

# THE CELLHOUSE SNITCH



## Nevada State Prison Preservation Society

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### 2022-23 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Maurice White President  
Vacant, Vice-President  
Lynne Knack, Treasurer  
Didi Chaney, Secretary  
Terry P Hubert, Facilities Maintenance  
Lee A Perks, Planning  
Susan Bernard, Paranormal  
Vacant  
Glen Whorton, Editor – History  
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Myron Carpenter, Honorary Board Member

### CADRE:

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Brian Hutchins, Legal Counsel  
Joe Kinsley, Paranormal  
Marti Cockell, Store  
Rose Kinsley, Store  
Jeff Lovelace, Locksmith

**“Rich guys have a license to steal. I didn’t know I needed one.”**

## The Snitch

## BOARD

Susan Bernard was voted onto the Board at their April meeting. Susan will represent the interests of the Paranormal Committee on the Board. She is an extremely hard worker, as are all the members of the Paranormal Committee. She is essentially the originator of the paranormal activities at the Prison. Further, she is a descendant of Warden Matt Penrose.

Karen Denning has resigned from the Board. She has become our first paid employee, becoming our Tour Coordinator. Per the Society’s bylaws, a Board Member cannot profit from the organization. We have engaged her with a yearly contract, paid for by the administrative assessment from ticket revenue before it goes to the DOC trust fund.

There is still one open Board position for those interested in in a **WORKING** Board. Contact Glen Whorton by phone or email on the banner.

**Continued:**

## **TOURS/EVENTS**

We hosted the Chamber of Commerce Tuesday Lunch on the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month. Over 80 people attended and they were an enthusiastic group, evidenced by the fact that so many of them arrived early. Glen Whorton and Brian Hutchins did a 30 minute review of the Prison's history, and tours were conducted after the group was let out of the Culinary. The Gift Shop did a resounding \$750 in business.



**LUNCH FOR 83**



**GLEN GIVES THE HISTORY**



**VOLUNTEERS GIVE THE TOURS**

**Continued:**

## **YARD LABOR CREW & PROJECTS**

Last month Terry led the YLC in the burning of the weeds and limbs that had accumulated through the winter and early spring. They were in the process of the burn when the State Fire Marshal showed up. No problem; as all was as it should be and the detritus was eliminated without complaint from the fire police.

The actual outcome of the Fire Marshal's visit was a requirement to service the fire extinguishers and get power to the sockets in the theater in order to eliminate the use of extension chords. Lee managed to get the extinguisher company out to service before the Chamber lunch. He had the electrician out on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of this month. The electrician fixed the lights and switches in the Execution Chamber and powered up the sockets in the theater.

Speaking of the Theater Terry and Lee supervised the laying of carpeting in that room. Glen moved 25 chairs into the room and held two of his guide training classes there.

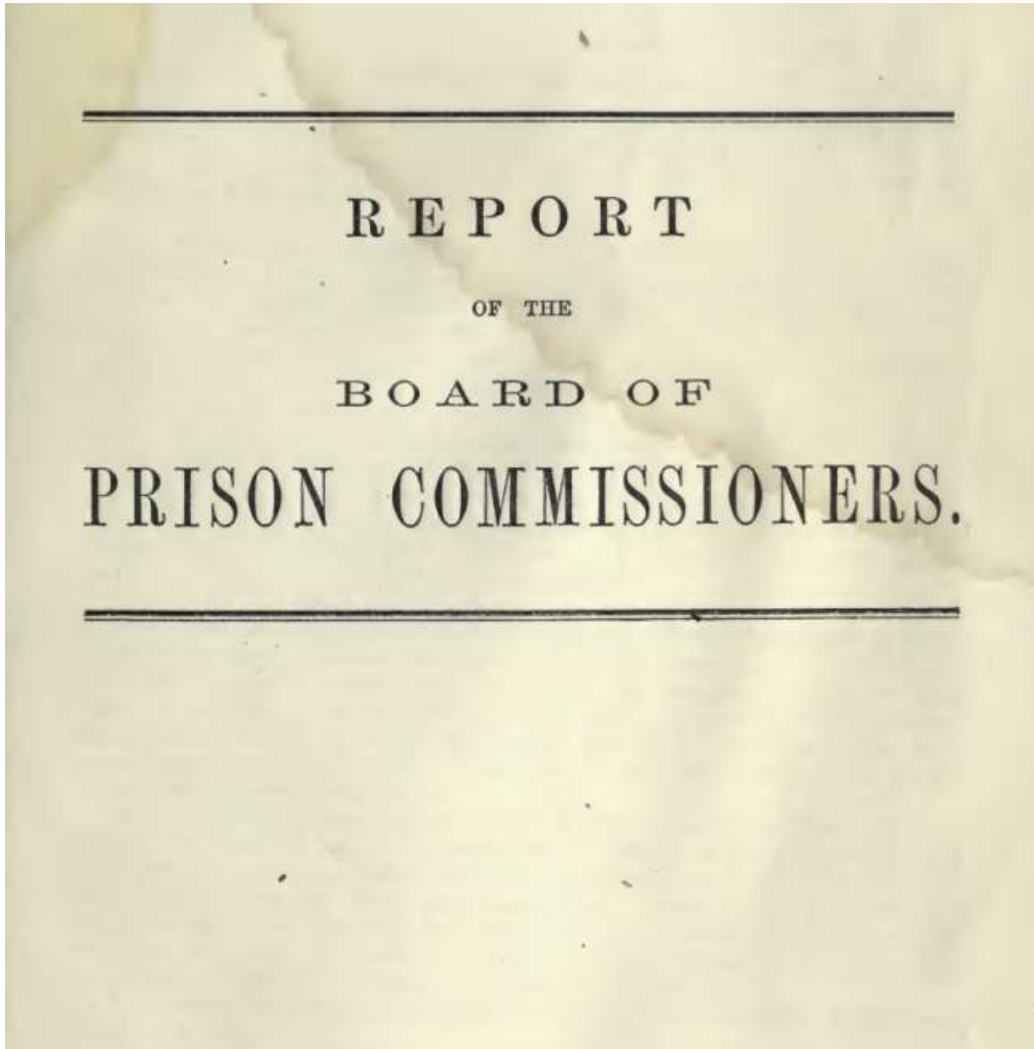


**DONE & DONE**

**Continued:**

## MUSEUM

Gene Hattori, the State Archeologist, was researching early state fish & game regulations when he came across the very first report on the Prison to the Legislature. We had digital copies of all the Wardens' reports except this one. This is a really important addition to our collection.



Continued:

# REPORT.

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CARSON CITY, December 9, 1864.

*To the Hon. the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Nevada:*

In compliance with a law passed by the last legislative assembly of the Territory of Nevada, constituting the undersigned a Board of Prison Commissioners, and defining their duties, we respectfully beg leave to submit the following report:

The purchase of the building in use for the Territorial Prison, with twenty acres of land, was completed in accordance with the terms of the Act, the Commissioners deeming it proper to employ legal counsel in settling the title to the property.

The land was subsequently included in an entry made in the Land Office in this city by Mr. Alvah Mitchell, without, however, in our opinion, any intention on his part adverse to the interests of the Territory. Mr. Mitchell proffered a bond obligating himself to deed the property to the Territory on the receipt of his patent, but, fearing the validity of such bond, the Commissioners reported the case to the General Land Office at Washington, requesting a suspension of the same until the matter could be investigated. We hand you herewith a copy of a letter in reply, from the Department of the Interior.

The Commissioners took possession of the prison on the first day of March, 1864, and appointed Warden, Guards, and such employés as they thought necessary for the safe keeping and management of the convicts. Everything was in a crude and irregular condition, requiring labor and time to reduce to order and system; however, under the immediate superintendence of the very efficient Warden, the prison was soon in a satisfactory working condition, comparing not unfavorably with much older institutions of the kind.

At the time the Commissioners took charge of the prison the building contained but six cells, in which were confined eight prisoners; the number of convicts rapidly increased, involving the necessity of enlarging the building for their accommodation. Accordingly, a substantial stone addition was erected, forty-one (41) feet in length by twenty-eight and one-half (28½) feet in width, affording room for thirty-two (32) cells, only eight of which we found it necessary to complete.

The cost of this building, independent of the convict labor, was in the vicinity of \$4,000.

The present monthly expenses of maintaining the prison average about one thousand one hundred (\$1,100) dollars.

**Continued:**

## HISTORY It has been 100 years and 5 days since the execution of Andrija Mircovich.

This morning at 11.15 Andrija Mircovich, the murderer of John Gregovich, was shot to death at the Nevada Penitentiary. The execution by rifle fire was the first of the kind in this state, as the law now allows a condemned man to choose either hanging or shooting.

Preparations had been made and an automatic device was purchased by the state some time ago. The new device worked as anticipated and the condemned man met practically instant death when the shots rang out.

### **The Execution**

The law requires that twelve men witness an execution. When the visitors filed into the yard they were directed into a corner where a high board fence forms two sides of an enclosure about one hundred feet square. The quarry excavation formed the other two, where the natural walls rise about forty feet. The death chair was placed against the southern wall and provided with straps to fasten the condemned man firmly in place.

At a little before 11 o'clock seventeen men were gathered in the enclosure where they waited about fifteen minutes for the guards to bring in the condemned man.

They were enjoined to refrain from

loud talking. About thirty yards from the death chair was a shed facing to the south, which was occupied by three guards who fired the shots.

The employes of the prison dislike an execution and drew names from a hat. The men whose names were drawn were obliged to act.

### **Mostly Mechanical**

The guns used were provided specially for the purpose and nothing is left to chance. The guns were fired from a sighting machine, the weapons being clamped in place after having been carefully sighted, the chance of a guard becoming nervous and not aiming accurately, is obviated. Two of the rifles were loaded with powder and ball and the third contained a blank cartridge. There were Maxim silencers on the weapons to deaden the noise of the explosions. Ropes were stretched from the corners of the shed to keep the spectators back.

### **Displayed Iron Nerve**

At a few minutes after 11 Warden Dickerson and half a dozen guards entered the enclosure with Mircovich. The man who was so soon to die and settle his accounts with society, walked unaided with a perfectly firm step, without coat or vest and head uncovered. As he passed the shed where his executioners were waiting he gave it a passing glance and strode to the death chair. Here he seated

to the death chair. Here he seated himself and placed his arms in position to receive the straps. The work of strapping him firmly to the chair began and to one of the guards who seemed to use unnecessary force the Warden sounded a note of admonition in a low voice to treat the man more gently.

#### **Wanted No Black Cap**

He asked as a favor of the guards that he might be allowed to face his executioners without the black cap, and this request having been granted the man, who seemed perfectly cool, sat there with his head erect, facing the muzzles of the guns. As the guards completed their task they stepped to one side, and Mirkovich

looked up to the sky and saw the fleecy clouds through which the sunshine of a perfect day filtered down upon the scene.

He then looked the spectators over and must have noticed that some of the friends and relatives of the man he stabbed to death just a year ago to-day, were there to see him die.

Presently a voice called out from the shed in slow and measured tones: "Make ready! Take aim!" There was a few seconds pause and again the voice rang out:

**"One, Two, Three—Fire!"**

There was a muffled report and the man in the chair, on whom all eyes were fastened, lowered his chin a trifle as his head nodded to the shed, and then throwing it backward it lolled from side to side, due to muscular reaction. He then sank back like a man wearied and seeking an easier position.

The execution was over and the first man to meet his death in Nevada by a legal shooting had paid the penalty as adjudged.

The Warden stepped to the front and announced that the execution had taken place according to law.

The spectators were then asked to leave the enclosure.

The bullets had passed through the body and into the back of the wooden chair. Dr. Maclean, the Prison physician states that death took place instantly and that the movements of the head were due to muscular reaction. The body was laid out in the adjoining shed where it was prepared for burial, which will take place in the prison burial grounds.

The spot where the man died was at the bottom of excavations, where, according to scientists, our prehistoric ancestors roamed 600,000 years ago. Considering these deductions as facts of scientific history it is not impossible that in the dim past of the pleozonic period other executions may have taken place in the same vicinity.

After the body was placed in its coffin some flowers were brought in from some sympathetic source. They were spring blossoms and some white flowers and green ferns in the form of a cross. They were placed on the dead man's breast.

### **Felt Justified**

In the morning the condemned man was visited by Rev. Thomas, the Prison Chaplain. He said that his faith was the Greek Church. When asked if he desired to receive the sacrament he declined, on the ground that it would be too much trouble. He spoke English imperfectly but stated that at the time of the killing he had been very much exercised by reports and felt at the time that he was justified in the act. He felt that he should not have been convicted of murder in the first degree. To a representative of the Appeal he expressed the idea that two years in prison would have been sufficient punishment for his crime.

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