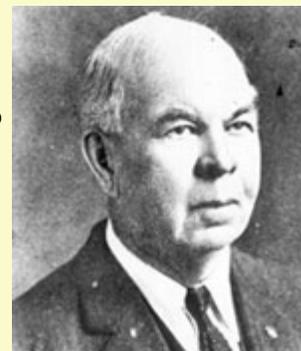


William E. Hawkins

April 2, 1863—August 6, 1940

Appointed to County Commission, July 1, 1909

As the original chair of the Clark County Commission, William E. Hawkins reprised the position he held on the Lincoln County Commission where he had worked to secure the creation of Clark County from Lincoln County. He served on the Clark County Commission, as mayor of Las Vegas three times, and also had an important role in the business and real estate sectors of Las Vegas.



Hawkins' parents migrated west and he was born in 1863 in Yreka, California. He spent his early life in California and opened his first business, a general store, in Ager, California.

Hawkins came to Las Vegas in March of 1905 and established a store at the old town site. Following the purchase of several blocks of land at the Las Vegas Land Auction held by the railroad in May 1905; Hawkins relocated his business to the new townsite. Located on Fremont Street, his new store formed an important part of the growing business district for the new town.

In 1906, Hawkins made his first bid for political office and ran as a republican for a seat on the Lincoln County Commission. Voters elected him to the position and as a county commissioner from Las Vegas; he worked for the creation of a separate county for the southern region of Lincoln County. Following the division of Lincoln County, Hawkins resigned his seat on the Lincoln County commission and Governor Dickerson offered him an appointment as the chair of the newly created Clark County Board of Commissioners. Following his original appointment, Hawkins ran to retain his position in 1910, but Thomas A. Brown defeated him.

Hawkins continued to improve his store on Fremont Street and it evolved from a general store into a clothing store stocking first men's clothing and then women's clothing as well. He took an active role in civic organizations as a member of the Masons, the Fraternal Order of the Eagles, and the Elk Lodge. He also joined the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, serving for a time as director of county/municipal affairs. In 1908, he began service on the board of the First State Bank of Nevada.

Hawkins helped write and pass the official city charter for Las Vegas in 1911. His commitment to the young city was rewarded with an appointment as one of the original city commissioners. Hawkins then ran to be the second mayor of the city. In 1913, Las Vegas voters elected him mayor to succeed Peter Buol. Hawkins served as mayor for three terms. During the 1920s, Hawkins began selling large subdivisions of land around Las Vegas. The first one, known as the Hawkins Addition and was located off of Fifth Street between Stewart and Mesquite Streets to about Lewis and Bridger Streets. In 1929, he opened a second set of lots between Garces and Charleston, to Main and Fifth Streets. Both areas developed quickly and some of Las Vegas' earliest residences were built in Hawkins' developments.

Hawkins returned to county government in 1924 for one term as county assessor. Later, Governor Balzar appointed him to Nevada State Tax Commission.

Hawkins fell into ill health in the late 1930s. He died on August 6, 1940. He was honored for his commitment to Las Vegas and the roles he held in that city, including city and county politician, bank official, merchant, and real estate broker. His pallbearers included Walter Bracken, Ed Von Tobel, C.P. Squires, and O.K. Adcock. He was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.