

**Alan Bible – Democrat, Elected
20th Nevada Attorney General
Term: January 4, 1943–January 6, 1947, Elected
Term: January 6, 1947–January 1, 1951, Elected**

The Nevada Attorney General's Office extends a very special thank you to Paul A. Bible, Esq., the son of former Nevada Attorney General Alan Bible, for providing an in-person and highly-detailed account of his father.

Biography

Alan Bible, son of Jacob ("Jake") Harvey and Isabel Welsh Bible, was born on November 20, 1909, in Lovelock, Humboldt (now Pershing) County, Nevada. He attended school in Lovelock in a two-room schoolhouse, but in 1919, after a fire destroyed the Bibles' home and everything they had, the family moved to Fallon. Bible continued his education at Fallon Oak Park Grammar School, and in the fifth grade, he became a member of the class debating team. In 1923, Bible attended Churchill County High School; was president of the freshman and senior classes; and won the state oratorical contest in 1926.

In 1930, Bible received a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Nevada at Reno; a law degree from Georgetown University Law School, Washington, D.C., in 1934; and was admitted to the Nevada State Bar in 1935. While studying at Georgetown, the worsening depression forced Bible to work part-time, and it was there he met Senator Pat McCarran who gave Bible a job as an elevator operator in the Capitol Building. After graduation from law school, Bible returned to Nevada and became Senator McCarran's associate law partner.

In 1939, Bible married Loucile Jacks Shields, he adopted her daughter Debra, and he and Loucile had three sons, Paul, William, and David. Governor Richard Bryan appointed Paul chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission and William as Director of the Budget. William managed Richard Bryan's campaign for U.S. Senate and then became chairman of the State Gaming Control Board.

In 1935, Bible's political career began with his appointment as District Attorney of Storey County and subsequent election to that office the following year. It was a friend of Bible's who recommended him to then-Attorney General, Gray Mashburn, a long-time ally of McCarran and the 21st Attorney General of Nevada. Bible served as a Nevada Deputy Attorney General from 1938–1942, and in November 1942, he was elected as Nevada's 20th Attorney General, the youngest state attorney general in the nation. Re-elected in November 1946, he served until 1951, at which time, he and his law partner, Robert L. McDonald, co-founded the law firm of McDonald Carano Wilson. During his eight years as Attorney General, Bible became the state's leading expert in the "complicated legal field of western water rights."¹

In 1952, Bible ran for the United States Senate but lost in the Democratic primary by 475 votes to political newcomer Thomas B. Mechling. However, after the death of United States Senator Pat McCarran on September 28, 1954, Bible was elected to the Senate and sworn in on December 2, 1954, to fill the remaining two years of

¹ Gary E. Elliott. 1994. *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, Reno.

McCarran's term. Bible was re-elected in 1956, 1962, and again in 1968. On December 15, 1974, Bible resigned his Senate seat and terminated his Senate service "before the end of the 93rd Congress so that his successor—Senator Paul Laxalt, who would sit on the other side of the Senate aisle—could be sworn in early so that "Laxalt could advance in seniority over other members of the 1974 freshman class."² That was vintage Bible, more concerned about his state's welfare than his political party.³

From the time Bible entered the Senate, his career revolved around water projects, mining legislation, land and resource development, parks and recreation expansion, wilderness protection, and "the fight to preserve a state veto against perceived encroachment by the federal government."⁴

Like so many of his Senate colleagues, Bible came of age as a state official when the western states confronted a perplexing variety of postwar economic problems. Moreover, Bible's political tutelage under McCarran and his own experience in the attorney general's office reinforced his belief that "all politics" is local. He accepted the political wisdom of his mentor [McCarran] that Nevada, and the needs of its constituents, superseded all other political or economic considerations. He learned the arts of horse-trading and compromise long before he succeeded McCarran as a U.S. Senator.⁵

Part of a Nevada political tradition is that "no state is more deficient in water resources than Nevada."⁶ Mining declined in the late 19th century, and many in the west looked for ways to free themselves from their dependence on mining . . . and pleaded with the federal government to finance water development projects to irrigate crops Bible was convinced that water was the key to economic development in arid Nevada, and "labored in support of state water rights . . . which brought federally-financed water reclamation projects to the West."⁷

One "local" political issue involved the Colorado River Commission which was created by the Nevada Legislature in 1935. The Commission's duties included the responsibility for securing and protecting Nevada's rights and interests in its share of the waters of the Colorado River and in electric power generated on the river. Between 1954 and 1974, Bible was instrumental in authorizing legislation and shepherding it through, leading to the construction of the first phase of the Southern Nevada Water Project in 1965 which guaranteed Nevada's share of Colorado River water and building pumping stations to bring additional water to Las Vegas. This water enabled the development of the Las

² Elliott, 1994, p. 207.

³ O'Callaghan, Mike. *Bible: a book for Nevadans*. *Las Vegas Sun*, October 31, 1994.

⁴ Elliott, 1994, p. xvi.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

⁶ *Id.*, p. 3.

⁷ *Id.*, p. xvi, p. 3.

Vegas strip. In a 1987 interview, Bible said, “[w]e didn’t think we would ever need any more water, Las Vegas was just so small.”⁸

Another water project of Bible was the Wildhorse Dam Project in northern Elko County at Owyhee, Nevada. On September 8, 1970, Bible, honored during the opening ceremonies, became the third, honorary member of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe of the Duck Valley Reservation. Bible, adopted by the Tribe, received a new name, "Dama-day-gu-wup," which means “[h]e who speaks for us.” Then-tribal Chairman, Benson Gibson, paid tribute to Bible as the principal force in obtaining the authorization and financing for the new dam” and said that Bible “was being adopted for that support and assistance as well as for ‘monies yet to come.”

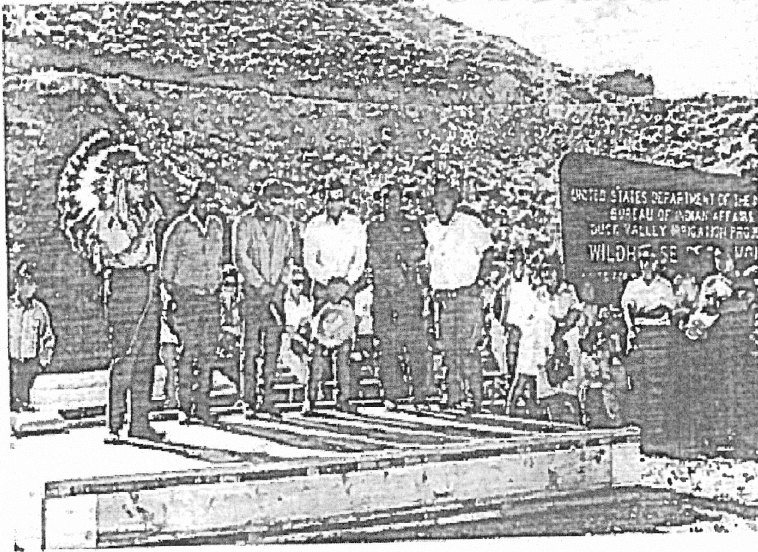


In this picture from an Elko newspaper of the time, courtesy of the Northeastern Nevada Museum, Bible (third from left) is wearing the tribal eagle leather war bonnet presented to him by the Tribe. ⁹

Bible became the third, honorary member of the tribe, joining singer Bing Crosby (the honorary mayor of Elko) and Fred Hallett, a former music teacher at the Owyhee school.

⁸ Staff and Wire Reports, “Nevada Ex-Sen. Alan H. Bible; Political Force for 40 Years”. *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1988. Accessed December 2, 2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1988-09-14/news/mn-1677_1_nevada-politics.

⁹ *Elko Daily* newspaper picture, September 8, 1970, courtesy of Northeastern Nevada Museum.



SEN. ALAN BIBBLE, in his newly acquired ceremonial Indian headdress, delivers the principal address at the dedication of Wildhorse Reservoir in northern Elko County. On the platform with Sen. Bible are members of the Shoshone-Palate Tribal Council, and Benson Gibson, tribal chairman, is at the far right in the group on the platform. Sen. Bible received the eagle feather headdress when he was adopted as an honorary member of the tribe earlier in the day.

man, is at the far right in the group on the platform. Sen. Bible received the eagle feather headdress when he was adopted as an honorary member of the tribe earlier in the day.

Sen. Bible Honored During Wildhorse Dam Ceremonies

U.S. Senator Alan Bible yesterday became an honorary member of the Shoshone-Palate Tribe at Owyhee and was the principal speaker (while wearing his new eagle-feather war headdress) at the dedication of the new \$2.5 million Wildhorse Dam in northern Elko County.

Sen. Bible became the third honorary member of the Shoshone-Palate during special ceremonies at Owyhee following a venison and beef barbecue served by residents of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Previously

accepted honorary members of the tribe are movie star Bing Crosby (who also is the honorary mayor of Elko) and Fred Hallett, a former music teacher in the Owyhee school.

Benson Gibson, tribal chairman, served as master of ceremonies for the various events during the day, which included a tour of the reservation, the barbecue luncheon, the adoption ceremony for Sen. Bible and the dedication of the new dam.

Chief Gibson paid tribute to Sen. Bible as the principal force in obtaining the author-

ization and financing for the new dam and explained the Senator was being adopted for that support and assistance as well as for "monies yet to come." In accepting the honorary membership cheerfully acknowledged the commitment for future support of reservation projects.

Gibson said Sen. Bible's new Indian name is "Dana-day-gu-wap," which means "He who speaks for us."

As a part of the ceremony accepting Sen. Bible into the (Continued on back page)

DANCING

In the
Frontier Lounge
Starting at 8:40

Friday-Saturday

Music by

Attention
Elko Desque Club Members

Bible

(Continued from page 1)

tribe, Arthur Manning and his daughter, Tina, rendered a presentation of a Bible passage in traditional Indian sign language.

Two chartered busses carried local residents and out-of-town visitors from Elko yesterday morning for the day's events; and a number of others drove private automobiles from various points in both Idaho and Nevada. Several hundred were on hand for the barbecue luncheon.

Governmental dignitaries attending the ceremonies in addition to Sen. Bible included Nevada's other U.S. Senator, Howard Cannon; Louis R. Bruce of Washington, D.C., the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; Jose A. Zuni of Stewart, superintendent of the Nevada Indian Agency; Vern Hamre of Ogden, regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service; Nolan F. Kell of Reno, Nevada director of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management; and John E. Bawden of Carson City, state highway engineer.

The new Wildhorse Dam that was dedicated during final ceremonies yesterday afternoon is 90 feet high with a capacity of 72,000 acre feet of water covering 3,600 surface acres. The new structure replaces an old dam and approximately doubles the capacity of Wildhorse Reservoir. Officials noted the reservoir is presently storing about 40,000 acre feet of water.

A spokesman for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation noted that because of weather variations during the construction of the new dam, the contractor was required to heat the gravel used as concrete aggregate with steam during winter months; and to chill the gravel with dry ice during the summer.

The enlarged reservoir will store Owyhee River irrigation water for the Duck Valley Reservation, where the 750 members of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe maintain a herd of about 5,700 head of cattle and raise approximately 18,000 tons of alfalfa hay annually on small ranches. An estimated 250 non-tribal members providing various services on the reservation boost the total population to about 1,000, a spokesman said.





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War bonnet worn by Senator Alan Bible in 1970, found approximately 45 years later in the basement of the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko. It apparently was donated by Bible to the museum. Museum staff restored the bonnet—it will be loaned to the new Shoshone-Paiute Tribal Headquarters in Owyhee, Nevada.

Important to Bible throughout his twenty-year career as a United States senator was doing little favors for people—“I always had one guiding rule, which I hope I more or less met, and that was trying to help people,”¹³ and “I got the greatest pleasure out of trying to help people . . . [t]here can be no greater reward in life.”¹⁴

Also known for his advocacy of national parks, Bible, in his tenure as chairman of the Interior Committee's Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, helped create more than 86 parks, historic sites, and national monuments, including the 48,000-acre Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland; the 23,000-acre Gateway National Recreation Area along the New York-New Jersey shoreline; the 53,000-acre Point Reyes National Park in California; the 131,983-acre Redwood National Park, including three state parks; the 684,000-acre North Cascades National Park, including two recreation areas; the 26,000-acre Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts; and an expansion of the Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. In 1986, Congress established Great Basin National Park in White Pine County, in east-central Nevada near the Utah Border—“a

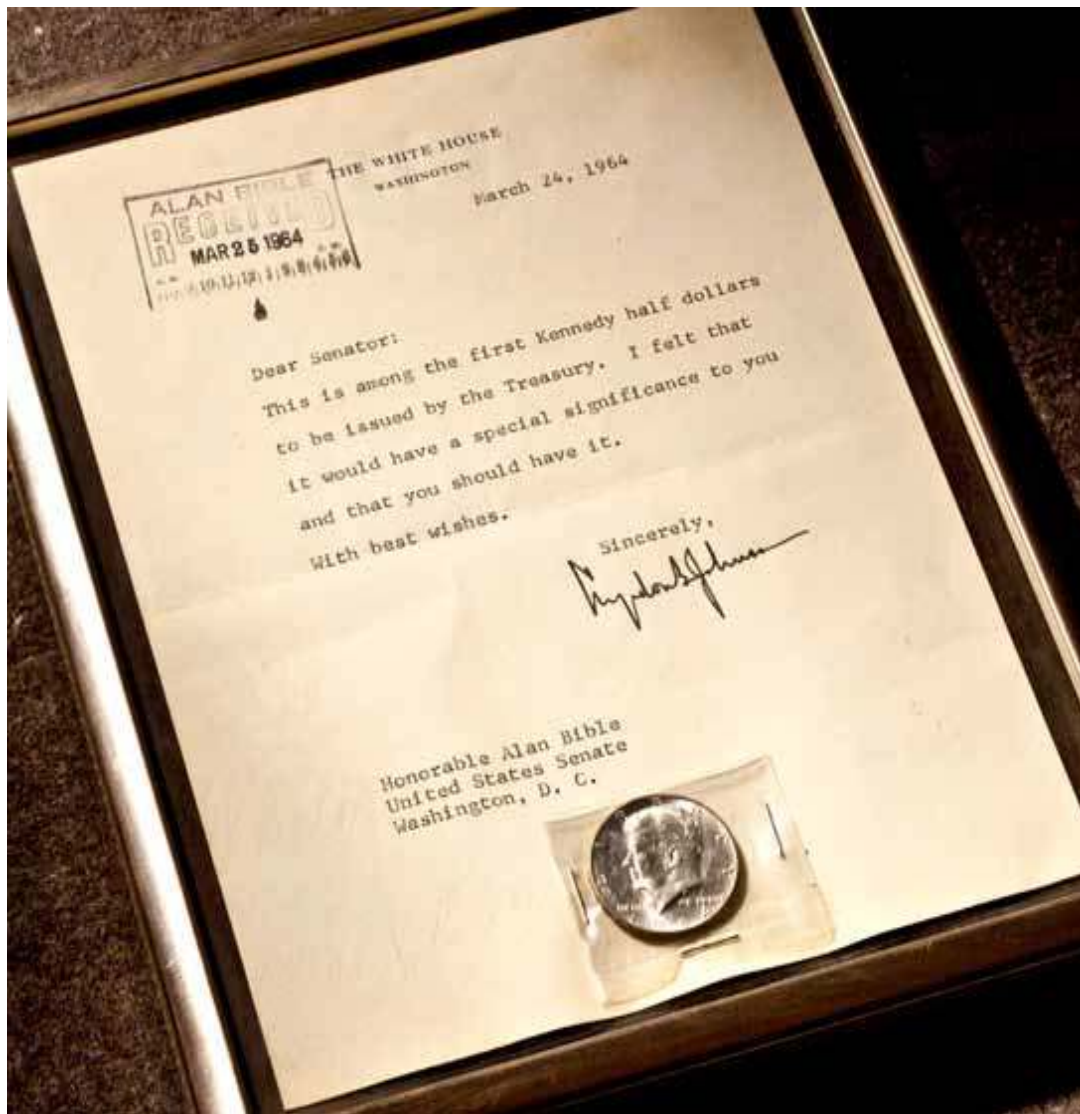
¹² <https://www.facebook.com/nnmuseum/photos>. Accessed December 13, 2016.

¹³ Mary Ellen Glass. University of Nevada, Oral History Archive, *Alan Bible: Recollections of a Nevada Native Son*. Oral History UNOHP Catalog #095, Interviewed 1977-1979, Published 1982, p. 142.

¹⁴ Staff and Wire Reports, “Nevada Ex-Sen. Alan H. Bible; Political Force for 40 Years”. *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1988. Accessed October 13, 2016.

lasting testament to his [Bible's] career . . . a park [he] had fought for throughout his final years in the Senate".¹⁵

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, Bible proposed that 50 million silver dollars be minted with the President's likeness.



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1964 letter from President Lyndon Johnson to Senator Alan Bible, which includes a gift of an uncirculated Kennedy half dollar, can be found in the Alan H. Bible Senatorial Papers at UNR Knowledge Center.

Bible supported President Johnson's Great Society program as well as his Vietnam policy, however, in 1968, Bible said of the American involvement there, “[w]e have learned a lesson that we cannot police the entire world.” According to Alan’s son, Paul Bible, President Johnson said of [Alan] Bible that he was a “work horse rather than a show horse.” Bible cast the deciding vote in the Senate to override President Nixon’s

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ As of November 28, 2016, the University of Nevada Reno Knowledge Center listed on its website this picture and accompanying text, which can be found in the Alan Bible Senatorial Papers at UNR Knowledge Center. Accessed November 28, 2016.

veto of the Clean Water Act. Bible also introduced the first bill passed by Congress that gave 18-year-olds the right to vote.

“Bible gave much to our nation without asking for applause. He made sure his people in Nevada were not forgotten. He commended the respect of our whole national government through his gentle manner, his hard work, and his fairness. He left a great heritage, but he never asked to be recognized for his accomplishments.”¹⁷ According to Bible’s son, Paul, Bible received an honorary degree from the University of Nevada (now, the University of Nevada, Reno) in 1970, and in 1974, he was named a Distinguished Nevada by the University of Nevada Regents. Bible’s friend William “Wildcat” Morris and his wife Vivian created and endowed the *Senator Alan Bible Teaching Excellence Award*, for faculty in liberal arts and sciences in honor of Alan Bible. The endowment later was augmented by his son Paul and his late wife Judy. Important to Bible throughout his twenty-year career as a United States senator was doing little favors for people—“I always had one guiding rule, which I hope I more or less met, and that was trying to help people . . . I got the greatest pleasure out of trying to help people . . . [t]here can be no greater reward in life.”¹⁸ Paul Bible, Alan’s son, said that upon his father’s retirement, Senate staff presented Bible with a plaque that read: “For a man who always looks for the best in everything and everybody”.

Bible gave much to our nation without asking for applause. He made sure his people in Nevada were not forgotten. He commanded the respect of our whole national government through his gentle manner, his hard work, and his fairness. He left a great heritage, but he never asked to be recognized for his accomplishments.¹⁹

Mary Ellen Glass, who interviewed Bible for the University of Nevada Oral History Project (Oral History #095), said he was a highly likeable, rather self-effacing individual . . . he slides over issues, and doesn’t speak too critically of anyone. . . it was a matter of policy with him, and it became part of his political style. ‘If I can’t speak well of a person, I will not speak ill of him’.²⁰

In 1974, Bible was succeeded in the Senate by Senator Paul Laxalt, confidant to President Reagan and the grandfather of the 33rd Attorney General, Adam Paul Laxalt.

Bible died on September 12, 1988, in Auburn, California, at the age of 78. At the time of his death, Bible was survived by his wife, Loucile, of Auburn, California; daughter Debra Bandini, of San Diego, California, and three sons: Paul, of Reno, Nevada; William, of Lake Tahoe, California; and David, of Santa Clara, California; and seven grandchildren.

¹⁷ U.S. Senator, Ted Stevens, State of Alaska, foreword to *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West*, by Gary E. Elliott, ix-x. University of Nevada Press, Reno, 1994.

¹⁸ Nevada Ex-Sen. Alan H. Bible; Political Force for 40 Years. *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1988. Accessed online November 3, 2016.

¹⁹ U.S. Senator, Ted Stevens, State of Alaska, foreword to *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West*, by Gary E. Elliott, ix-x. University of Nevada Press, Reno, 1994, x.

²⁰ Mary Ellen Glass, University of Nevada Oral History Project (Oral History #095). “*Alan Bible: Recollection of a Nevada Native Son: The Law, Politics, the Nevada Attorney General’s Office, and the United States Senate*”. Interview Date: 1977-1978; Document Date: 1982. Accessed December 13, 2016.

Bible is interred at the Masonic Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Reno, Nevada. Upon Bible's death, consumer advocate Ralph Nader called Bible "one of the Senate's most productive members."²¹

On September 28, 1988, in the *Las Vegas Sun*, Hank Greenspun, an old nemesis of Bible's from the 1952 Democratic Senate primary . . . wrote a fitting epitaph for the life and career of Alan Bible:

Alan Bible's legacy was to let every person know that despite petty, cheap, vicious politics, a man can rise to the highest positions and win the admiration and confidence of his constituents. The only advice we can give to those who would seek a career in public life is to pattern their character after Alan Bible. If they do they will become, as he did, a public official in whom trust was not betrayed.²²

Election of 1942 and 1946

On November 3, 1942, Bible was elected as Nevada's 20th Attorney General, and of the 38,980 votes cast, Bible (Democrat) received 23,139 (59.4%) votes to John R. Ross' (Republican) 15,841 (40.6%) votes. It is interesting to note that John Ross was the great-grandfather of Nevada's 33rd Attorney General, Adam Paul Laxalt.

In the election on November 5, 1946, Bible ran unopposed and received all 32,644 votes cast.²³

Office Administration and Duties

The Nevada Attorney General's office budgets from July 1, 1942, through June 30, 1950, listed 24 staff for Special Assistant Attorneys General, Deputy Attorneys General, Chief Clerks and Stenographers, and additional stenographers:

1943–1944 Budget \$35,000

\$10,000 Attorney General's Salary

\$ 7,200 Deputy Attorney General's Salary

\$ 6,000 Extra Deputy Attorney General Salary

\$ 4,200 Chief Clerk – Stenographer

\$ 3,600 Extra Stenographic Services

²¹ Staff and Wire Reports, "Nevada Ex-Sen. Alan H. Bible; Political Force for 40 Years". *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1988. Accessed October 13, 2016.

²² Elliott, 1994, p. 207.

²³ *Political History of Nevada*, 2006, Page 384.

- \$ 500 Extra Clerical Help
- \$ 1,500 Traveling Expenses
- \$ 2,000 Office supplies, equipment, and incidentals, including court costs

For the express purpose of paying costs and expenses of prosecuting or defending impending or existing tax or other suits, no part of which shall be paid or expended for attorney fees, \$10,000

1945–1946 Budget \$37,240

- \$10,000 Attorney General's Salary
- \$ 7,200 Deputy Attorney General's Salary
- \$ 6,000 Extra Deputy Attorney General Salary
- \$ 4,200 Chief Clerk – Stenographer
- \$ 4,140 Extra Stenographic Services
- \$ 500 Extra Clerical Help
- \$ 1,500 Traveling Expenses
- \$ 2,500 Office supplies, equipment, and incidentals, including court costs

For the express purpose of paying costs and expenses of prosecuting or defending impending or existing tax or other suits, no part of which shall be paid or expended for attorney fees, \$10,000

1947–1948 Budget \$61,370

- \$11,200 Attorney General's Salary
- \$ 9,240 Deputy Attorney General's Salary
- \$ 7,920 Extra Deputy Attorney General Salary

\$ 5,390 Chief Clerk – Stenographer
\$ 4,620 Extra Stenographic Services
\$ 500 Extra Clerical Help
\$ 1,500 Traveling Expenses
\$ 2,500 Office supplies, equipment, and incidentals, including court costs
\$ 6,500 Legislative bill drafter and assistants
\$12,000 Defense of the Boulder Dam suit

For the express purpose of paying costs and expenses of prosecuting or defending impending or existing tax or other suits, no part of which shall be paid or expended for attorney fees, \$10,000

1949–1950 Budget \$57,900

\$11,200 Attorney General's Salary
\$ 8,400 Deputy Attorney General's Salary
\$ 7,200 Extra Deputy Attorney General Salary
\$12,000 Special Assistant Deputy Attorney General
\$ 4,900 Chief Clerk – Stenographer
\$ 4,200 Stenographer Salary
\$ 500 Extra Clerical Help
\$ 1,500 Traveling Expenses
\$ 2,500 Office supplies and equipment, including court costs
\$ 5,500 Legislative Fund

For the express purpose of paying costs and expenses of prosecuting or defending impending or existing tax or other suits, no part of which shall be paid or expended for attorney fees - \$10,000

Although the 1943 and 1945 State Legislatures did not add any additional duties for the Attorney General, the 1947 State Legislature added the following duties:

- The Attorney General will prepare index and marginal notes for all of the acts, joint and concurrent resolutions, and memorials passed by the State Legislature. (Statutes of Nevada 1947, Chapter 11, Section 18, Page 12).
- The Attorney General will “. . . prepare and assist in the preparation and amendment of legislative measures when requested or upon suggestion herein provided . . .” and; “. . . aid and assist any member of the legislature as to bills, resolutions, and measures, and drafting them into proper form, and furnishing to the member the fullest information upon all matters within the scope of the Attorney General’s Office . . .”²⁴ (Statutes of Nevada 1947, Chapter 42, Inclusive, Pages 50–51).
- The Attorney General “. . . shall be counsel and attorney for the Department of Highways in all actions, proceedings, and hearings. (Statutes of Nevada 1947, Chapter 240, Section 1, Page 764).

The 1949 Legislature did not add any additional duties for the Attorney General.

²⁴*NB*: Although not stated, this activity was a precursor to the creation of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).