by Guy Rocha, former Nevada State Archivist

Every Nevada governor since 1909 has lived in the current Governor's Mansion. An 1866 law requires that the governor reside in the seat of government. However, prior to the construction of the official residence at 600 N. Mountain Street, wherever the governor lived in Carson City was considered the governor's mansion.

Territorial Governor James Nye's house, located at 108 N. Minnesota Street, is a splendid sandstone building and today is a law office. Nye (1861-64) was also the acting governor of Nevada until Henry Blasdel was sworn into office.

Blasdel (1864-71), his successor Lewis Bradley (1871-79), and Bradley's successor, John Kinkead (1879-83), all elected from places other than Carson City rented dwellings. The 1871 city directory shows Blasdel living at the corner of Division and Proctor streets. The structure on the northwest corner, for many years St. Peter's Episcopal Church Rectory, dates back to the early 1860s. Blasdel purchased the residence in August 1870 from his secretary, attorney Thomas Wells, the deed noting that the governor had been using the house as his office prior to the acquisition.

The 1878-79 city directory identifies Governor Bradley as living at the northwest corner of Nevada and Second streets. The house on the corner today dates back only to the early 20th century. Assuming Bradley resided in just one location, it is a particular loss because the governor's daughter, who served as hostess of the mansion for her widower father, was married in the structure in 1873.

The oversight associated with Kinkead's governor's mansion is that the house at 502 N. Division Street is identified solely as the former residence of Territorial Secretary and Acting Governor Orion Clemens. Orion's brother Samuel, AKA Mark Twain, sometimes stayed at the house while reporting on Carson City events for the Territorial Enterprise. "Governor Kinkead is in the city taking his Christmas," wrote the Morning Appeal of Dec. 25, 1878. "He and his family are settled for winter quarters in the Fox house—the dwelling erected by Mark Twain's brother, Orion." There the family remained and entertained during Kinkead's governorship.

Jewett Adams, both lieutenant governor (1875-83) and governor (1883-87), lived in a stately house at 410 S. Minnesota Street. By 1906, he had sold the former governor's mansion to State Printer Andrew Maute. The structure was torn down in the 1950s and the lot remained vacant for some 40 years.

"Hon. C. C. Stevenson has purchased the valuable property long owned by Misses Clapp and Babcock," reported The *Nevada Tribune* of December 6, 1886. "No better site for a Gubernatorial Mansion could be found in Carson." For many years, educators Hannah Clapp and Eliza Babcock lived at 512 N. Mountain Street before moving to Reno. However, the house to date has not been recognized as a governor's mansion. Governor Charles Stevenson (1887-90) died in the house on September 21, 1890.

Lt. Governor Frank Bell (1890) briefly became the acting governor. He did not run for the governor's office. It is doubtful that Bell, who lived in nearby Reno and likely commuted by train to Carson City, relocated to the state capital while serving as acting governor. Although the 1866 law required the lieutenant governor to also reside in the seat of government - the requirement was dropped in 1895 - it appears Bell may have only maintained a token residence in Carson City.

Following Roswell Colcord's election, the governor-elect purchased the residence at 700 W. Telegraph Street on December 27, 1890. Colcord (1891-95) chose to serve only one term. Appointed superintendent of the U.S. Mint in Carson City in 1898, he lived in the former governor's mansion until his death in 1939.

Silver Party candidate John E. Jones (1895-96) succeeded Colcord as governor. The former Nevada Surveyor-General lived at 603 W. Robinson Street. Governor Jones left for San

Francisco in 1896 for medical treatment, leaving the powers of the governorship to Lt. Governor Reinhold Sadler. Jones died on April 10.

Lt. Governor Reinhold Sadler then became the permanent acting governor. Running for the governor's office in 1898, Sadler (1896-1903) was elected by a mere 22 votes. The former governor's mansion is located at 310 N. Mountain Street.

Governor John Sparks (1903-08) found a clever way to address the requirement he live in Carson City. He rented a room in the downtown Arlington House--razed in 1966--and would occasionally spend time there. When Sparks wanted to seriously entertain, or spend time with his family, he would board a V&T passenger train and travel to his elegant mansion on the Alamo Ranch south of Reno. Apparently nobody openly questioned the arrangement.

Sparks died at the Alamo Ranch on May 22, 1908. By then the current Governor's Mansion location had been secured and construction bids solicited. While Sparks had initially vetoed the mansion legislation in 1905, he signed it in 1907. Lt. and Acting Governor Denver Dickerson first occupied the official residence in 1909.

Photo: Nevada State Governor's Mansion ca 1915-1922, during Governor Emmet Boyle's term of office. Photo from the collection of the Nevada State Archives.

The Historical Myths of the Month are published in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and in the *Sierra Sage* ,
Carson City/Carson Valley.