constructed in 1910. The pool appears in the first aerial photographs of the prison taken in 1931; NSP Photo 0005, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA; Snyder, 61.

³¹ NSP 0005 and NSP 004, Nevada State Prison Photograph collection, NSLA.

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cobbles between 1929 and 1931. Stones painted red, white, and blue form the letters USA at the top. South of this, behind the Cottages, are remnant rock terraces and concrete planting beds that were previously interspersed into a post-war residential landscape. There is also an entrance to a tunnel of unknown original function which appears in a c. 1931 aerial photo, located east of Cottages 1 and 2. At the foot of the slope are vestiges of a line of garages that formerly stood behind the Cottages.

15. Prison Trash Dump – Early. c.1907-1940. Contributing Site.

The Nevada State Prison trash dump is a disperse scatter of prison related refuse located east of the prison fence and extending almost to Fairview Drive. The trash dump consists of domestic and industrial debris widely scattered over an irregular area measuring approximately 1300 feet by 450 feet. The dump contains thousands of diagnostic artifacts, characterized by concentrated trash mounds as well as scatters of diagnostic glass, ceramic and metal fragments including tin cups and license plate fragments. Most of the dump surface is composed of scattered individual fragments of discarded materials. However, a concentration of trash mounds containing high densities of cultural materials occurs near the center of the dump. Diagnostic artifacts in these piles include cut nails and colored glass, and an applied lip bottle neck indicating a possible association with the mid-nineteenth century period. Larger mounds, perhaps the result of mechanical clean-up and dumping by truck are also present. Temporal indicators (maker's marks, trademarks, distinctive manufacturing elements) indicate that most of the mounded and scattered debris dates to the early and mid-twentieth century. A concentration of construction debris is located in the northwest quadrant of the dump and includes dressed sandstone blocks, "T" beams, concrete slabs and heavy iron doors. A granite mano and red chert secondary flake indicate that the area was likely used prehistorically.

While debris is not in its primary context, extant portions of the dump retain integrity of materials, setting, feeling, and association. While the movement of the dump materials has disrupted its depositional integrity, the volume of cultural materials present allows for reasonable "presence-or-absence" information potential. Subsequent cleanup of the area resulted in mounding of refuse and topsoil, but all debris remains within the dump extent. Mounds and scatters of debris within the trash dump contain data that can address research questions relating to prison operation and use over time. Functional artifact categories observed within the dump include: domestic items relating to food preparation and consumption; personal items relating to hygiene, grooming and health; activities, including those related to prison industries and maintenance; and architectural items consisting of construction hardware, materials, and utilities.

The association of the dump site with the prison, and the presence of prison-related cultural materials in volume, allow the dump site to contribute information potential to the significance of the prison. Future archaeological analysis of the dump site may help researchers answer questions about the daily social lives of prisoners and guards, the material culture of the prisoners and guards, and the diet of both prisoners and guards. The building refuse may also contribute to analysis of any changes in construction over

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time, differences in workmanship or materials used in buildings that are no longer extant, and perhaps even what tools were used to work the stone in what periods. By retaining clear association with the prison's historical context, and possessing integrity in materials, setting, feeling, and association, the dump site contributes to the significance of the NSP under Criterion D.

There may be additional archaeological features within the historic district relating to the 1920-1940 period, but a formal archaeological survey and evaluation will be needed to confirm their presence and integrity.

The Modern Period – 1940 to 1967

Following the Second World War, the NSP underwent a second major phase of development as administrators sought to expand and update the prison campus. Development of new technology alongside expansion of services led to the addition of new buildings and some modification of existing buildings to suit new needs. NSP administrators converted the once-hollow Sally Port into an enclosed Courthouse. Dedicated library and culinary facilities freed space in the cell blocks to house more prisoners as the number of incarcerated persons in State facilities rose steadily in the 1950s and 60s. While the prison continued to expand after 1967 due to massive increases in the number of incarcerated citizens in Nevada, modifications after that date were generally concentrated in the "Hill Units" located on the eastern side of the NSP campus and outside the historic district boundary.

16. Security Fence Foundations. 1942. Contributing Structure.

There are concrete and stone foundations for chain link fence courses interspersed atop the Quarry wall and running southward toward the Cemetery, likely completed in 1942. The fences were replaced and upgraded on these courses in 1960 under Warden Fogliani.³² Many of these historic fence lines have been demolished and built over with new courses of modern chain link fence, likely in the 1980s. By that time, the expansion of the NSP to include the Hill Units required the replacement of most of the fences with new materials and courses. Among the best intact foundations of the 1942 fence can be found along the ridge top east of the Cottages and north of the Prison Cemetery.

17. Cell Block B. 1948. Contributing Building.

South of Cell Block A, and connected to it, is Cell Block B, a four-story, coursed sandstone masonry building constructed in 1948. The window openings are barred and have sandstone lintels and sills. The metal window sashes feature a nine-by-nine glazing pattern. The roof is flat and has a railing around its perimeter to allow guards to patrol. As built, NSP staff projected that Cell Block B would house 216 inmates. During the building's construction, crews removed the stone tower guard posts on the corners of the adjacent Cell Block A, replacing them with steel and glass towers at the south corners of

³² Snyder, 97, 109; NSP 0002, NSLA.

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Cell Block B. A plaque on the interior identifies the architect as Edward S. Parsons and the contractor as the Walker Boudwin Construction Company.³³

18. Armory (Property Warehouse). 1950. Contributing Building.

Just south of the Greenhouse is the Armory, a one-story, gabled building with wood lapboard siding and a concrete block half wall around the perimeter above the foundation. The windows and doors are boarded over. Prisoners constructed the building in 1950. It originally served as a warehouse and armory storage building. It has been vacant since at least 2009. Aside from the addition of a newer composition shingle roof, there have been no significant changes to this building.

19. Storage and Maintenance Building. 1952. Contributing Building.

East of the Warden's House is the Storage and Maintenance Building, a one-story, rusticated sandstone building with a side gabled roof, measuring 30' by 100'. In the southeast corner of the building is an inscription stone carved with name of Warden A. E. Bernard and the date 1952. The roof is sheathed with corrugated metal. The building is elongated with four entrances on the west façade and garage bays and doors on the rear/east elevation. One of the front entrances has been filled in with concrete slump block, and another contains a modern air conditioner unit. Prison administrators made at least two additions to the building prior to 1962, both of which extended it to the north. The first of these was a single car garage built with a coursed sandstone foundation and panel and batten walls, and the second, a ragwork stone addition extending north to the historic route of Fifth Street.³⁴

The Cottages (#20-25)

On the west end of the complex, outside the prison fence, are a set of cottages designed and built in the 1950s to provide on-site residences for prison guards and their families. All of the cottages are constructed of rusticated sandstone laid in a running bond and low-pitch, asphalt composition shingle roofs. They all have inset porches supported by wooden posts and containing a large picture window on their west façades. All other windows are wooden one-over-one sash units. The boxed eaves on the five hipped-roof units appear to have been reconstructed recently, and the roofs recently replaced. However, some of the units have slight modifications that distinguish them from the others, detailed below. There were sandstone, front-gabled garage buildings constructed for these cottages in the late 1950s, but these were demolished between 2004 and 2006.³⁵

³³ NSP 0107 and 0108; Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1946, to June 30, 1948, Inclusive*, NSLA.

³⁴ NSP Photo 0002, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

³⁵ John Snyder, *Nevada State Prison History*, State of Nevada – Department of Transportation, Carson City, NV (March 2005), 106, and Attachment photos NSP-27 and NSP-28; NSP 0002, Nevada State Prison Photograph Collection, NSLA.; Aerial photographs available at Carson City's public GIS webpage show the garages present in 2004, but absent in the next series in 2006.

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20. Cottage 1 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

At an early date, likely before 1960, a stone pony-wall was added around the porch of this cottage. The pony-wall uses a random un-coursed pattern. A sandstone exterior chimney is on the north side of the house. The front picture window has an octagonal accent window. There are remnants of an enclosed, lapboard shed roof entry added onto the rear elevation that has since been partially removed.³⁶

21. Cottage 2 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

Aside from the features listed above, this unit has a small, enclosed shed addition on the east elevation.

22. Cottage 3 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

23. Cottage 4 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

24. Cottage 5 – Hipped Roof Box. 1953. Contributing Building.

See description of “The Cottages.” No special features present on this unit.

25. Cottage 6 – Minimal Traditional. 1955. Contributing Building.

Cottage 6 is a Minimal Traditional type house with one story and a side-gabled roof. Cottage 6 was built from sandstone cut to the dimensions of standard bricks. Red bricks have been used as an accent around the windows to mimic shutters. The front porch has ladder-like wood supports. There is a small, enclosed shed addition on the east elevation.

26. Greenhouse Foundation. 1957. Contributing Structure.

West of the main gate are the remains and stone foundation of the former Greenhouse. The remains and foundation include a two foot high stone foundation made of uncoursed sandstone masonry and capped with a poured concrete sill. A rectangular, concrete trench in the middle of the floor is fed with water from the warm springs. Historic photos show that a similar building appears to have been constructed in the 1920s and included a wood framed, front-gabled greenhouse building set on the foundation and designed to keep the plants from freezing in the winter. However, records and a carved block reading A.E. Bernard, Warden, 1957, indicate it was demolished and reconstructed in that year.³⁷

27. Boiler Plant. 1958. Contributing Building.

South of the License Plate Factory is the Boiler Plant, a 65’ by 40’, painted, pre-cast concrete building constructed in 1958. It has a primary one and a half story section on its south side consisting of the boiler and utility room, with a two-story section to the north.

³⁶ The Quarry stopped active production by 1960, so it is unlikely that any stone work on the campus was completed after that date.

³⁷ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1952, to June 30, 1954, Inclusive*, NSLA.

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Both sections have a flat roof, and multiple pedestrian and freight doors with multi-light glazing. Windows are predominantly paired, two-by-two steel frame windows. The building's west elevation includes a ribbon of paired windows along the full length of the two-story section, providing light into the boiler and utility room.³⁸

28. Kennel. c.1950s. Contributing Building.

Southwest of the Butcher Shop, but still north of the prison fence line, is a 60' by 25', side-gabled building constructed from coursed sandstone masonry. The building has a moderately pitched gable roof sheathed with corrugated metal. The gables have wood siding. On the north elevation, toward the northwest corner are three large sliding bay doors. There are some paired, fixed windows on the building. The construction date and original function of the building is unknown but it appears to have been built between the 1930s and 1950s as a maintenance or storage building. However the use of quarry stone indicates it was built prior to 1960, after which the Quarry was no longer in use. It served as a kennel for guard dogs in the 1970s.³⁹

29. Cell Block C. c. 1960. Contributing Building.

Cell Block C is a two-story building connected to the south elevation of Cell Block B. It is constructed of pre-cast concrete and has an asphalt, low-pitched gabled roof and barred windows. Constructed in about 1960, this building became a separate block to house high-security inmates, and for use as a solitary confinement facility. Although possessing a separate floor plan, it served as an addition onto the south elevation of Cell Block B, extending the east definition of the Prison Yard southward by several hundred feet. The construction of the Culinary eventually eliminated this relationship to the Prison Yard.⁴⁰

30. License Plate Factory. c. 1962. Contributing Building.

East of Cell Block A is the License Plate Factory. The factory is a 180' by 40' concrete masonry building constructed by 1962. It has a shallow gable roof, high ribbon windows in multiple sets, and billboard-style painted signage on the north gable end. There is a two-story, shed-roof projection on the west elevation. The first story of the projection is concrete block, with a single door on its north elevation. The second story of the projection is corrugated steel.⁴¹

31. Two Tower. 1962. Contributing Building.

South of the Electrical Shop is a 12' by 12' pre-cast concrete guard tower with an asphalt roof with a wide overhang. An interior staircase climbs up three stories to the guard room at the top. The majority of the tower has squared concrete walls. The guard post portion

³⁸ NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

³⁹ The construction date of the Kennel is unknown but it does appear in the 1962 aerial photograph set. NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

⁴⁰ NSP 0001, Nevada State Prison photograph collection, NSLA.

⁴¹ The License Plate Factory does not appear in an aerial photo series from 1962. However, it was constructed shortly thereafter and appears in photographs of the prison from the late 1960s. It is also mentioned in subsequent reports by Warden Fogliani prior to his removal in 1967.

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has a concrete half wall and glass picture windows that are canted outward to the roof overhang and provide a full view of the prison.

32. One Tower (Main Gate). 1963. Contributing Building.

One Tower, a pre-cast concrete 18' by 18' building constructed in 1963 sits at the northwest entrance to the prison. The first floor is canted inward, and contains ribbons of aluminum framed windows on all four sides. The walls of the second story are made of canted glass windows. The roof is flat with a wide overhang, and is topped by several utility and communications modules.

33. Three Tower. 1966. Contributing Building.

Three Tower stands on a single, round steel support with an octagonal guard room at the top. The structure contains twenty-five square feet and is accessed by a spiral steel stair outside the prison fence, with the entrance via a platform on the south face of the octagon. The guard room itself has a metal half wall canted inward, joining a continuous ribbon of steel-frame windows that are canted outward. The roof is flat, with flat metal faces approximately two feet in height above the windows.

34. Culinary and Dining Hall. 1966. Contributing Building.

North of the southern Quarry wall is the one-story Culinary and Dining Hall. Built in 1966 with International stylistic influences, the Culinary consists of a 65' by 125' primary building, with a 40' by 100' addition onto its east elevation. Both sections of the building are constructed from concrete block and share a flat, single-ply membrane roof with a large face along the eave with evenly spaced block brackets. Though of concrete and steel construction, the exterior walls are faced with square tile. The compatible east addition was added in 1999.⁴²

Post-Modern Construction

After 1967, there remained some modest construction within the main prison complex for basic needs and further increases in the prison population. The dominant construction phase after the historic period was the addition of the "Hill Units" east of the historic NSP campus. There have also been infrastructural upgrades including a larger water tank and accessory buildings constructed on the east side of the campus. Both the Hill Units and accessory buildings are not within the historic district.

35. Gymnasium and Book Bindery. 1976. Non-contributing Building.

South of the Boiler Room is the Gymnasium and Book Bindery Building, a prefabricated building with metal siding and a metal gabled roof. It was constructed in 1976. The Book Bindery occupies 4,137 square feet of the building and the Gymnasium occupies 7,980 square feet of the building.

⁴² "1998 Aerial Photos" and "2001 Aerial Photos" layers, Carson City public GIS web tool, <http://ccapps.org/publicgis/>, accessed 3/9/2015;

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36. Chain Link Security Fence. c.1980s. Non-contributing Structure.

Most of the historic campus is surrounded by two runs of chain-link fence of approximately twelve feet, topped with concertino wire. Aluminum posts are spaced at approximately ten feet. These courses of chain-link were most likely added after the construction of the Hill Units to provide additional security. Many of the fence courses run along historic courses established in 1942 or 1960.⁴³

37. Shed. c. 2000. Non-contributing Building.

Beside the blocked off entrance to the Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel is a small shed built from concrete blocks with a front gabled roof. The construction date of the shed is approximately 2000.

38. Maintenance Shop. 2004. Non-contributing Building.

East of the Storage and Maintenance Office is the Maintenance Shop, a 40' by 100' prefabricated building with metal siding and a metal roof. It is on a concrete slab foundation and was built in 2004.

Integrity of the District

The Nevada State Prison retains good integrity in all seven aspects during its period of significance from 1920-1967. The campus as a whole reflects the result of continuous evolution in administration at a site that has been used by the State of Nevada as a prison from 1862 to 2012. The historic district in particular represents the period between 1920 and 1967 when the prison operated using rehabilitative methods established in the Progressive Era and refined after the Second World War. The overall integrity of setting, feeling, and association of the NSP has been well retained.

The buildings themselves retain strong integrity in design, workmanship, and materials. The heavy use of prisoner-crafted sandstone from the Quarry prior to 1960 is still very evident. Most historic buildings within the district have received very few modifications to their design or finishes since the historic period, with most changes being interior infrastructural upgrades. The non-contributing buildings within the district are compatible with the significance of the NSP as a prison complex. Due to the absence of extant, confirmed resources from prior to 1920 that possess integrity, and the questionable informational potential of archaeological resources dating prior to 1920, the period of significance does not include the earliest period of the prison's operation between 1862 and 1920. While a small number of resources appear to date from before the 1920 reconstruction phase, their construction dates cannot be confirmed. Furthermore, although the Prison Quarry was present and in operation as early as 1862, subsequent construction and deterioration has limited the historic integrity of the Quarry to that period, so that the resource reflects its operation during the early and mid twentieth century.

Although no formal archaeological investigations have been completed, there is an expectation of information potential in the Prison Trash Dump site within the district. There is reasonable information potential within the prison grounds for other archaeological deposits that are not

⁴³ Snyder, 109.

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known at this time. Due to the significant amount of ground disturbance since 1920, subsequent building construction, and paucity of pre-twentieth century diagnostic artifacts in the Prison Trash Dump, Nevada SHPO archaeologists do not consider the district to retain information potential for the prison prior to the campus' redevelopment in the 1920s. Future discoveries and further research may reveal information potential for this area, if intact resources or deposits are identified.

The various landscapes and associated features retain strong integrity to the period of significance in their spatial organization, species composition, land use patterns, and topography. Most changes since the period of significance have been minor additions or subtractions of designed landscape features. Most of the new landscape features are decorative elements in the West Lawn and Garden that are compatible with the overall character of the site as a park-like recreational space.

Returned

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

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Period of Significance

1920-1967

Significant Dates

1920 – Construction begins on main campus

1967 – End of rehabilitation-focused methods at NSP

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

DeLongchamps, Frederic J.

Parsons, Edward S.

Heidenreich, William M.

Nevada Engineering Construction Company

Panicari, G.

Walker Boudwin Construction Company

Returned

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Nevada State Prison is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the Area of Politics and Government for its association with Nevada's state administration, specifically, its adoption and refinement of prison reforms in the twentieth century. The Nevada State Prison (NSP) represents Nevada's implementation of rehabilitative methods of penology by 1920, and the refining of those practices after the Second World War. The NSP is also significant under Criterion D for its potential to yield information about prisoner and guard life in the

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twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1920, the year in which the state began a massive reconstruction of the prison to establish a new campus that emphasized prisoner rehabilitation. The period closes in 1967 with the transition from those rehabilitative methods of corrections to contemporary, security-based modes of prison administration. Between 1920 and 1967, NSP administrators created a built environment that emphasized the treatment of prisoners as patients who could be rehabilitated through labor. Among the various work programs established for NSP inmates was the quarrying and cutting of sandstone, the construction of prison campus buildings, and the development and maintenance of the prison's landscape. In 1967, the administration of the prison, and the treatment of its prisoners, changed dramatically towards a system that emphasized security and control, leading into the contemporary age of prison management in the United States.⁴⁴

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Establishing Nevada State Prison, 1862-1864

Until 2012, the Nevada State Prison (NSP) was the anchor facility of Nevada's oldest state agency, and served as the only state correctional institution in Nevada from 1864 through 1964. The site began as a makeshift territorial prison following the establishment of Nevada as a territory in 1862. Americans and immigrants flocked to what became western Nevada in 1859, seeking riches from the newly discovered Comstock Lode in Virginia City.⁴⁵ As a result, Congress officially recognized the Nevada Territory in 1861, and the following year the territorial legislature provided that a prison be established at the capital of Carson City. The population boom following the "Rush to Washoe" exposed the need for an organized correctional system in Nevada, precipitating the development of one of Nevada's oldest institutions.

Nevada adopted the tiered correctional system that had become the standard throughout the United States. Tiered corrections established a combined system of county jails, state prisons, and federal prisons, each with its own purpose. While federal penitentiaries exclusively housed those who had violated federal laws, state and county institutions interacted more closely. Each tended to house convicts under state or county law, respectively, but state prisons often housed convicts with long-term sentences from throughout the state, regardless of whether local or state law had been violated. The Nevada legislature formed a Prison Commission in 1862 and charged it with finding a suitable building to serve as the state prison. Because no such building existed, legislator and Carson City founder Abraham Curry offered to board prisoners at his Warm Springs Hotel east of Carson City for \$500 per month.⁴⁶ Curry's land featured a warm freshwater spring and a sandstone Quarry, upon which he built a stone bathhouse and hotel.

⁴⁴ James W. Hulse, *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted*, (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 291-92.

⁴⁵ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 75.

⁴⁶ Snyder. 2-3.

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Upon its conversion to a prison in 1862, the Hotel housed four prisoners who spent their time laboring in the Quarry. Curry served as their warden, agreeing to “keep all convicts for their labor, and a bonus of \$6,000 more or less per annum. He will employ them in his extensive stone Quarry, and has already prepared cells etc., for their safe retention.”⁴⁷ Curry sold the property to the Nevada Territory for \$80,000 in March of 1864. The twenty-acre purchase included the thirty-eight-cell former hotel building that measured thirty-two by ninety-six feet, the sandstone Quarry with its tools and horse teams, and use of Curry’s adjacent toll road. Despite its reuse as a prison, the property retained the impression of a crude frontier hotel: canvas lined the interior walls, the roof was composed of wood shingles, and no fences or walls existed around the building’s perimeter. Period newspapers also indicate that the hotel portion remained available for public accommodations for several years after the transfer.⁴⁸

The Reformatory Movement at the Nevada State Prison, 1864-1900

On October 31, 1864, Nevada made the transition from territory to statehood, and on November 5, the prison officially became a state-administered institution. From its earliest days through the modern era, the NSP sought to adopt nationally-recognized correctional practices. However, limited funding often hampered this goal, leading to only scattered adoption of Reformatory practices until the twentieth century. Despite the institution’s status as Nevada’s first state agency, its management remained somewhat provincial in its early years. In 1864, Warden Howland added the first cell block, known as the Territorial addition, to the campus to house the nineteen inmates of the prison. In 1865, J.S. Crosman assumed wardenship, inheriting twenty-two inmates and a dismal budget. In spite of fiscal constraints, Crosman successfully secured funding to complete construction of a twelve-foot high security fence around the Hotel, Quarry, and Prison Yard, as well as guardhouses, two water wells, an icehouse, an enclosed garden, and a cellar. He also constructed an addition to the Hotel measuring thirty-two by forty-one feet, which provided fourteen additional two-person cells.⁴⁹

Among the consistently defining features of the prison was the stone Quarry, included in the 1864 deed. The deed granted to the State of Nevada “all the quarried stone now on said premises.” In addition to the spring waters, the NSP’s outcrop of sandstone provided raw materials for building purposes and began operation by 1861. While early stonecutting at the Quarry was a commercial venture of Curry’s, stonecutting soon became a source of revenue and an occupation for prisoners. Nevertheless, as late as 1870, non-inmate quarrymen worked alongside the prisoners to blast out rock for the Nevada State Capitol (NRIS#75002126).⁵⁰

A prison escape in December of 1865 illuminated the need for improved security, in spite of the new fence. A group of inmates were able to loosen mortar and dig their way out of the main

⁴⁷ Undated newspaper article, “Nevada State Prison,” ephemera file, Nevada State Library, Carson City.

⁴⁸ Snyder, 4; Nevada Statute 1864: 66 “An act to provide for a territorial prison;” Ormsby County Deed Book 8, 63; Raymond Smith, *Carson City Yesterdays*, Vol. 1, (Minden, NV, 1999), 29.

⁴⁹ Snyder, 4-5.

⁵⁰ Ormsby County Deed Book 8, 64; Robinson, *Nevada Directory of 1862*, 1, 3, 5-8, 11; “Warden’s Report and Inventory, 1864,” Nevada State Prison ephemera files, NSLA; Dolan, “Pages from the Past,” April 30, 1972. The 1862 business directory lists five stonecutters as boarders at Curry’s Warm Springs Hotel, presumably cutting and facing stone for projects in the Eagle Valley region.

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building.⁵¹ As a result, Warden Crosman plastered the interior walls of the prison, in addition to raising the southwest security wall by four feet. In 1866, Crosman also increased the size of the prison yard by blasting out the Quarry, constructed a masonry water tank that delivered water to the kitchen, and added a twenty-two by seventy-eight foot room to the rear of the main building.⁵²

The subsequent management of the NSP responded both to national trends in prison management and Nevada's population trends in the second half of the nineteenth century. The expansions and improvements outlined below were a response to overcrowding at the NSP, mirroring national trends that saw a swell in inmate population between 1868 and 1878.⁵³ The NSP's population increases correlate with the state's early mining boom between 1859 and 1879.⁵⁴ According to Warden James Slingerland, the population at the NSP tripled from 41 in 1867 to 128 in 1869. Because of the crowded conditions, the 1873 Legislature passed a law mandating a new prison, large enough to house 300 inmates and to be constructed in nearby Reno.⁵⁵ However, the project ran over budget, and the massive spending resulted in only a partial perimeter wall being built at the Reno location. The 1877 Nevada State Legislature refused to provide additional appropriations for the construction of the state prison at Reno, and the site was abandoned.⁵⁶ In 1877, the inmate population at the NSP ballooned to 144, forcing guards to house the prisoners in the prison's fifty-three cells.⁵⁷ According to early-twentieth century historian Blake McKelvey, the overpopulation problem was a result of Nevada "thronging with desperadoes" in the "boom days" of the 1870s, but may have been influenced by a rise in crime following the end of 'bonanza' mining in the late-1870s.⁵⁸ The prison's population remained relatively steady until 1888, when it declined to 99, reflecting the decrease in Nevada's population as people began to leave the state for employment elsewhere. After this drop, the prison population remained steady into the 1900s.⁵⁹

The appointment of James Slingerland to the NSP wardenship in 1867 signaled the beginning of the prison's early Reformatory period. Despite Nevada's relative youth as a state, the legislature and administrators attempted to adopt contemporary strategies for prison management. Shortly after Slingerland, assumed wardenship, a kitchen fire consumed much of the prison, largely sparing the "Territorial Addition," but precipitating some of the first Reformatory changes at the institution. Slingerland began a reconstruction project that helped establish the prison as a state institution, replacing the improvised frontier hotel with a dedicated iron-and-stone penitentiary, adding two dungeons for solitary confinement, iron gates, and a locking mechanism that he

⁵¹ Snyder, 7.

⁵² Snyder, 6.

⁵³ Blake McKelvey, *American Prisons*, (University of Chicago, Chicago: 1936), 76.

⁵⁴ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 101.

⁵⁵ Snyder, 17.

⁵⁶ Snyder, 28.

⁵⁷ C.C. Batterman, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1877 and 1878*, NSLA.

⁵⁸ McKelvey, 197.

⁵⁹ Snyder, 33; Hulse, *The Silver State*, 162. Frank J. McCullough, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1889 and 1890*, NSLA.

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designed himself.⁶⁰ Compared to other Gothic and Romanesque Revival style state prisons that were popular during the late nineteenth century, the NSP was relatively modest in appearance, yet it did possess a number of architectural flourishes. The ornamental gates, medievalist octagonal watchtowers, and roof-top cupola seen in historic photographs suggest a conception of the prison as a State institution worthy of such embellishments. The prison's proximity to the Warm Springs resort may also have encouraged a more decorative approach.⁶¹

Slingerland's developments echoed an ideological shift in American penology away from the harsh discipline of the Auburn System, which enforced absolute silence and solitary confinement at night. Prisons throughout the country began adopting a rehabilitative approach known as the Reformatory System, compelled by an 1867 report on correctional institutions. In that year, the New York Prison Association employed Enoch Wines and Theodore Dwight to examine prison conditions in the United States and Canada. Wines and Dwight emerged from their investigation with a list of recommendations, including larger cells, better sanitation, rehabilitation incentives, and non-corporal punishment.⁶² Despite the call for improved conditions for prisoners, the report also espoused simplicity of construction. To Wines and Dwight, "highly ornamental" prisons were "objectionable" because they were more expensive to build, increasing the cost of crime to society. Wines and Dwight argued that investment in architectural adornment would discourage prison authorities from modifying or replacing their facilities in the event that evolving prison theory suggested better arrangements. The authors also claimed that ornamental prisons lent "dignity" to crime. While their suggestions were not broadly adopted until the 1876 establishment of Elmira Reformatory in New York, their influence became apparent in Warden Slingerland's sanitation improvements at the NSP. Beginning in 1867, Slingerland implemented several improvements to the facility, including increasing ventilation by installing transoms over doors and draining the adjacent marshland. Despite his desire to improve health and hygiene at the prison, Warden Slingerland insisted that he had "not proposed to consume precious time in trying to make an unmitigated rascal an honest man."⁶³

Among the key Reformatory developments at the NSP was the creation of a Public Account system of penal labor, which involved producing goods onsite and selling them on the open market.⁶⁴ This was common for correctional facilities in the nineteenth century, which largely administered prisoner labor for two reasons: to cover operating expenses and to dispense punishment. Warden Crosman reported that prisoners were put to work cutting stone in the Quarry, and the prison sold much of the sandstone that it produced. The quarried sandstone, either rubble or dressed, often went to projects in nearby Carson City, including the First United Methodist Church (NRIS# 11000785, contributing resource to the Westside Historic District), the United States Mint (NRIS# 75002127), the Nevada State Printing Office (NRIS# 78003212),

⁶⁰ James Slingerland, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years of 1867 and 1868*, NSLA.

⁶¹ Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 12-18.

⁶² John W. Roberts, *Retribution and Reform: An Illustrated History of America's Prisons*, (American Correctional Institution by United Book Press, Inc., Baltimore: 1997), 61.

⁶³ Slingerland, 1869; Wines and Dwight, *Report on the Prisons and Reformatories*, x, 109-111.

⁶⁴ Slingerland, 1869, 82.

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the Governor James W. Nye Mansion (NRIS# 75002128) and the Armory building.⁶⁵ In 1869, the Nevada State Legislature passed the Capitol Building Act, which required that the new capitol building (NRIS# 75002126) in Carson City be constructed of sandstone cut from the Nevada State Prison Quarry. According to the act, the NSP did not receive compensation for the stone. In order to supply the amount of stone required, the legislature charged Slingerland with expanding the Quarry operation, which including demolishing the yard's south fence and employing 60-70 inmates at a time to cut stone.⁶⁶

Although Slingerland only tacitly adopted Reformatory concepts, the 1873 appointment of P.C. Hyman introduced a period of formal incorporation of Reformatory principles. Hyman arrived in the wake of a prison riot and prison break occurring within ten months of each other. Witnessing an inadequate prison wall as a security threat, Hyman commissioned a fourteen-to-eighteen foot high wall that connected to the high Quarry wall.⁶⁷ In an effort to ensure the prison was adequately managed, the Nevada Prison Commission sent Warden Hyman to the 1874 Prison Congress of the United States.⁶⁸ The National Prison Association held these annual meetings beginning in 1870, during which the organization adopted a Declaration of Principles that recommended the reformatory concept.⁶⁹ The yearly meeting served as a gathering to share new ideas, models, and trends in American penology. Hyman returned with new designs for the NSP based on the reformatory model. During his tenure, Hyman oversaw the construction of a new dining room, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, shoemaking shop, and tailor shop.⁷⁰ The warden sought additional opportunities to employ inmate labor, and he intended to use the shoemaking shop to do so.⁷¹ The enterprise was successful from 1874 to 1877, after which shoe production and sales steadily declined.

Frank McCullough succeeded Hyman and continued operations at the Quarry and shoemaking shop during his tenure beginning in 1887. Under McCullough, prisoners continued to cut stone to be used in onsite construction as well as other state projects; in 1887, the warden commissioned the construction of a Butcher Shop, water building, and improved walls using prison-quarried stone.⁷² In his 1887 report, Warden McCullough insisted that the shoemaking shop, despite its operation at a deficit, proved valuable for the rehabilitation and vocational training of inmates.⁷³ He recommended maintaining the shoemaking shop in order to provide employment to inmates, in spite of its poor economic returns. However, when Warden Frank Bell assumed the wardenship in 1893, he closed the shoemaking shop, unable to justify its continued deficit.

Amid the adoption of Reformatory practices, the NSP became nationally celebrated for a discovery unrelated to corrections. In 1882, prisoners in the quarry discovered fossil tracks in the

⁶⁵ Snyder, 9, 32.

⁶⁶ Snyder, 13.

⁶⁷ Snyder, 16.

⁶⁸ Snyder, 17.

⁶⁹ Roberts, 62.

⁷⁰ Snyder, 16-17.

⁷¹ Snyder, 17.

⁷² Snyder, 33.

⁷³ Snyder, 32.

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sandstone that became not only a unique tourist attraction for the prison but a source of revenue to expand the institution's Reformatory program.⁷⁴ Though fossil discoveries were common in the NSP Quarry, the discovery of oddly shaped, eerily human-looking fossilized footprints prompted a formal investigation by the California Academy of Sciences. The Academy dispatched C. Drayton Gibbs, H.W. Harkness, and Joseph LeConte to the scene and the investigators documented footprints measuring eighteen to twenty inches long and eight inches wide. Despite theories about the prints belonging to a prehistoric humanoid, scholars eventually determined that the tracks were made by a prehistoric sloth. The press and scholarly attention devoted to the footprints drew more than 5,000 visitors over a two year period, and the tourist interest influenced the physical development of the prison grounds.⁷⁵ The prison could not curtail quarrying to accommodate the interest; therefore, inmates excavated a tunnel into the Quarry wall with the hope of uncovering more of the footprints, assuming that if prints were inside the tunnel, they could be protected without impeding the everyday function of the prison and the Quarry. The effort was successful, and the revenue raised from the collection of visitors' fees helped to further expand the facility supporting the construction of a prison library as well as the acquisition of a prison chaplain. The sloth prints also provided a degree of international attention, featured in history books, scientific journals, and satire of the period.⁷⁶

The Progressive Era and the Nevada State Prison, 1900 – 1940

The Progressive Era, generally defined as the period between 1890 and 1920, began as a drive for social reform that developed into a national movement by the twentieth century. Among the tenets of American Progressivism was the concept that social problems should be addressed by providing education, safety, and efficiency in economics and the workplace. Nevadans shared these ideals, and became active in the Progressive movement by 1900, seeking to make their State government a "responsive and effective instrument in relieving the social and economic distress of the people."⁷⁷ The movement greatly influenced American penology in the early twentieth century, reflecting a refinement of the Reformatory concept that the NSP fully embraced by 1900. This echoed national prison trends of the time, as the Auburn System's influence disappeared from American penitentiaries, with the exception of Auburn-style architecture.⁷⁸ Moreover, prison commissions widely accepted Reformatory practices that emphasized prisoner rehabilitation and improved sanitation while rejecting exploitation and degradation.⁷⁹ The quintessential Progressive reformer, Theodore Roosevelt further extolled a prisoner's right to "proper work, health, reasonable moral and mental training, and...rehabilitation" in his 1913 work *The New Penology*, arguments that became the defining

⁷⁴ Garrard, William, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the Nevada State Prison for the Years 1881 and 1882*, NSLA.

⁷⁵ Snyder, 31; There is a lively discussion in national journals regarding the discovery of the footprints at the Nevada State Prison. Despite their significance to late-nineteenth century zoology, the prints are now covered by concrete, and thus non-contributing to the historic district at this time. See "Ancient Footprints: A Record of Post-Tertiary Man-Gigantic Sandals and Small Men," *The Helena Independent*, August 20, 1882, 1; "Find relics of the Days of Civil War," *The Carson City News*, February 2, 1928, 1:6; "Footprints of Monster Men," *New York Times*, August 18, 1882; Mark Twain, "Carson Footprints," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, March 25, 1885, 1; Robert H. Davis, "Nevada Footprints," *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, 4(1893):598-605, available via Google Books..

⁷⁶ McKelvey, 197.

⁷⁷ Rullell R. Elliot, *History of Nevada*, 2nd ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 239.

⁷⁸ McKelvey, 213.

⁷⁹ Roberts, 79.

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philosophy for Nevada's corrections in the early 1900s. These new techniques, along with a rise in prisoner population, eventually compelled NSP administrators in the 1920s to demolish the original prison and construct a new campus.

While the use of rehabilitation-focused labor was a carryover from the Reformatory period, Progressive ideology also necessitated the provision of improved sanitation and enhanced quality of life for prisoners. NSP administrators sought to adopt Progressive practices even before the construction of a new campus in the 1920s. During this period, the prison adopted new technologies to improve sanitation and security, as Warden J.L. Considine replaced the pump room's steam engine with an electric engine, installed an electric alarm system, and positioned incandescent lights outside the prison between 1904 and 1905.⁸⁰ Between 1907 and 1908, Warden W.J. Maxwell oversaw the construction of an eight-foot electrified fence along the rear of the prison yard, in addition to a new iron door installed on the armory and three guard houses built at the prison gate and along the south and west perimeter.⁸¹ In an effort to further improve health and sanitation, Warden Denver Dickerson added a modern steam laundry and outfitted the hospital with modern operating equipment in 1913.⁸² These improvements mirrored contemporary technological developments in national prisons that saw plumbing and electric lighting installed in prisons through the country, and the replacement of iron-latticed, hinged cell doors with case-hardened, cylindrical barred doors that slid on tracks.⁸³

The Progressive Era practices utilized by the NSP advocated inmate rehabilitation through the individualized treatment of prisoners, indeterminate sentences, and convict employment programs. Warden Maxwell recommended the construction of a separate cell house in order to segregate first-time offenders from hardened criminals, following national recommendations to classify inmates and prescribe specialized treatment plans. These plans aimed to create reformed, contributing members of society.⁸⁴ Maxwell also recommended that the State form a committee to address inmate employment issues, in addition to considering an indeterminate sentence system to reward prisoners for good behavior.⁸⁵ By 1923, the prison established a credit system that reduced sentences based on good behavior and time spent working for the benefit of the prison.⁸⁶ This signaled a shift in the emphasis of prisoner labor from a means to cover operating costs to a rehabilitation method that offered vocational training and eliminated idleness.⁸⁷ In 1909, Warden Maxwell reported that twenty-five percent of inmates were addicted to opium, and he attributed this statistic to the lack of available work at the prison.⁸⁸ Maxwell believed that prisoner idleness, in combination with the current penal system, harmed inmates rather than reforming them for a return to public life. In his report for the 1925-26 years, Maxwell stated that "there are some men, serving their first prison terms, who are not at heart criminals. We find

⁸⁰ J.L. Considine, *Biennial Report of the Warden of Nevada State Prison for the Years 1903 and 1904*, NSLA.

⁸¹ W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1907-1908*. Nevada State Archives, NSLA.

⁸² Snyder, 45.

⁸³ Roberts, 95-104.

⁸⁴ Roberts, 121; Maxwell, 1908, NSLA.

⁸⁵ Maxwell, 1908, NSLA.

⁸⁶ Snyder, 54.

⁸⁷ Roberts, 82.

⁸⁸ Maxwell, 1908, NSLA.

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law-breakers and we find criminals in prison . . . Idleness, especially in a prison, does more . . . toward making criminals of these law-breakers than anything else.” Although under Maxwell’s wardenship, the Quarry continued to supply stone and cracked rock for Carson City construction and infrastructure projects, he contended that the Quarry did not provide enough work for the inmate population.⁸⁹

The aim to provide work opportunities to aid in reforming prisoners precipitated the proliferation of prison honor camps at state penitentiaries, including the NSP, in order to relieve overcrowding and provide more rehabilitation opportunities. Through work such as road building and farming, these honor camps provided an opportunity for well-behaved inmates to work in minimum-security conditions.⁹⁰ In 1911, the Nevada Legislature authorized the NSP to establish road camps, which allowed inmates to work on the roads between Carson City and Reno, between Carson City and Glenbrook, and along the east side of Washoe Lake.⁹¹ These road camps were common throughout the United States, although they were particularly common in the West. In fact, western prisons pioneered the concept of employing trustworthy inmates, primarily prisoners facing imminent eligibility of parole, to work in these camps. Motivated in part by the increasing number of automobiles on American roads, Colorado first developed the inmate road-building model which quickly spread to Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming.⁹² Convict road-building in Nevada lasted only two years, until the 1913 Legislature declined further appropriations for the expensive program.⁹³

A longer lasting labor program adopted by the NSP was an off-site farm to provide both work opportunities and food for prisoners. In 1910 the Nevada Board of Prison Commissioners purchased the Schultz Farm, located between the prison and Stewart Indian School (NRIS# 85002432), with the intent of expanding opportunities for inmate labor and establishing self-sufficiency amid consistently inadequate funding for the prison.⁹⁴ At the NSP, a foreman supervised inmate farm-workers, ensuring that they did not leave farm property. Aside from this restriction of movement, prisoners on the farm enjoyed full liberty. Warden Maxwell lauded the opportunities for rehabilitation, and the prison administration anticipated the potential of the farm to meet the prison’s need for meat, vegetables, and hay.⁹⁵ Under the subsequent leadership of Warden Henrichs, the farm expanded to include a dairy that met the needs of the prison in excess.⁹⁶ Despite the farm’s success, Henrichs noted in 1919 that inadequate employment opportunities for inmates persisted, particularly during the winter, which interrupted work at the Quarry and farm. To ease the lull, he leased prisoners to nearby, privately-owned farms and ranches to assist in harvest activities. The warden requested appropriations to build a

⁸⁹ Maxwell, *State of Nevada Biennial Report of the Supt. Nevada State Police and Warden State Penitentiary: 1925-1926*, 6, NSLA.

⁹⁰ *The American Prison: From the Beginning...A Pictorial History*, (The American Correctional Association, 1983), 114; Roberts, 90.

⁹¹ Snyder, 43.

⁹² McKelvey, 223.

⁹³ Snyder, 46.

⁹⁴ McKelvey, 104.

⁹⁵ Snyder, 42.

⁹⁶ Snyder, 46.

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manufacturing shop to bolster inmate employment; however, the Legislature did not approve them.⁹⁷ As another effort to reduce inmate idleness, the state promoted increased inmate exercise, which included the installation of a tennis court in the Front Yard of the NSP in 1915.⁹⁸

Alongside the popularity of prisoner labor was a movement to provide compensation to prisoners for their labor. These developments grew out of the 1910 formation of the National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor, which stated its “intention to investigate the prison labor problem broadly and systematically and to promote appropriate remedies.”⁹⁹ The NCPPL urged state prison boards to abolish contract and forced labor, based on Director D. E. Stagg Whitin’s work *Penal Servitude*, which argued that forced labor was akin to economic slavery and therefore in direct conflict with rehabilitation. The committee recommended paying a fair wage to working inmates and promoted education and exercise as integral to rehabilitation.¹⁰⁰ In 1923, amid the NSP’s significant expansion project, which primarily employed convicts, the Prison Board instituted a daily wage schedule for inmate labor.¹⁰¹

Nevada’s population, and subsequently the prison’s, rose significantly in the early twentieth century, placing added pressure on the existing facilities of the prison. During Warden Considine’s 1903-1907 tenure, the prison housed an average of 106 prisoners.¹⁰² After W.J. Maxwell assumed wardenship in 1908, the population doubled to 217.¹⁰³ Simultaneously, the state experienced its second mining boom in copper, gold, and silver, resulting in a significant population increase from 1900 into the early 1920s.¹⁰⁴ Considering the overcrowded conditions at the NSP, the 1909 State Legislature allocated \$205,000 for the construction of a new prison.¹⁰⁵

Beginning plans to expand the prison, the state commissioned prominent Nevada architect Frederic DeLongchamps in 1910 to design a new prison. His blueprints, inspired by the Auburn and Eastern State Penitentiaries, called for an imposing Gothic Revival style penitentiary with a central rotunda and radiating wings of cells. The design featured a large chapel to encourage the moral reform of inmates, a photography studio and darkroom to document incoming prisoners, a “Bertillon room” to take body measurements as a way of identifying prisoners prior to the acceptance of fingerprint identification, and a separate cell block exclusively for female prisoners, the first such accommodations at the prison.¹⁸ However, funds were not available to build the huge facility, and the plans did not take into account the terrain that included an ever-expanding stone Quarry. The steep Quarry walls worked well as a barrier and the more the prisoners worked the Quarry, the more formidable the walls became. A prison modeled after New York State Penitentiary or Eastern State Penitentiary, with their static stone fence lines,

⁹⁷ Snyder, 47.

⁹⁸ Denver Dickerson. *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1913—1915*. Nevada State Archives.

⁹⁹ Rebecca M. McLennan, *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State 1776-1941*, (Cambridge University Press, New York: 2008), 324.

¹⁰⁰ McLennan, 325-326.

¹⁰¹ Snyder, 54.

¹⁰² Considine, 1904, NSLA.

¹⁰³ W.J. Maxwell, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1907—1908*. NSLA.

¹⁰⁴ Hulse, 162-179.

¹⁰⁵ Snyder, 41.

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could never have accommodated the growing Quarry. Also, the new prison would have been built with unskilled prison laborers who were not trained to the level of craftsmanship required for such a detailed and complex building. As such, the state placed the prison's expansion project on hold.

However, in 1919, the Nevada legislature revived the expansion project for the NSP, involving then State Architect DeLongchamps to develop new designs.¹⁰⁶ DeLongchamps' updated designs for the NSP reflected the tenets of Progressive Era penology. Under direction by State Engineer James Scrugham, DeLongchamps created plans for a new cell house (now Cell Block A) and the Warden's Residence, both of which would be constructed using convict labor. W.J. Boudwin eventually replaced Scrugham as State Engineer, and he employed an African American convict named "Slim" as his foreman. Prisoner work crews began demolition work in advance of the new cell house in April of 1920.¹⁰⁷ The floorplan for each cell included a flush toilet, washstand, drinking fountain, electric lighting, and provisions for adequate ventilation.¹⁰⁸ In order to keep costs down and avoid patent royalties, DeLongchamps and Boudwin designed custom cell fronts that recycled existing metal, including old cell gratings and doors, and they engineered a new locking device and door suspension scheme. Slim had served in a similar capacity for a construction project at Folsom Prison, and his observations informed their designs. Inmates performed metal work for the project in the prison shop in addition to assisting with excavation and construction.¹⁰⁹

The expansion project took place between 1920 and 1927 and in addition to the Warden's Residence and Cell Block A, resulted in a commissary, kitchen, dining rooms, women's quarters, heating plant, cold storage, and administration offices, all housed in the Administration Building. The expanded facilities proved necessary as the NSP received more prisoners into the 1920s. In 1920, NSP housed ninety-nine prisoners, but the population rose again to 200 by 1925.¹¹⁰ This reflected national trends at the time, as the crime rate in the United States increased steadily between the late 1910s and early 1920s. This was in part due to rising unemployment after World War I and the enforcement of new laws such as the Volstead Act passed by Congress in 1918, signaling the beginning of Prohibition. The National Vehicle Motor Theft Act passed in 1919 also contributed, making interstate transport of stolen vehicles a felony, authorizing offenders to be sentenced to state or federal prison.¹¹¹ These statutes, as well as the housing of federal prisoners at the NSP from 1925 to 1933, contributed to the rise in inmate population. Federal convicts housed at the NSP contributed significantly to the need for expansion. The NSP housed a total of 334 federal prisoners between 1925 and 1933, earning \$217,148.51 in fees from the federal government.¹¹² However, in 1930, the United States established the Federal Bureau of

¹⁰⁶ Snyder, 48.

¹⁰⁷ Snyder, 48-49.

¹⁰⁸ Snyder, 49; Scrugham, James G., to Dr. J.W. Kime. Letter, April 9, 1924, Reports, Department of Corrections collection, NSLA.

¹⁰⁹ Snyder, 50.

¹¹⁰ R.B. Henrichs, Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1921—1922; Snyder, 57.

¹¹¹ The American Prison: From the Beginning...A Pictorial History, (The American Correctional Association, 1983), 126-127.

¹¹² M.L. Penrose, *Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1933—1935*, NSLA.

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Prisons, precipitating the transfer of a number of federal prisoners housed at the NSP to the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island in Washington. By 1933, all federal prisoners had vacated the state prison, either by fulfilling their sentences or transferring to federal facilities.¹¹³ The elimination of federal prisoners resulted in a largely depopulated prison. In fact, Warden Penrose sent a telegram to the United States Attorney General requesting more federal prisoners in exchange for a reduced per diem, as the prison's recent expansions and reduced population provided a surplus of space, but the Attorney General denied his request.

By 1929, the built environment of the NSP fully reflected Progressive Era values of improved living conditions and security. Warden M.R. Penrose reported a spurt of new construction in that year that included a heated library outfitted with electric lighting, as well as three new guard towers: one at the main entrance, one atop the south end of the cell house, and one atop a wall on the south side of the main building. The towers were of rusticated quarry stone, and featured electric heat and telephones. New walls, punctuated by three arches with large iron gates, provided additional security to the main entrance, and existing walls were heightened. Additionally, Penrose launched an exterior beautification program for the grounds, which included grading the grounds east of the warden's residence, clearing all sagebrush within 11,500 feet of the prison, and grading the hill to the west of the prison, sowing it with grass seed. Penrose also rebuilt the stone wall north of the prison, laid a stone walk on the north and east side, excavated the yard by two inches to provide additional drainage, and laid concrete walks in the yard leading from the main building to surrounding buildings.¹¹⁴ Penrose's 1929 report mentions a library under construction, as well as the "improved appearance of the grounds" as a result of planting various trees, shrubs, and flowers. By 1931, Penrose had graded the pond in front of the prison and spread crushed rock on its banks, as well as planting 100 cottonwood trees along the south side of Fifth Street between the prison and Carson City.¹¹⁵ He also graded the hillside on the southwest corner of the prison and laid painted river cobbles on it to resemble the American flag. In his 1935 report, Penrose reported building a hothouse (the current Greenhouse) over a stream from the hot spring, installing a sprinkler system, and laying additional driveways, walks, and a lawn in the yard.¹¹⁶

Prisoner entertainment and the public's attitude toward acceptable forms of entertainment in prisons also influenced the development of the NSP. One of the activities sanctioned by prison officials was gambling. From 1932, following the legalization of gambling in Nevada, to 1967 the NSP was home to an inmate-run casino housed in a building known as "the Bullpen," demolished in 1967. Inmates could wager on craps, poker, blackjack, and gin rummy in addition to placing bets on sports. Each game was run by an inmate and as in any other casino environment, the person running the game had to bankroll it. In addition to facilitating the casino games, the NSP created its own gambling currency by issuing tokens known as "brass" in denominations ranging from five cents to five dollars. According to Warden Penrose, who organized the casino program, gambling taught inmates basic banking skills that they would need

¹¹³ Snyder, 63-64.

¹¹⁴ Snyder, 60.

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¹¹⁶ M.L. Penrose, Biennial Report of the Warden of the State Prison, 1925-1927; 1927-1929; 1929-1931; 1933-1935. NSLA.

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on the outside. “Odd though it may sound,” Penrose said, “the gaming table has given many a dead broke inmate a start in this little world within. Gambling helps a little in the refining. It is legal in Nevada, well-regulated, tax-burdened, and a great deal cleaner than say, the big casino in Wall Street.”¹¹⁷

Amid its rebuilding, the NSP became the setting for an important development in the national debate on capital punishment: the adoption of lethal gas as a method of execution. Debate about capital punishment in Nevada began during early statehood when officials grew alarmed by the mob-like, spectacle atmosphere of public executions. The state legislature stipulated that all capital sentences should be carried out in a controlled setting at the NSP. In 1912, Nevada still condoned hanging and shooting as the preferred methods of execution, however, state officials were uneasy with the methods. Reviving Enlightenment-age concerns regarding the nature of civilized society and the continuing use of gruesome execution methods, Progressive advocates began an international conversation about “humane” execution. Establishing a humane approach to capital punishment became a primary concern of Progressive reformers.¹¹⁸

Nevada led this effort, with the NSP becoming the first institution in the United States to execute a prisoner using lethal gas. After the first execution by electric chair was carried out in New York in 1890, the result precipitated considerable public criticism. Nevada officials sought a more humane execution method. In 1921 two state legislators, assemblymen Harry L. Bartlett of Elko County and J.H. Hart of Pershing County officially proposed a solution in Assembly Bill 230. The bill stated in part that:

The judgment of death shall be inflicted by the administration of lethal gas. The execution shall take place within the limits of the state prison, wherein a suitable and efficient enclosure and proper means for the administration of such gas for that purpose shall be provided by the board of prison commissioners. The warden of the state prison must be present, and must invite a competent physician, and not less than six reputable citizens, over the age of twenty-one years, to be present at the execution; but no other persons shall be present at the execution.¹¹⁹

The Nevada Legislature passed the law in 1921, and Nevada became the first state in the nation to approve lethal gas for execution. Reaction to the new method was swift with international commentary ranging from enthusiastic approval to abject horror. Despite the mixed reception, Nevada moved ahead and conducted the first legal execution by lethal gas in 1924. To prepare for the execution, warden Denver Dickerson oversaw the creation of the nation’s first gas chamber, which began its life on the NSP campus in 1888 as a barbershop. To convert the barbershop into a death chamber, inmate laborers sealed its doors and windows with wax and

¹¹⁷ Matt Penrose, *Pots O’ Gold*, (Carlisle & Co. of Nevada, 1935).

¹¹⁸ “Kemmler Executed: A Sickening Sight to Behold,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, August 6, 1890, 1.

¹¹⁹ Assembly Bill No. 230. Statutes of the State of Nevada Passed at the Thirtieth Session of the Legislature 1921, Carson City: Nevada State Printing Office, 1921; Spellier, Louis A. “They Don’t Know Whether it is Good or Bad Politics.” *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 4, 1919, NHSL.

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installed a steel cage inside the building.¹²⁰ A series of pipes delivered hydrocyanic acid to a spraying apparatus within the room, which featured an observation window from the outside.¹²¹ Nevada's first use of the chamber came on February 8, 1924, when NSP staff executed inmate Gee Jon despite strenuous efforts by his defense team to convince the Nevada State Supreme Court that the untested method was cruel and unusual. In October 1928, a new stone and cement execution chamber, featuring a guardroom and two condemned cells, replaced the converted barbershop, and the original gas chamber was demolished.¹²²

The tenets of Progressive penology received criticism by the 1930s in response, in part, to concerns from business leaders who criticized the practice of using prisoner labor. By the 1920s, unions and other supporters of free industry criticized American prisons for interfering with the free market, as inexpensive convict labor undercut fair market prices. As a result, prisons established the state use system, in which convicts produced goods—including license plates—for sale to the United States government rather than competing with private businesses for other services. In response, many states like Nevada adopted the state use system, which focused prisoner labor on specific state needs, such as the production of license plates. The prison-run license plate factory has become ubiquitous in popular culture, as it was an early adoption of the state-use system of penal labor in America.¹²³ In 1931, Warden Penrose introduced the manufacture of license plates to the NSP after he constructed a factory expressly for this purpose, housed in an addition to the Administration Building.¹²⁴ The addition featured a cell house on the second floor; however, the extra space was not needed, and Warden William Lewis converted the space into a school in 1936. Lewis wrote a letter to the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the New Deal's most ambitious agency, requesting their assistance in establishing the school. As a result, the WPA largely provided support to the NSP education program, including furnishing a classroom instructor.¹²⁵

Modern Rehabilitation at the Nevada State Prison, 1940 – 1967

After 1940, the Nevada State Prison refined Progressive Era models of rehabilitation, including detailed classification of prisoners, community involvement, and improved medical care. In the early 1940s, World War II and wartime industries influenced the prison's population trends, as

¹²⁰ Snyder, 53; "Boston's Lethal 'Humor.'" *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 8, 1921, 4; Brisbane, Arthur. "Death by Gas in Nevada." *The Ogden Standard Examiner*, July 28, 1921, 4; "Death Gas In Nevada Brings Murder To End." *The Evening Republican*, Mitchell, S.D. January 22, 1925, 12; "Execution by Gas Sought in Arizona." *Reno Evening Gazette*, January 13, 1933, 12; "Fight to Save Gee Jon May Go Into U.S. Court." *Reno Evening Gazette*, February 6, 1921, 1, "First Gas Execution Is A Success." *Sheboygan Press-Telegram*, February 8, 1924, 1-2; "First Lethal Gas Execution Takes Place in Carson City, Nev. Prison" *Manitoba Free Press*, February 9, 1924, 1, 12; "Gas for Murderers," *The Gleaner*, April 8, 1921, 5; "Humane Nevada," *Manitowoc Herald-News*, April 7, 1921; "In the Death Chair: Further Particulars of the Kemmler Electrocution," *The Frederic News*, August 7, 1890, 1; "Lethal Chamber Plea," *The Daily Mail*, December 22, 1921, 3; "Painless, Both," *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 13, 1921, 4; "True Mercy or Cruellest Torture?," *Syracuse Herald*, May 15, 1921, 7, all at all at NHSL.

¹²¹ Scott Christianson, *The Last Gasp: The Rise and Fall of the American Gas Chamber*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 73-74.

¹²² Snyder, 60.

¹²³ Roberts, 86.

¹²⁴ "50% is Saved Buy State on Motor License Plates," *Nevada State Journal*, January 20, 1934, 4.

¹²⁵ Snyder, 66.

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well as inmate labor opportunities. Following the war, the prison refined new modes of prison administration adapted from the earlier Progressive model. NSP administrators humanized inmates, seeking to further individualize rehabilitation and create a campus-like environment.

The establishment of wartime industries in Nevada at Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot, the Basic Magnesium Plant in Henderson, and new air bases in Fallon, Tonopah, and Las Vegas, all led to a spike in Nevada's population. This rise correlated with additional increases in inmates housed at the NSP. By 1940, the NSP's inmate population had reached a record high of 340. The cell house could only accommodate 266 prisoners, and Warden Lewis sent the overflow of inmates to the prison farm to avoid doubling cell occupancy.¹²⁶ The 1941 State Legislature appropriated funds for prison expansion; however, the nation-wide defense effort indefinitely postponed construction.¹²⁷ In 1945, Warden Sheehy wrote, "Due to war, it was impossible to obtain materials and labor."¹²⁸ The NSP contributed to the war effort by donating scrap iron and scrap rubber, as well as constructing cots, stretchers, and related items for Nevada's Council for Defense. This level of involvement in the war effort was common for American prisons, many of which manufactured shoes, boats, and even aircraft engines. In Nevada, prison inmates also bought war bonds and stamps.¹²⁹

After the war ended, the prison attempted to address overcrowding through the expansion of prisoner housing, but this remained limited until 1951. The earliest attempt, begun in May of 1947, constructed Cell Block B, along with some additions to existing buildings.¹³⁰ Arthur E. Bernard assumed wardenship in 1951, and his tenure is largely characterized by an ambitious building program that furthered the individualized treatment of each prisoner. Bernard personally interviewed all incoming prisoners to determine their security risk and capacity for rehabilitation. He employed those deemed fit for reformation in the prison hobby shop, in his construction projects, and on the occasional off-site job. Between 1951 and 1954, he expanded the inmate dining room and library and remodeled the Butcher Shop and Warden's Residence. Using prisoner labor and materials for all of his projects, Bernard built a new guards' dining room, a shower and lavatory in the Prison Yard, plumbing shop, horse barn, garage, gas chamber, recreation hall, potato cellar, and paint shop. Inmates used quarry stone to construct six two-bedroom cottages (Cottages 1-6) to be used as guards' residences, and they excavated a 25'x50' swimming pool in the West Lawn for use by prison personnel.¹³¹ Bernard continued his building campaign between 1956 and 1958, again using convict labor and reclaimed materials to construct two more garages, a guesthouse, two dormitories, and a new greenhouse. Under staff

¹²⁶ Hulse, *The Silver State*, 213, 334; Snyder, 67.

¹²⁷ *The American Prison*, 181-183.

¹²⁸ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Penitentiary and Supt. Nevada State Police for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942*, NSLA.

¹²⁹ Snyder, 68.

¹³⁰ Richard H. Sheehy, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1948, to June 30, 1950*, NSLA.

¹³¹ Arthur E. Bernard, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1950, to June 30, 1952; Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison For the Period July 1, 1952, to June 30, 1954*, NSLA.

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supervision, inmates modified much of the thoughtful, Progressive-Era landscaping, creating athletic space in the Prison Yard and paving much of the exterior landscape with asphalt.¹³²

In 1959, the Prison Board appointed Jack Fogliani as warden, who became the last of the rehabilitation-era wardens at the NSP. Fogliani focused on rehabilitation through arts and crafts, education, music, and vocational opportunities. Inmates organized “The Boys in Blue” prison band, which performed at various events around Carson City, and the prison converted the solitary confinement cave excavated into the Quarry wall to an office for the *Sagebrush*, an inmate-run newspaper. They also formed basketball and boxing teams that competed in outside events throughout the state. During this time, prisoners demonstrated a deep connection to the larger community, as they donated to various charities and participated in blood drives. These changes represented the larger trend in American prisons, which sought to ease convicts back into society by providing rehabilitation in a campus-like setting.

Within the modern rehabilitative techniques, known collectively as the Medical model, Fogliani emphasized the importance of medical, mental, and dental care for NSP prisoners. Under his wardenship, the prison established individual and group psychology programs, a dental clinic, and an Alcoholics Anonymous program. Fogliani also worked to enrich inmate-staff relationships, hoping that better relations would improve the overall operation of the prison. These developments fit with the Medical Model’s emergence as the new standard for penology in the 1950s. Adherents viewed delinquency as equivalent to physical disease. As such, prisons had a duty to diagnose and treat each prisoner according to their unique circumstances. The Medical Model reinvigorated and expanded upon inmate classification using new developments in psychology and sociology.

Warden Fogliani invited Synanon to establish an outpost at the prison in 1963. Charles E. Dederich, a graduate of Alcoholics Anonymous, founded Synanon in 1958 to support and assist individuals in overcoming their addictions. At the prison, Fogliani reserved a tier of cells for members of the program, many of whom were addicts. The program also included non-addicts, operating on the principle that non-addict prisoners often share personality traits with drug addicts. Synanon provided cutting-edge treatment including art therapy and group therapy.¹³³ Members worked in the prison hobby shop, and prison officials often employed them to work inside the compound. Fogliani credited Synanon with improving the attitudes and morale of the prisoners.¹³⁴

Fogliani developed quality vocational and educational programs as warden. He established the first successful honor camp at Spooner Summit in the mountains east of Lake Tahoe, where inmates engaged in fighting fires and removing invasive plants. Fogliani also expanded the prison farm. The prison launched a work crew program, whereby local governments, farms, and ranches employed inmates. The construction of a new auto shop and carpenter shop within the

¹³² Arthur E. Bernard, Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1958, NSLA; “Dietitian Named at State Prison,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 22, 1951, 12.

¹³³ “Mutual Aid in Prison,” *Time Magazine*, 81:9 (March 1963), 67.

¹³⁴ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden Nevada State Prison For the Period July 1, 1960, to June 30, 1962, Inclusive*, NSLA.

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prison compound extended additional vocational opportunities to inmates. Fogliani also founded a GED program at the prison and hired the State Department of Employment Security to administer tests that assisted inmates in procuring employment upon their release.¹³⁵

Concurrent with the adoption of the Medical Model, Warden Fogliani oversaw an expansion of the prison that included a new License Plate Factory, security fences, the two-story Tower One at the northwest entrance, a new library, a coffee shop, and the maximum-security Cell Block C with a private exercise yard. The NSP's population rose to 460 in 1960, prompting the Prison Board to construct a new women's and maximum security prison south of the main complex, housing 17 female, and 298 maximum security male prisoners. Fogliani remodeled visitors' booths to include telephones during an era in which prisons across the country sought to create more comfortable and informal visitation areas.¹³⁶ Despite the popularity of the Medical Model, the mid-1960s suggested a shift in prison ideology and administration during Fogliani's tenure. In light of the new maximum-security facility south of the NSP, State and prison officials began to place an emphasis on public safety and security. The State completed a north-bowing highway bypass for Fifth Street to eliminate traffic through the prison grounds. In Fogliani's 1965 report, he recommended that the warden should be able to choose his residence, as opposed to living in the Warden's Residence, which at that time was located within the NSP security compound. The resulting solution led to the use of the Warden's Residence as an investigation facility, and the conversion of the Guard's Cottages to storage space.¹³⁷

The End of the Rehabilitation Era

By 1967, security issues caused a major shift in the prison's administration away from the Medical Model to a contemporary strategy of security and control. A nation-wide surge in incarceration began in the 1960s and accelerated into the 1970s. Prison administrators across the country began to de-emphasize rehabilitation in favor of enhanced security, in part, in response to increasing violence and resistance among prisoner populations.

At the NSP, the withdrawal from the rehabilitative model began as a response not only to national trends represented in the NSP's prisoner population, but also local events. In January of 1967, two prisoners escaped and held a Carson City family hostage before prison officials captured them and returned them to the penitentiary. One week later, seven maximum security inmates escaped. Once officials recovered them, Governor Laxalt fired Warden Fogliani, replacing him with Carl Hocker, San Quentin's correctional captain.¹³⁸ Carl Hocker's wardenship signaled the end of rehabilitative practices at the NSP. Under his tenure, biennial reports of the warden were no longer composed for the Nevada Legislature, and prison officials shifted their emphasis from rehabilitation to control. Hocker endured a number of prison riots, hunger strikes, and increased violence during his administration that received national media attention.

¹³⁵ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1959, to June 30, 1961*, NSLA.

¹³⁶ Roberts, 179.

¹³⁷ Jack Fogliani, *Biennial Report of the Warden State Prison for the Period July 1, 1963, to June 30, 1965*, NSLA; Riddle et al, *Nevada State Prison*, 34-35; the women's and maximum security prison to the south of the NSP campus is what is now known as the Warm Springs Correctional Center.

¹³⁸ Tom Kennedy, "Nevada Prison Warden Fired After Escape," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), Jan. 31, 1967.

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Alongside national trends, NSP inmates began engaging in civil disobedience in addition to violent rebellion, eventually giving way to the Inmates' Rights Movement and institutional responses in the form of super-maximum custody. Subsequent developments at the NSP included the construction of the "Hill Units" cell complex on the east side of the historic district in the 1980s during an expansion of the prison to house an estimated 850 inmates. Following the recession of 2008, the State legislature chose to close the prison, which took effect in 2012.

Criterion D

The NSP is eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield future information about the social life of prisoners and prison staff during the period of significance from 1920-1967. Although the known, unevaluated archaeological resources lack integrity of deposition as they are no longer in their primary context, the diagnostic artifacts present within the Prison Trash Dump and other potential areas within the district may address a number of research questions related to the twentieth century history of the NSP. Those research topics include the following:

- Daily social lives of prisoners and guards, including work programs, maintenance practices, and recreational activities.
- Material culture of the prisoners and guards, including clothing, personal belongings, personal hygiene, etc.
- Diet of both prisoners and guards, through waste containers from both the prison kitchen and from food items possibly provided by prisoner family members.
- Building refuse may also contribute to analysis of any changes in construction over time, differences in workmanship or materials used in buildings that are no longer extant, and perhaps even what tools were used to work the stone in what periods.

The information potential of trash dumps and trash scatters has been established in archaeological discourse. While temporal determinations may be limited to what can be supported through primary and secondary historical documentation, the presence or absence of particular artifacts, and statistical analysis of these artifacts, can reveal a great deal regarding particular research questions like those outlined above. The volume of twentieth century diagnostic artifacts extant in the Prison Trash Dump in the northeast corner of the historic district provides a large enough sample size to evaluate these questions, especially during the early and mid-twentieth century.¹³⁹

At the time of this nomination, there are not recorded surface features that retain sufficient integrity to suggest information potential dating prior to 1920. While the Prison Trash Dump retains "presence or absence" potential with twentieth century diagnostic artifacts, pre-twentieth century artifacts are minimally represented in the surface scatter. As a result of continuous ground-disturbing activities at the NSP since 1920 throughout the grounds and in the Quarry, as

¹³⁹ See the following: Dennis E. Lewarch and Michael J. O'Brien, "The Expanding Role of Surface Assemblages in Archaeological Research," *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 4 (1981): 297-342; Thad M. Van Buren, "(Not) Just Another Isolated Historic Refuse Scatter," *California Archaeology* 1, No. 2 (Dec. 2009): 163-182; and Douglas C. Wilson, "Identification and assessment of secondary refuse aggregates," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 1, No. 1 (March 1994): 41-68.

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well as periodic cleaning of the surface scatter for the security reasons inherent in the prison, the likelihood of discovering intact features with information potential for the facility prior to 1920 is minimal. However, future sub-surface testing may reveal currently unknown, intact archaeological deposits that could require revisiting this determination. In the event that future deposits are discovered, this nomination may be amended to reflect the new information gathered.

Summary

The Nevada State Prison historic district stands as an historically significant representation of Nevada's adoption and refinement of Progressive Era, rehabilitative correctional practices. The prison's significance to Nevada, and its historic integrity to the period of significance, make it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D.

The period of significance encompasses the time during which the Nevada State Prison was administered by the State of Nevada and implemented rehabilitative prison practices. It has been further restricted by the presence of confirmed extant resources associated with that significance. Unfortunately, nearly all the resources dating prior to 1920 have been demolished. The three extant resources dating from the nineteenth century do not have confirmed construction dates, and bear questionable integrity to that period. As a collection of buildings, structures, and landscapes within the prison campus, the NSP reflects its construction and development between 1920 and 1967 with the end of the Fogliani administration.

Efforts are underway to preserve the prison. Although the Nevada Department of Corrections retains administration of the facility for limited purposes, action on the part of the Nevada State Prison Preservation Society (NSPPS) seek to retain the historic district for future use.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Roberts, 212-224; Nevada State Prison Preservation Society website; Whorton, "Nevada State Prison."; Geoff Dornan, "Locked but still loaded with history," *Nevada Appeal*, January 15, 2012, A1, A4.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Nevada Architectural Archive, University of Nevada – Reno.
Nevada Historical Society Library, Reno, NV.
Nevada State Prison ephemera file, Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City, NSLA.
Nevada State Prison Warden Biennial Reports. Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City, NV.
Ormsby County deed records, Carson City NV.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

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X Other

Name of repository: Nevada State Library and Archives; Nevada Historical Society Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 52.75 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Coordinate #	Easting	Northing
1	263343	4338238
2	263428	4338228
3	263451	4338251
4	263520	4338295
5	263493	4338334
6	263505	4338363
7	263575	4338391
8	263645	4338390
9	263705	4338366
10	263896	4338195
11	263884	4338020
12	264066	4338004
13	263860	4337773
14	263677	4337834
15	263832	4338066
16	263650	4338158
17	263636	4338120
18	263601	4338090
19	263594	4338068
20	263570	4338077
21	263556	4338047

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22	263554	4338027
23	263549	4338012
24	263529	4337995
25	263524	4337980
26	263515	4337963
27	263450	4337874
28	263419	4337881
29	263357	4337954
30	263305	4337970

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nomination boundaries are portrayed on the boundary map that accompanies this nomination and is based upon the historic extent of the prison during the period of significance. The boundary begins at the northwest corner of the property, where the old Fifth Street route and the current access road join, running along the stone wall at the south end of the parking lot, then pushing north to the current Fifth Street right of way. It curves back to the southeast along the right of way, and then runs south along a dirt access road, then east again along the same access road until meeting the right of way for Fairview Drive. The boundary then runs west back to the prison fence, but runs north, then west, around the 1980s Hilltop addition. The boundary then runs south along the west side of the Hill Units along the top of the Quarry wall, then running south to include the Prison Cemetery. The boundary then runs north and west to the west property line of the prison, then back to the beginning of the boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Nevada State Prison Historic District were selected to include known prison-related historic resources built or in existence prior to 1967 (the close of the period of significance) and associated grounds. The boundaries were selected based on property lines, modern roads, and natural boundaries to exclude concentrations of non-contributing modern buildings such as the 1980s Hill Units on the east side of the historic prison core. Also excluded is a nineteenth century and later prison cemetery now located on the grounds of the modern Warm Springs Correctional Center to the south of the historic district. Although it is related, it is non-contiguous to the district and has not been evaluated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Elizabeth Dickey, Mike Drews, and Jennifer Riddle / Jim Bertolini and ZoAnn Campana.

organization: Carson City Historic Resources Commission, supported by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office

Nevada State Prison

Carson City, NV

street & number: 901 S. Stewart
city or town: Carson City state: Nevada zip code: 89701
e-mail jbertolini@shpo.nv.gov
telephone: (775) 684-3436
date: 12/22/2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Returned

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: unknown Date Photographed: c.1931
Description of Photograph(s) and number: NSLA Aerial photograph (NSP 0002) of prison at the Nevada State Archives showing virtually all of the contributing resources in the nominated area. View looking southeast. 1 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: unknown Date Photographed: 1962

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: NSLA Aerial photograph (NSP 0002) of prison at the Nevada State Archives showing virtually all of the contributing resources in the nominated area. View looking south. 2 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: North section of the West Lawn and Garden, showing the pond, the Greenhouse Foundation, and the wall along the parking lot. View looking west. 3 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Administration Building and Sally Port. View looking south. 4 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Pump House with the Armory and One Tower beyond. View looking north. 5 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The flag on the slope between the Sally Port and the cottages. View looking east. 6 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Rear elevations of the cottages. View looking southwest. 7 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front elevations of the cottages. View looking north. 8 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cottage 6. View looking northeast. 9 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Three Tower. View looking northwest. 10 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Nevada State Prison Cemetery. View looking northwest. 11 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street Tower with the Administration Building beyond. View looking east. 12 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The Warden's House and front yard with the Storage and Maintenance Building beyond. View looking east. 13 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Side and rear elevations of the Warden's House. View looking northwest. 14 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Kennel. View looking southwest. 15 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Butcher Shop. View looking southeast. 16 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Electrical Shop with the Maintenance Shop beyond. View looking northeast. 17 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: The License Plate Factory, Quarry Walls with Shed, Boiler House, and Gymnasium and Book Bindery. View looking south. 18 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014
Description of Photograph(s) and number: East elevation of cell blocks A, B and C. View looking southwest. 19 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with cell blocks B and C, the Culinary, Three Tower, and Quarry Walls. View looking southwest. 20 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with Quarry Walls, Sally Port, and Administration Building. View looking west. 21 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Yard with Administration Building and Cell Block A. View looking northwest. 22 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Quarry Walls with two cave entrances. View looking west. 23 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Armory building within the West Lawn and Garden. Looking southwest at the north elevation of the building. 24 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Two Tower, looking east at west elevation. 25 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Boiler Plant, looking southeast. North and west elevations of the building. 26 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Storage and Maintenance Building, looking southwest. East and north elevations. 27 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street (historic route) and Front Lawn, looking west. 28 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, showing designed landscape features. Looking northwest. 42 of 30.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: November 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, looking south across the upper terrace of the site. 30 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Fifth Street Guard Tower, stone wall, and cottonwood/elm alley, looking southeast. 31 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Historic fence foundation, looking north. 32 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cell Block C, Boiler Plant, and License Plate Factory, looking northeast. 33 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North end of the West Lawn and Garden, showing the Greenhouse Foundation, One Tower, and the Administration Building beyond, looking northeast. 34 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Rubble piles at northwest end of the Prison Trash Dump, looking northeast. 35 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Typical surface scatter in Prison Trash Dump, looking northeast. 36 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Prison Trash Dump rubble piles, with Nevada State Prison in background, looking west. 37 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District

City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada

Nevada State Prison

Carson City, NV

Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front Lawn and Parking Area, showing lawn with Fifth Street Guard Tower and stone wall, and One Tower in the background. View looking northwest. 38 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front Lawn and Parking Area, showing the parking area, looking southwest. 39 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden showing terraces and other landscape features, looking south. 40 of 42.

Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cottages 1 and 2, and West Lawn and Garden, looking west. 41 of 42.

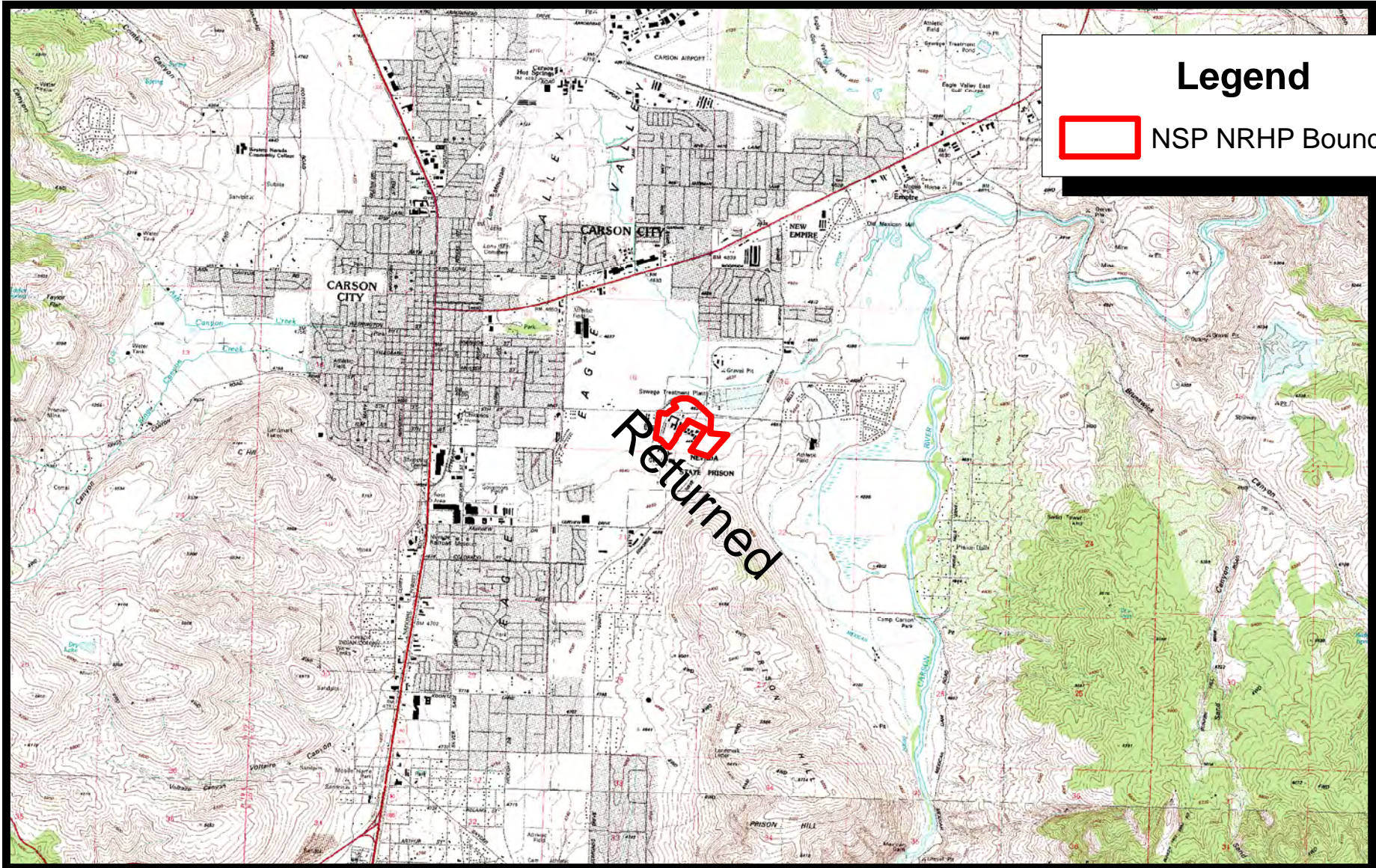
Name of Property: Nevada State Prison Historic District
City or Vicinity: Carson City County: Carson City State: Nevada
Photographer: Jim Bertolini Date Photographed: January 23, 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Lawn and Garden, showing landscape features from Modern period, looking north. 42 of 42.

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.460 et seq.).


Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

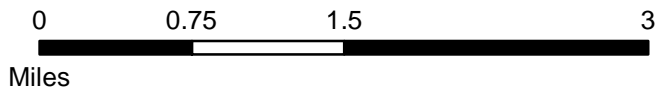
Nevada State Prison NRHP Topographic Map

New Empire and Carson City Quadrangles



Legend

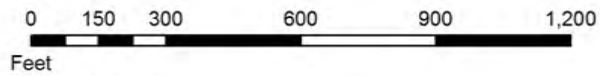
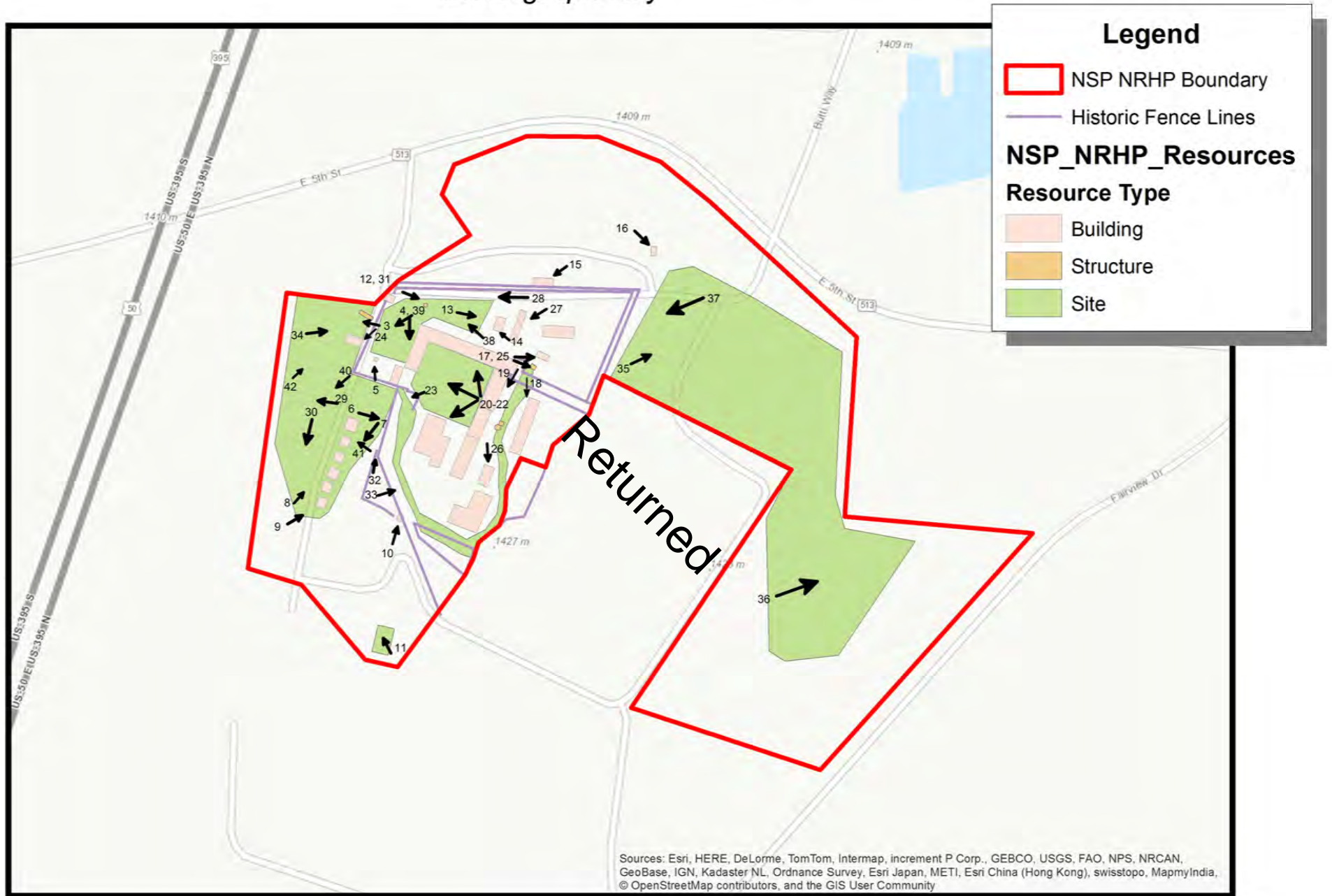
 NSP NRHP Boundary



Author: Nevada SHPO
Date: April 14, 2015
Source: Nevada SHPO
Datum: NAD 83
Projection: Zone 11 N

Nevada State Prison NRHP Site Map

Photograph Key



Author: Nevada SHPO
 Date: April 14, 2015
 Source: Nevada SHPO
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: Zone 11 N



Nevada State Prison NRHP Boundary Map

Aerial Photo



Legend

- NSP NRHP Boundary
- Historic Fence Lines

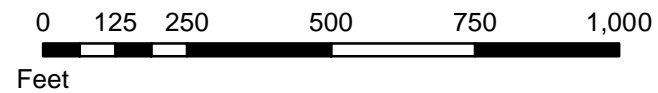
NSP Resources

Resource Type

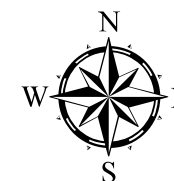
- Building
- Site
- Structure

#	Resource Name
1	Quarry
2	Butcher Shop
3	Nevada State Prison Cemetery
4	Cell Block A
5	Administration Building
6	Warden's House
7	Electrical Shop
8	Fossilized Sloth Footprint Tunnel
9	Sally Port (Courthouse)
10	Fifth Street Guard Tower
11	Pump House
12	Prison Yard
13	Front Yard and Parking Area
14	West Lawn and Garden
15	Prison Trash Dump
16	Security Fence Foundations
17	Cell Block B
18	Armory (Property Warehouse)
19	Storage and Maintenance Building
20	Cottage 1
21	Cottage 2
22	Cottage 3
23	Cottage 4
24	Cottage 5
25	Cottage 6
26	Greenhouse Foundation
27	Boiler Plant
28	Kennel
29	Cell Block C
30	License Plate Factory
31	Two Tower
32	One Tower (Main Gate)
33	Three Tower
34	Culinary and Dining Hall
35	Gymnasium and Book Bindery
36	Chain Link Security Fence
37	Shed
38	Maintenance Shop

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



Author: Nevada SHPO
Date: April 14, 2015
Source: Nevada SHPO
Datum: NAD 83
Projection: Zone 11 N



Nevada State Prison NRHP Site Map



Legend

- NSP NRHP Boundary
- Historic Fence Lines

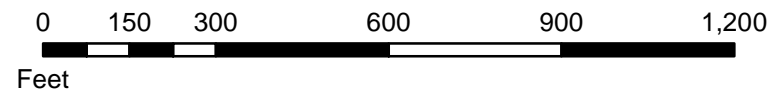
NSP_NRHP_Resources

Resource Type

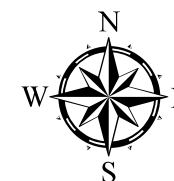
- Building
- Structure
- Site

#	Resource Name
1	Quarry
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11	Pump House
12	Prison Yard
13	Front Yard and Parking Area
14	West Lawn and Garden
15	Prison Trash Dump
16	Security Fence Foundations
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20	Cottage 1
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22	Cottage 3
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31	Two Tower
32	One Tower (Main Gate)
33	Three Tower
34	Culinary and Dining Hall
35	Gymnasium and Book Bindery
36	Chain Link Security Fence
37	Shed
38	Maintenance Shop

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Author: Nevada SHPO
 Date: April 14, 2015
 Source: Nevada SHPO
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: Zone 11 N



LEO M. DROZDOFF, P.E.
Director
Department of Conservation and
National Resources

REBECCA L PALMER
State Historic Preservation Officer

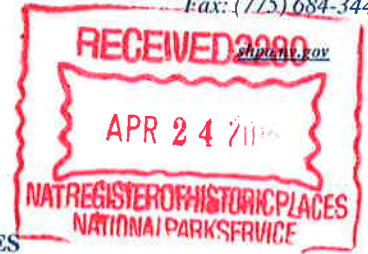
BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Address Reply to:
901 S. Stewart St, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-5248
Phone: (775) 684-3448
Fax: (775) 684-3442



April 16, 2015

Barbara Wyatt, ASLA
National Register/NHL Programs
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

RE: National Register Nomination, Nevada State Prison, Carson City, Nevada

Ms. Wyatt,

The enclosed three (3) disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Nevada State Prison to the National Register of Historic Places. Disk 1 includes the nomination form, related correspondence, reports, and GIS data related to the prison. Photographs for the submission are included on disks 2 and 3.

If you have any questions about the nomination, please contact Jim Bertolini, National Register Coordinator, at (775) 684-3436 or jbortolini@shpo.nv.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Palmer".

Rebecca Palmer
State Historic Preservation Officer
Nevada SHPO
(775) 684-3443
rlpalmer@shpo.nv.gov



NEVADA
**STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OFFICE**

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Brian Sandoval, Governor
Leo M. Drozdoff, P.E., Director
Rebecca L. Palmer, Administrator, SHPO

July 28, 2015

Barbara Wyatt, ASLA
National Register/NHL Programs
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

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AUG - 7 2015

**Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service**

RE: National Register, Nevada State Prison, Carson City, Nevada, NRIS #15000320 – Response to Request for Information

Ms. Wyatt,

The enclosed three (3) disks contain the true and correct copy of the revised nomination for the Nevada State Prison, per your Request for Information of July 15, 2015 and follow-up conversation via telephone with yourself and Michael Russo on July 17, 2015.

Disk 1 includes a revised 10-900 nomination form, including the following revisions in response to your comments:

NPS Comment 1: The period of significance must begin earlier if the quarry is considered a contributing site and the butcher shop is considered a contributing building. Both pre-date the beginning of the period of significance.

NVSHPO Response: The period of significance has been shifted to 1862-1967 to cover the full period of operation under semi- or fully rehabilitative methods. Statement of significance has been adjusted as a result.

NPS Comment 2: The earliest construction date needs to be consistently stated—or better explained. On page 5, 1868 is mentioned as the year construction began (first paragraph under *Site Overview*). On the same page, 1862 is mentioned as the first date of the “early period” (second paragraph under *Site Overview*).

NVSHPO Response: Considering comment 1, the quarry is being used as the justification for the period of significance. That makes the earliest development the use of the quarry as part of the territorial prison in 1862. The first paragraphs in Section 7, Page 5, have been adjusted to reflect and clarify this.

NPS Comment 3: The site description needs to be more thorough. Near the beginning of Section 7 it would be appropriate to describe the site plan, including circulation, the spatial organization of the prison complex, vegetation, and other landscape features, including the setting. The 25-acre site is only minimally described as a complex.

901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5004 ✦ Carson City, Nevada 89701 ✦ Phone: 775.684.3448
Fax: 775.684.3442

www.shpo.nv.gov



NVSHPO Response: Several paragraphs have been added at the beginning of Section 7 to clarify the overall campus landscape and setting.

NPS Comment 4: It is not clear why the cemetery is not considered eligible under Criterion D. The case for Criterion D can easily be made for cemeteries, and may be particularly important when tombstones are missing. The information potential could be considerable at this site. Please see the section on Criterion D in the National Register bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* (page 14). The bulletin states, “While commonly understood to apply to archeological research, Criterion D also encompasses information important in the study of material cultural and social history.” This seems to be the case with the prison cemetery and it seems to be an oversight to consider it noncontributing. If the prison as a whole is only important beginning in 1920, the cemetery could have a separate period of significance that relates to the burials. Note that the instructions in NR Bulletin 16 state, “Enter the dates for *one or more periods* of time when the property attained the significance qualifying it for National Register listing” (my italics; see p. 42). With the evaluation of the cemetery as contributing, Social History or some other area might be added as an area of significance.

NVSHPO Response: As a result of the change in period of significance, the Prison Cemetery has been shifted to a contributing site within the historic district.

NPS Comment 5: Criterion D has been applied, but Archeology is not noted as an area of significance. Is this correct? Please explain.

NVSHPO Response: Archaeology has been added as an area of significance, and the text has been modified to explain and reflect this addition.

NPS Comment 6: On page 16, it would be useful to define “Sally Port” and “Synanon labor” or refer to the pages in Section 8 where the terms are explained. Although sally port is commonly used to identify prison entrances, it is not universally understood and an explanation in the context of the courthouse would be helpful.

NVSHPO Response: The definition of a sally port has been added in the text. The footnote definition for Synanon has been moved to an individual footnote for clarity.

NPS Comment 7: On page 18, please note if the coursed stone wall is a contributing structure or feature.

NVSHPO Response: All coursed stone walls have been changed to contributing structures and added to the resource count. Where appropriate, all “uncounted” landscape features have been identified as uncounted “Historic Associated Features.”

NPS Comment 8: On page 19, please note if the landscape features in the lawn area are considered contributing. By their dates (pre-1967), they seem to contribute. The fountain may be



a contributing object or structure; the remainder may be considered contributing small-scale elements that add to the historic character of the west lawn and garden, but are not included in the inventory count.

NVSHPO Response: The fountain has been changed to be a contributing object to the historic district and, as above, uncounted landscape features have been identified as "Historic Associated Features."

NPS Comment 9: On page 20, the earliest date of the prison trash dump (1907) pre-dates the period of significance (1920). The collection of artifacts prior to 1920 seems to relate to the information potential of the site, but it is problematic that they predate the period of significance. Consider a period of significance for the trash dump.

NVSHPO Response: The period of significance for the district has been adjusted to reflect the full period of operation of the prison from 1862 to 1967. As a result, this issue has been resolved.

NPS Comment 10: On page 23, the Greenhouse Foundation is considered a contributing structure. Please see pages 15-17 of NR Bulletin 16. Ruins are counted as sites, but they are not counted separately from the site of which they are a part.

NVSHPO Response: Per phone conversation on July 17, the Greenhouse Foundation has been considered a site as opposed to a structure. As a result, it has not been counted as a contributing resource but considered a contributing site within the larger West Lawn and Garden site. Although the Greenhouse is not included in the resource count, its resource number and its citation on the site map has been retained to support future resource management.

NPS Comment 11: In the section "Integrity of the District," please reconsider some aspects of the "questionable informational potential of the archeological resources dating prior to 1920" (p. 26). This seems to be contradicted by the information potential of the trash dump mentioned in the same section—which may not pertain to the nineteenth century history of the site, but could pertain to its history from 1907 to 1920.

NVSHPO Response: In light of the quarry issue raised in comment 1, NVSHPO archaeological staff, and Dr. Sarah E. Cowie, the historical archaeologist for Nevada's state review board, reviewed the entire nomination to clarify the issue of archaeological integrity. The language of the nomination in several places has been adjusted to acknowledge the possibility of future archaeological discoveries, the disruption of archaeological integrity during and after the period of significance, and the importance of monitoring and future research to identify any heretofore undiscovered archaeological features that may have information potential.



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Rebecca L. Palmer, Administrator, SHPO

NPS Comment 12: In Section 8 there should be a section on Criterion A that corresponds to the section on Criterion D (p. 46).

NVSHPO Response: Archaeology has been added as an area of significance, and within the response to Comment 11, has been clarified and strengthened within the context of the historic district.

Disk 1 also includes related correspondence, reports, and GIS data related to the prison. Photographs for the submission are included on disks 2 and 3.

If you have any questions about the nomination, please contact Jim Bertolini, National Register Coordinator, at (775) 684-3436 or jbertolini@shpo.nv.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Palmer".

Rebecca Palmer
State Historic Preservation Officer
Nevada SHPO
(775) 684-3443
rlpalmer@shpo.nv.gov