John Sparks was a native of Mississippi, born August 30, 1843. Before coming to Nevada he embarked in the cattle business in Texas and Wyoming. He became a rancher in Elko County and later bought the Alamo ranch near Reno where he lived during his term as governor. He was elected governor on the Silver Democrat ticket in 1902 and re-elected in 1906, commuting to Carson City on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad. He died in office May 22, 1908.

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