

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 27 1987
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Abraham Curry House

AND/OR COMMON

Abraham Curry House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

406 North Nevada Street

N/NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Carson City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Nevada

N/A VICINITY OF

CODE

32

COUNTY

Carson City

CODE

025 570

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED
- N/A

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Norman Y. Herring and Stephen Wassner

STREET & NUMBER

406 North Nevada Street

CITY, TOWN

Carson City

STATE

Nevada

N/A VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carson City Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Carson Street

CITY, TOWN

Carson City,

STATE

Nevada

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

The Architecture of Carson City, Nevada, Selection from HABS, No. 14.

DATE

1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Summary

The Abraham Curry House is a single story, symmetrical masonry dwelling supported by a sandstone foundation and terminating in a hip roof. The Vernacular style dwelling, constructed c. 1871 by Abraham Curry, incorporates details of Georgian and Greek Revival derivation in its design. The dwelling retains its architectural integrity and is currently used as law offices.

Site:

The Abraham Curry House occupies a landscaped lot located at the northwest corner of Nevada and Telegraph Streets in Carson City. The dwelling is oriented east towards Nevada Street. The perimeter of the site is defined by a simple, wooden picket fence.

Elaboration:

The Abraham Curry House is a seven bay building constructed in two stages. The original house is rectangular in plan measuring approximately 36'-0" by 55'-0" with slightly projecting pavilions at the center of the two long walls. A narrow 40'-0" addition is located to the rear of the building resulting in an overall L-shaped plan.

The building is constructed in sandstone locally quarried at the Nevada State Penitentiary in Carson City. The principal elevation (E) is built in coursed ashlar while the remaining elevations are built in random ashlar. Sandstone blocks were dressed with picks, plain chisels and tooth chisels. Margins are found only at the building corners.

Building windows are four-light-over-four-light, double hung sash set beneath slightly projecting sandstone lintels and plain, sandstone sills. The principal entrance is located on the east elevation and includes a contemporary, wooden, period door. A concrete terrace extends across the east elevation.

The original, rectangular building terminates in a hip roof sheathed in composition shingles while rear addition terminates in a shed roof. Five, brick chimneys are located at the perimeter of the structure along the secondary elevations. A wooden cornice incorporating block modillions with a cyma recta molding bands the building.

The central pavillion of the original building includes a hall, parlor and dining room reflecting the dwelling's original plan. Interior detailing includes simple molded woodwork and five panel doors. Elaborate plaster medallions are located in the principal first floor rooms. Ceilings are 16'-0" high and interior masonry walls are 22" thick.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	X EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

C. 1871

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Abraham Curry

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Criteria B and C

The Abraham Curry House is a single story, masonry building constructed c. 1871 by Abraham Curry, the founder of Carson City and first Superintendent of the United States Mint in Carson City. The dwelling served as Curry's home from its construction until his death on October 19, 1873. The Abraham Curry House is architecturally significant for the quality of its vernacular design which incorporates earlier architectural prototypes.

Elaboration:

The following overview of Abraham Curry's career was prepared by S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Architectural Historian, HABS in November, 1972.

Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Abraham, Abram, or Abe, Curry was born in Ithaca, New York in 1815. Little is known of his early career, but by 1858 he was in Western Utah. In company with three other men, he came to Genoa in that year from California, intending to establish a general store there. Finding the price of land in Genoa too high, the four men - A. Curry, B. F. Green, Frank M. Proctor and J.J. Musser - rode a few miles north to Eagle Valley, then owned by John Mankin, who operated the Eagle Ranch. The asked Mankin the price, which was the same as a small lot in Genoa, and bought it from him for even less than his first asking.

Although there were four "proprietors" of the Eagle Ranch, from all accounts it seems that Curry is the one to whom credit should be given for making the ranch into a town. It was he who in September 1858 proposed to have a town site surveyed and platted. This was soon done, and an equal division of town lots made between the four. At first, the partners are said to have sold the lots for \$50.00 or to have given them away to any who would build on them.

Curry, however, became sole owner of that portion of the property known as the Warm Springs, just to the east of the townsite. Green sold his one-quarter share for a pony and Proctor and Musser gave Curry their interests in this parcel.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attachment

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 0 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 0 |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Abraham Curry House occupies lots 5 and 8 of Block 39 of Proctor and Green's Division of Carson City. These lots are located at the northwest corner of Nevada and Telegraph Streets

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathryn M. Kuranda, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation and Archeology

STREET & NUMBER

201 South Fall Street, Room 106

CITY OR TOWN

Carson City

DATE

January 23, 1987

TELEPHONE

(702) 885-5138

STATE

Nevada

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Ronald A. Jones Deputy

TITLE

State Historic Preservation

DATE

1/30/87

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Linda M. McCallister
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

3/30/87

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The building originally included an octagon cupola centrally located on the roof ridge. This glazed element terminated in a pyramidal roof and provided light to the interior dining room. A five bay porch supported by panelled piers and incorporating a cornice similar to that of the original dwelling originally spanned the east elevation. The cupola and porch were removed c. 1930.

The rear wing addition includes south and west masonry walls and a north frame wall. The wing is reported to have been constructed to house a private school conducted by Maryette Curry, daughter of Abraham Curry.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

On this tract, Curry established both a sandstone quarry and built a stone hotel, one hundred feet long, thirty-two feet wide and two stories high. It was to this hotel which Curry invited the first Territorial Legislature in October 1861. (Governor Nye had issued a proclamation in the summer that the newly elected legislators would assemble in Carson City on October 1, 1861).

This first Territorial Legislature held a forty-nine day session, and on the last day, November 29, 1861, declared Carson City the county seat of Ormsby County. The County Commissioners at first met in rented quarters but on October 14, 1862, they purchased the "Great Basin Hotel", another of Curry's enterprises, for \$42,500.00, and converted it into a courthouse.

Among the several offices created by the first Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Nevada in 1861 was that of Warden of the Prison. On January 1, 1862, Governor Nye appointed Curry to fill this position. Curry leased his property at Warm Springs for the prison. On the property was the stone quarry, where the prisoners could be put to work, and which provided the building material for many of the city's early buildings. In 1862, the quarry was described as covering some sixty acres.

Curry served as Warden of the State Prison for several years, and in 1864 the Territory of Nevada paid him \$80,000 for the prison and twenty acres of land, including the stone quarry. During this same year Curry and an associate were granted the right to build, and charge a toll on, a macadamized road from Carson to Empire City.

As early as 1862, the United States Congress had recommended the passage of a bill authorizing the construction of a branch mint in Carson City. Due to many reasons, it was not until 1865 that a mint in Carson City was finally approved. In December of that year Abraham Curry was named by Secretary of the Treasury Hugh McCulloch as one of the three Commissioners to establish the Mint at Carson City. When on July 17, 1866, the plans, specifications, and authorization papers arrived in Carson City from Washington, they were addressed to A. Curry, "Superintendent of Construction." Curry was also elected County Surveyor of Ormsby County in 1866, a position he held for two years. In 1867, he was one of the charter members of the Carson Encampment No. 2 of the Independent Order of Off Fellows. The Mint (see HABS No. NEV-13-22) was completed by December, 1869, and when it began operation in January, 1870, it was A. Curry who had been promoted from Superintendent of Construction to Superintendent of the Mint. The document, dated April 15, 1869, and signed by President Grant, appointed Curry as Superintendent is still preserved and displayed in the building.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

Curry served as Superintendent of the Mint until September 1870, when he resigned to campaign for the Republican nomination for Lieutenant-Governor, a race he lost.

Curry's next big project was the building of the mammoth shops for the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (HABS No. NEV-12-7) in Carson City. Construction began in December 1872 and was completed in July 1873. The grand ball, held on the Fourth of July 1873, by which Curry inaugurated the new shops, was his swan song. On October 19 of that year, at the age of 58 he died. His funeral was the largest held up to that time in Carson City and the Mint ceased operations for the day out of respect to its first superintendent. He is buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery, Carson City.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, his far-flung enterprises, Abe Curry, according to his widow, died with just one dollar in his pocket. In the years after his death, the neighbors helped pay the bills, provided firewood, etc. Maryette Curry taught a private school in the rear wing and boarders were taken in. Still, portions of the property were sold in 1875 and 76.

In 1902, there were delinquent taxes on the property, and W. H. Cowan paid them and obtained title to the property. Cowan was the son of Elvira Curry, Abe's daughter. The Cowans owned the property until 1919, when it passed out of the hands of the builder's family.

Criteria C

The Abraham Curry House is a vernacular style dwelling incorporating details of Greek Revival and Georgian derivation. As in the case of many Carson City residential buildings dating from the late nineteenth century, the Curry House is a sophisticated "survivalist" design derived from earlier eastern prototypes. Curry, who is credited with the design and construction of the dwelling, was born in Ithaca, New York in 1815. The classical inspiration of the Nevada Street dwelling as well as that of the public buildings erected under Curry's direction, may be traced to New York State prototypes. The building is one of the few residential buildings of the period to be executed in masonry. The structure is representative of Carson City's early residential architecture in its integration of stylistic elements from earlier architectural periods.

1. S. Allen Chambers, Jr., *The Architecture of Carson City, Nevada* (Washington, D.C.: Historic American Building Survey, 1971), pp. 155-157.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Davis, Sam P. ed. The History of Nevada, Reno: The Elmo Publishing Co., 1913.

Hickson, Howard, Mint Mark "CC", Carson City: Nevada State Museum, 1972.

Historic American Building Survey, The Architecture of Carson City Nevada,
Selections from the Historic American Building Survey, No. 14, Washington, D.C.
HABS, 1972.

Old Views: Nevada Historical Society, Photographic Collection, Reno, undated.

Storey, Ormsby, Washoe, and Lyon County Directories, 1871-77, Sacramento:
M.S. Crocker and Company.