
FALL 2022

DESERT DUST

Carlin Historical Society - Carlin, Nevada



The Woes of the Carlin Jail

ABOVE: Probably one of the earliest buildings used to house Carlin's finest after they had a little too much fun.

WRITTEN BY ELLA B. TRUJILLO

Carlin was born in the wild west and was full of opportunity, including the illegal kind. Stagecoach robberies and cattle rustling were quite common. One infamous cattle rustler was a beautiful woman named Susie Raper. In the early years of Carlin, she called the area home and worked the cattle country up and down the Humboldt. She probably spent a night or two in the Carlin Jail but was quite adept at being acquitted of any crimes. In truth, the Carlin Jail seems to have had a hard time holding anyone for very long. The Jail was born in August 1869 when the County allocated \$250.00 to build a "prison" in Carlin.

Repairs to the structure were made in 1897, 1904, 1912, and 1914.

Sometimes those repairs were the result of the ambitious (and sometimes rather easy) escapes of the jail's inmates. In 1895, the *Elko Independent* reported that two youthful hoboos had been given "free lodgings" in the Carlin Jail. They had not been residents for very long before they kicked a hole through the jail wall and escaped. Evidently, the building was not as secure as one would like one's jail to be.

By 1914, the good people of Carlin wanted something better. In October, the *Elko Daily Independent* reported "some dissatisfaction among the people of that place over the matter of working hoboos and petty offenders caught there on the streets" and the fact that there is "no suitable place to house the prisoners". So, in 1915, a new jail was built. It was a cement building with a steel cell. It had indoor plumbing, electric lighting, and was used as a model for the new jail in Montello, Nevada. The County paid the Southern Pacific Railroad Company for water and electricity.

But, by 1945, it seems that even a steel cell was not enough for the criminal masterminds who found their way into the hands of Carlin law enforcement. In August 1945, the *Nevada State Journal* reported that a man who had committed armed robbery and stolen a car was put into the jail. The Carlin constable left to get the Elko County Sheriff in order to transfer the prisoner to Elko. When the Constable and the Sheriff returned, they found the prisoner at liberty in the building and in possession of a weapon. He had found that there was a hole behind his bed where heat could enter the rear part of the jail. He slipped through it. The prisoner was shot and killed by the Sheriff. But, the sieve that was the Carlin Jail could not be stopped. In 1963, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported that two young boys were turned over to the U.S. Marshals after being apprehended in Wendover, Nevada.

According to the article, they had been taken into custody in Carlin but had then "just walked out", according to Carlin officers.

The building took some damage again in 1982, when a disgruntled former resident used several sticks of dynamite to blow up the building. The offender blew a large hole in the building, destroying boilers, all the windows, and blasting the poor neighbor next door out of his bed.

Today, no criminals are housed in the Carlin Jail. They are taken straight to Elko after being arrested. It's probably a good thing for those who call Carlin a peaceful town.



News and Gossip

Monthly Meeting - 3rd Tuesday
of each month at 5:30 p.m.

**Come check out the new exhibit all about
Carlin Schools!**

**Keep an eye out for information about our
2nd Annual Ghost Walk to be held on October
22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.!**

**VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED!
www.carlinhistoricalsociety.com**

