

The Hess House

The brick house shown in the attached pictures is the house I, Ronald Hess, grew up in. It was built by my father, Herbert Hess, for the purpose of becoming the Hess family home. Herbert Hess was an experienced home builder and licensed Nevada State contractor who had already completed other houses in Reno and the Home Gardens area. It was initially approved for construction in the early 1940's, during World War II. Due to war restrictions on building materials, the square footage of the house had to be kept small at just under 800 square feet. The brick exterior of the house alone, laid up with red colored mortar, required 5,500 red bricks and cost \$1,045 or 19 cents per brick. By 1950, the house was complete inside and out. It was built and resided for the first half of its life at 1765 Marvel Way. This location was south of Reno (at that time) and the airport in an area called Home Gardens. In 1977 the Reno Airport Authority expanded the airport land holdings to the south of Peckam Lane and started purchasing properties in the Home Gardens area. By 1979 the Airport Authority had purchased the property the Hess House was built on.

After purchase, the Airport Authority sold all of the buildings on the property to a salvage company which then sold this brick house to a property owner in Sparks. They jacked the house up and placed it intact, bricks and all, on large trailers. The only modifications done at the time to the house was removal of the front porch and also the removal of the brick chimney so it would clear power lines along the route. The chimney was never rebuilt to its full height. A neighbor notified us about the upcoming move of the house and we followed it along the route. At that time, the only way to get such a large load across interstate 80 and to its new location in Sparks was by taking it across the Vista overpass. Seeing this house on the middle of the Vista overpass was an impressive sight. The only damage done during transit was the loss of three bricks from one corner of the house when it took out a stop sign as it turned onto the Vista overpass.

The house was placed on a new foundation at the back of a lot located on the corner of 16th Street and A Street in Sparks. This location now backs up to the Main Sparks Fire Station. In the 1980's and 90's the house was used by its new owners as a private residence. In the early 2000's the house and lot were transferred to the City of Sparks Fire Department. For some years it was used to house part of the Sparks historic fire equipment collection. As of 2018 it has a new roof and is being used as office space by the Sparks Fire Department.

My Father once told me that knowing he wanted this house to be the family home "he built it to last". It appears he did just that and it was a nice house to grow up in.

Note: The parents of Herbert Hess, Harry Hess and Mary Rodenberg Hess, originally arrived in Sparks, Nevada around 1918. During the 1920's Harry Hess held various jobs with the railroad, was a City of Sparks policeman, and assistant Chief of Police for Sparks. Mary Hess was a professional nurse.

Ronald Herbert Hess

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Picture number 1: The front of the Hess House when it was located at 1765 Marvel Way in Home Gardens just South of Reno, Nevada. Photo by Herbert Hess.



Picture number 2: Showing the backdoor, with the family car in the forefront, when the house was at its original location on Marvel Way. Photo by Herbert Hess.



Picture number 3: Herbert Hess, the builder of the house, wife Thekla Hess, and a very young Ronald Hess taken at Christmas time in the front room of the Hess House. Photo by Jess Hess.



Picture number 4: The Hess House at 1765 Marvel Way shown just after completion of preparations to move the entire structure to its new location in Sparks, Nevada. Photo by Ronald Hess.



Picture number 5: The Hess House on Marvel Way being slowly moved to its new location in Sparks, Nevada. Photo by Ronald Hess.



Picture number 6: The Hess House where it is now located behind the Sparks Fire Department at 16th and A Streets in Sparks, Nevada. Photo by Ronald Hess.



Picture number 7: Looking straight at the front porch of the Hess House at its current location with Ronald Hess standing on the porch. Note that the porch has been slightly remodeled from the original to improve access to the front door. Photo by Rebecca Hess.