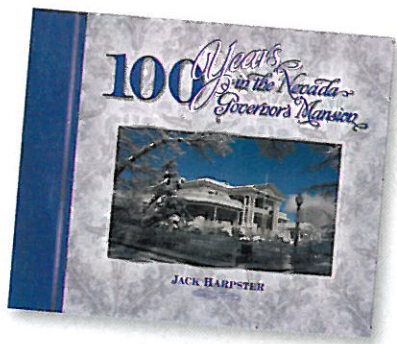


a century celebrated

Reno author's upcoming book details 100 years of Nevada Governor's Mansion residents.

BY JACK HARPSTER



Jack Harpster, from Reno, is a 23-year Nevada resident. He retired in 2004 following a 43-year career in the newspaper industry. This is his fourth nonfiction book. Visit nevadagovernorsmansion.com or call 702-387-5260 to order One Hundred Years in the Nevada Governor's Mansion.

On September 12, the Nevada Governor's Mansion in Carson City celebrates its centennial. More than a century earlier, on July 13, 1909, Governor Denver Dickerson and his family moved into the newly constructed house at 606 North Mountain Street, the first of 18 first families to call the Neoclassical Revival mansion home.

One Hundred Years in the Nevada Governor's Mansion, a soon-to-be-released book by Reno author Jack Harpster, will be published by Stephens Press of Las Vegas to coincide with September's centennial event. The book is an in-depth look at the historic house and the lives of its residents. The book is not about politics or state government; it is a look at the trials and tribulations, joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, and comedy and drama of the men, women, and children who have lived there.

One of the most notorious incidents in the mansion's history occurred 75 years ago, during the brief residence of Governor Morley Griswold, his wife Marianne, and their two children. Their story follows, in an excerpt from *One Hundred Years in the Nevada Governor's Mansion*.

Carson City Daily Appeal
Saturday, November 24, 1934

MYSTERIOUS BLAST OR EXPLOSION HEARD

The blast or explosion heard in Carson [City] last evening, particularly in the west part of town, is still a mystery.

Officers and others spent considerable time in attempting to find out what had happened, without success.

Plenty of persons heard the racket and felt the jar, but no one knew just where it occurred or what it was.

Further search early this morning failed to turn up any clue that would aid in solving the mystery.

Had a small earthquake struck the town? Had there been an underground mining explosion nearby? Or was it something more sinister? These questions were being asked by residents all over the west side of town, but nobody seemed to have an answer.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NEVADA STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Three days later a headlined story in the same newspaper, at the top of page one, explained the mystery: "Paroled Convict Attempted to Blow Up Governor's Mansion Friday Night."

In chilling detail, the story continued: "Dave Drawbridge, paroled from the Nevada state prison a year ago this month, has confessed to an attempt to blow the northeast corner off the governor's mansion."

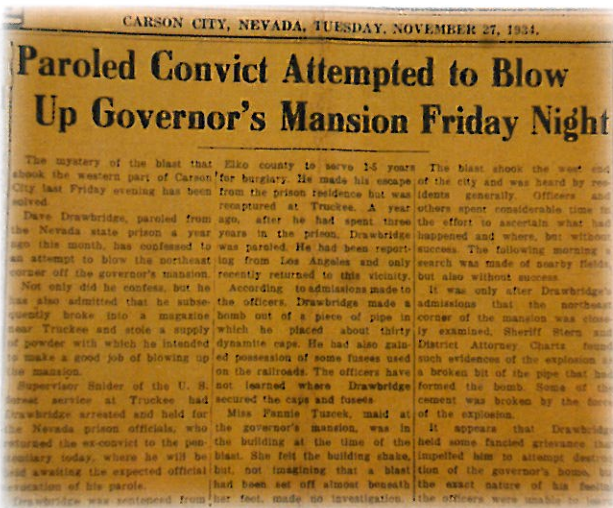
Drawbridge apparently held some grievance against the justice system, the state, the governor's office, or perhaps Governor Griswold himself that spurred his action, although when later captured he claimed he merely wanted "to blow the corner off the house."

"I was crazy," he told police when they questioned him. He said he just thought it would be "fun" to blow up the building.

Drawbridge had fashioned a bomb out of a piece of pipe into which he had stuffed about 30 dynamite caps and fuses. The caps are small explosive devices generally used to detonate a larger, more powerful explosive, such as dynamite. In this case, however, it appears that no other explosive device was used other than the blasting caps.

On Friday night, believing that nobody was in the mansion, Drawbridge placed his bomb in a vent on the northeast corner of the building under the cement block foundation of the porch. Then he ran down the street about 100 yards to watch his handiwork. At 7:50 p.m. the bomb went off. Although it was not a dud, the bomb did little damage, breaking off some of the concrete and a few nearby shrubs and making a gash in the lawn.

Unknown to Drawbridge, however, was the fact that somebody was at home that evening. Fannie Tuzcek, the cook and housekeeper, was reading in her upstairs bedroom when the blast occurred, but she was unharmed. She initially thought the furnace had blown up, but



Aside from landscaping, the Governor's Mansion (below) has changed little since 1909 (opposite page). See for yourself at the centennial celebration on September 12, from 2 to 4 p.m.



after inspecting it and finding no damage, she assumed a small earthquake had struck and returned to her room.

Having failed at his first attempt, however, Drawbridge was not finished. He traveled from Carson City to Truckee, where he broke into a cabin in the woods that belonged to the U.S. Forest Service. He was apparently aware of the cabin from an earlier prison escape when he had fled to Truckee. He broke open dozens of shotgun shells that were in the cabin and harvested the powder to make another bomb for a second

try at the mansion. However, while Drawbridge was washing his clothes in the cabin, a Forest Service employee showed up and arrested him for breaking and entering, thus ending what could have been a major disaster for the Governor's Mansion.

Drawbridge returned to prison, and his parole was revoked. He had served three years of a one-to-15-year sentence for burglary, and it is assumed he served the remainder of his sentence. He was never heard from again.