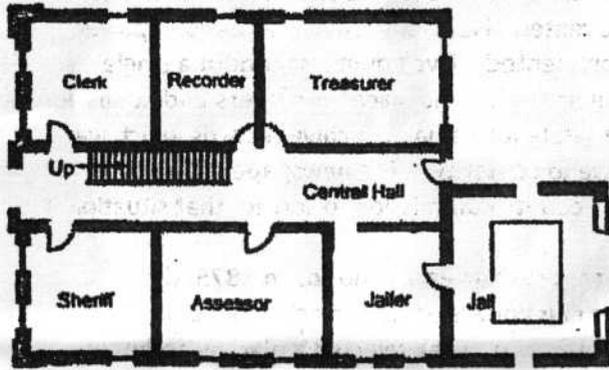
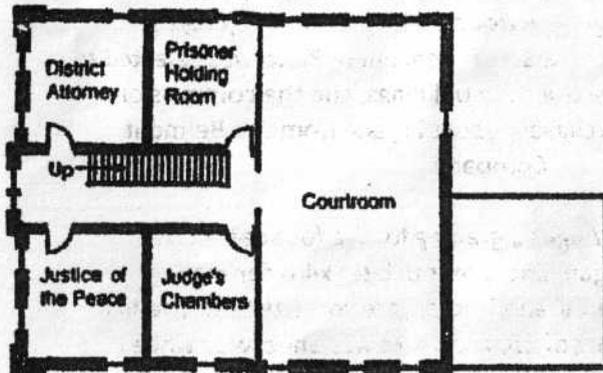


masons worked hard and finished by mid-December. Final touches were made the next spring with the installation of steel plates for the jail and the completion of the roof and cupola. In May 1876, the Commission accepted the building and began taking bids for furnishings. In all, construction cost the county \$22,000.



First floor plan.



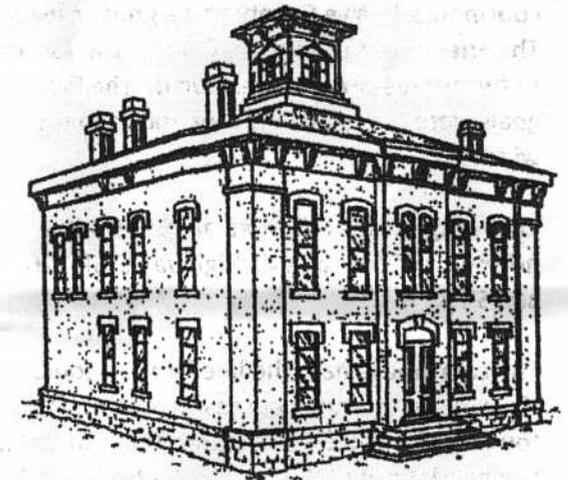
Second floor plan.

During Belmont's twenty-year boom, the mines produced \$15,000,000 in ore and much of the town's political and social life centered on the courthouse. But the building's completion coincided with the severe drop in mine production. The mines were in a standstill by 1886 and most of the few people that remained were county employees. In 1903, many moved to nearby Tonopah, where the latest mining boom was on, and in 1905 the legislature sent the county seat there, too. Belmont's post office closed in 1911. Several times in the 20th Century there were outbursts of activity, but Belmont continued to fade. Today it is a near-ghost town with a small permanent population. The mines, banks, hotels and whiskey shops are gone, but Belmont's stately courthouse still stands as a reminder of the town's proud place in Nevada history.

From the 1930s until 1974 the courthouse was unsecured and it was common practice for many local citizens and travelers to graffiti the interior walls with names, illustrations and poetry. Today, this graffiti is an integral chapter in the story of Belmont's decline and the courthouse's significance.



BELMONT COURTHOUSE



Friends of the Belmont Courthouse
www.belmontcourthouse.org

NYE COUNTY, NEVADA

Nye County deeded Belmont's courthouse to the Nevada Division of Parks in 1974 to better preserve it for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations. Nevada State Parks restricted unauthorized access, replaced the roof and stabilized the structure. Additional work was anticipated but was never completed. Due to budgetary woes and remote location, the courthouse started to fall into a severe state of deterioration.

Legislative session of 2013 returned the courthouse to Nye County and a group called The Friends of the Belmont Courthouse formed to further restore and preserve it. The first goals were to replace the roof and redo the windows.

Belmont, Nevada is located about 45 miles northeast of Tonopah via Highway 6, SR 376 and SR 82.

The courthouse has scheduled guided tours throughout the summer season and private tours can be scheduled at other times by calling Donna Motis at (775-482-3968). Check out the website for more information: belmontcourthouse.org

Gas and other services are not available, but all are found in Tonopah. A public campground is located west of the Monitor/Belmont Mill below Belmont. Numerous trails and back roads surrounding Belmont provide access into scenic ranges and valleys in the area.

All buildings in and about Belmont (occupied or not) are private property. Please do not trespass on these properties. County, State and Federal antiquities laws also protect historic

structures, ruins, artifacts and cemeteries. Please respect and help preserve these important reminders of Nevada's colorful past.



Belmont in ruins.

BELMONT: FROM BOOM TO BUST

Amid the ruins of the former mining town of Belmont, Nevada, a stately brick courthouse still stands. Despite decades of neglect in the harsh desert climate, the building survives an emblem of both the town's glorious past and its decline.

In October 1865 the first official claim was filed on land on the southeast slope of central Nevada's Toquima Range. The word soon spread of the discovery of silver, and hundreds of miners—along with merchants, bankers, saloon keepers, hotel owners, and others—rushed to a district first called Silver Bend, then Philadelphia, then Transylvania, and finally Belmont.

Tents were the first structures, but as the mines thrived, buildings of wood, stone and brick appeared. Belmont, a "handsomely laid out town" boasted a bank, school, telegraph office, post office, general store, two newspapers and numerous whiskey shops. By 1867, the population was estimated to grow to 2,000,

second only to Virginia City on the list of Nevada towns. Numerous springs enabled newly arrived farmers and ranchers to supply the town with grain, produce, beef and poultry. The town's success inspired the state legislature to move the Nye County seat from Lone to Belmont in February 1867, and a wooden structure was built as a temporary courthouse. The next year, a brick building was purchased and remodeled for court and administrative needs, but space for the sheriff and jail had to be rented elsewhere. The *Silver Bend Reporter* commented, "Nye County is without a single public edifice: no place for officers and no place of safety for valuable archive records which we owe to posterity." The newspaper called for the county commission to correct that situation.

It took seven years to do so. In 1875, the commissioners passed an act to build a courthouse. They selected a plan by architect J.K. Winchell of Carson City that called for a two-story structure made of brick on a stone foundation. The roof featured a striking cupola, and the rooms were large, with tall windows. In addition to offices and a jail, the plan featured a large courtroom, a jury room and judge's chambers. I.T. Benham of Reno was selected to construct the buildings, and the commission purchased a building site from the Belmont Mining Company.

By August, grading for the foundation had begun, and a month later kilns for making mortar and bricks were constructed. The first firing of 25,000 bricks was underway while locally quarried stone was brought in for the foundation. Lumber from western Nevada was shipped by railroad to Eureka, then transported by wagon to Belmont. With winter approaching