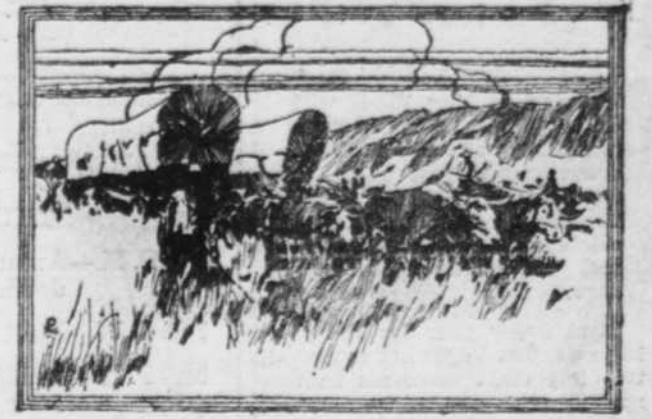


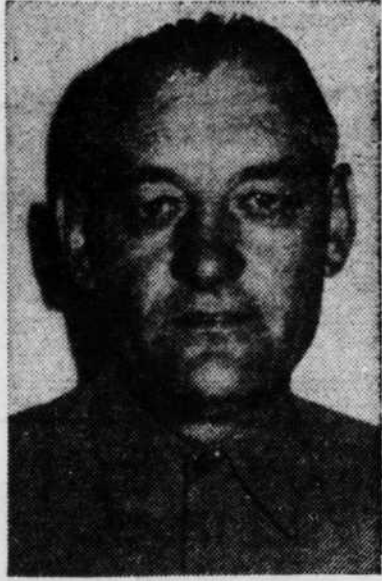
LAS VEGAS AGE

SOUTHERN NEVADA'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 1944



PARADE CHAIRMAN—James Cashman, who has served on the Helldorado committee ever since its inception as chairman of the various parades of the fete. The Old Timers' parade and the beauty parade have become nationally famous through his direction.



FIRST VILLAGE HEAD—James Powers, past exalted ruler, through whose efforts the idea of the Helldorado dance hall was born. Powers was the director of the first Helldorado dance hall at the "village" on Sixth and Fremont, a forerunner of the present one.



ORIGINAL COMMITTEE—The Helldorado celebration, born 10 years ago, originally was in charge of the group shown in this picture. From right to left, front row, are shown A. G. Blad, Fred O'Donnell, E. W. Cragin, James Cashman and James Powers. In the rear row, O. K. Adcock and Frank Gusewelle, P. J. Gallagher, A. S. Henderson and O. J. Smith also were on the original committee but were not available for pictures. (Photo by James H. Down, Jr., staff photographer).



RODEO CHIEF—E. W. Cragin took over the direction of the first rodeo and has been chief ever since. The rodeo has been one of the main attractions for the past eight years and it has been through Cragin's efforts that the affair has clicked so well.



KANGAROO COURT—Frank Gusewelle, genial director of the annual Kangaroo Court, has been in charge of this portion of the fete since 1935, when the first one was held. Gusewelle, a past exalted ruler, was one of the original committee members.



GENERAL CHIEF—Lou Gammell, who for the past two years has acted as general director for the annual Helldorado celebration. Gammell, formerly a member of the Reno lodge, transferred to Las Vegas two years ago and has been the head man since that time.



ORIGINAL RODEO—When the Helldorado celebration started in 1935 the only rodeo attached was Bobby, an outlaw Brahma bull from Oklahoma, who performed in a small corral inside the first Helldorado Village. The bull was brought here by Monte Reger, his trainer, and the big fellow did plenty of tricks. Standing by the bull are Reynolds "Tiny" Putnam, who doubled as barker for "The Streets of Cairo" and James Powers, operator of the first Helldorado bar.



FIRST HELLDORADO BAR—Standing in front of the Last Chance Bar and dance hall are shown Mr. and Mrs. James Powers. Powers operated the initial concession which since has grown to the huge dance hall in the Helldorado Village. It was from such a humble beginning that the fete has grown in the past 10 years. In the beginning, all of the concessions were manned by local people and the shows staged in the first Helldorado were made up entirely by Las Vegas. The first show was staged on a vacant lot where the Sears-Roebuck store now stands.

Fete of Helldorado Has Colorful History

"HELLDORADO"

THAT'S A DARING WORD within itself, but it has come to mean fun, excitement, costumes, old vehicles, parades, horses, "gay ninety" drama, and old-time dancing, all combining to make Las Vegas' annual spring festival one of the best known in the whole southwest.

It all started back in 1935, when a traveling show man, Clyde Zerby came to Las Vegas and convinced a committee of public spirited Elks lodge members that Las Vegas should capitalize on its "last frontier" spirit and share its unique features with people from more sedate communities.

Thus it was that the brain child of 1935 has grown in 10 years to robust proportions and has materialized into one of the greatest attractions of this area.

Starts in 1935

In April, 1935, headquarters for the first annual Helldorado were opened on Fremont between Second and Third streets, with Clyde Zerby, director general of the celebration, in charge. Advertising material to publicize the show was distributed there, and an information booth was maintained to answer questions regarding the fete.

At that time emphasis was being put on the growing of whiskers by all male residents of the community, following a proclamation by Mayor E. W. Cragin. Members of the city board at that time, serving with Mayor Cragin, were Commissioners H. P. Marble, James H. Down, Sr., L. L. Arnett, and W. C. German.

Barbers of the community were doing a novel business in trimming whiskers in fancy patterns on the faces of public-spirited men of the town. Not only were the barbers called on to shape the whiskers, but they also had many dye jobs, turning out blue-black and flaming red beards, where dull fawn-colored whiskers had grown.

Looking into the past, newspaper files show that about this time Senator Key Pittman, since deceased, charged that "southern Nevada harbors one of the largest bootleg liquor rings in the United States," adding that "there are stills in every gulch in which there is a spring." At that time a Boulder dam postage stamp was under consideration by authorities in Washington, D. C., and later was carried out as planned. Boulder dam was almost complete at that time, and the huge cooling tower structure, which played an important part during the construction of the big project, was pulled down late in March, 1935.

A special feature of the first Helldorado was a display of an old arastra (rock crusher), which was operated along with the panning of real gold from rich pay dirt. Dan Jondahl, president of the Boulder Dam Area Mining Association, was chairman of the committee in charge. At a meeting held in the Goodsprings school house, the Association voted on April 10 to back the Helldorado 100 per cent. Members of the committee participating were: Dan



ORIGINATOR AND PALS—Sitting on the curb, discussing the future of the Helldorado, are shown, from left to right, Clyde Zerby, who was the originator of the Helldorado idea now sponsored by the Elks, Louise Dufur, unofficial queen of the first Helldorado, and P. J. Gallagher, secretary of the Elks lodge at that time. This picture was taken in 1935 during the first Helldorado celebration of which Zerby was the director.

Annual Celebration Is in Tenth Year

Jondahl, chairman; Fred Ream and Fred Phiel, Goodsprings; Harry Trehearns, Crescent district; F. L. Roller and Sid Gaines, Searchlight district; John Sartain and Harry Kemp, Eldorado district; John Perkins and F. L. Lord, Gold Hill district.

On April 5, 1935, plans were announced for the selection of the "Belle of Helldorado," with a \$250 diamond ring to be awarded to the winner by the Elks lodge. A large number of contestants entered the race.

A popular event at the first Helldorado was the old time fiddlers' contest, scheduled at the Helldorado grounds, which were located on the present site of the Sears, Roebuck and company store.

Costumes for the first fete were strictly "pioneer," and an enterprising costume company brought to Las Vegas elaborate

outfits, which were rented out to local residents for the time of the celebration.

A story of the first fete, printed in the Review-Journal, states:

"With the same spirit in which the men have grown whiskers, donned the rough garb of the pioneer and swaggered under the weight of side arms, women of Las Vegas and Boulder City are digging into trunks, burrowing hither and thither, and some are buying up yards of old-time materials which they will fashion into the styles of over 80 years ago. Many are planning on renting costumes and gowns like great grandmother wore. It will be interesting to note what they will find to wear as companions to the men of Helldorado."

First "Kangaroo" Court
The first "kangaroo" court was held in the city on the week end of April 13, 1935. Thereby was

born one of the traditions of the annual celebration.

Just prior to the "kangaroo" court plans were made for the planting of the first bass in Boulder lake. Ryland G. Taylor, chairman of the chamber of commerce fish and game committee, asked the city board to provide \$100 to defray shipping charges from Dexter, New Mexico, for about 30,000 fingerlings to be placed in the lake.

At the same time it was announced that Boulder lake had reached its highest level, with the elevation at 712 feet, which was two and one-half feet higher than the previous record.
Plans were announced for a Boulder City day during the Helldorado fete, with all visiting Elks and their ladies to be taken on a tour of the Boulder dam project. Plans were made by Frank T. Crowe, construction engineer for

Helldorado Beginning In Las Vegas Traced

the Six Companies Inc., builders of the dam. G. E. Bodell, chief special agent for the Six Companies, was to act as guide for the visitors.

The old-timers parade was inaugurated at the first Helldorado. This parade was to honor Mr. and Mrs. Peter Paufl, pioneer Las Vegas residents, who were featured at a golden wedding ceremony which took place at the Helldorado grounds.

Stories of that early event of the fete, show that "no automobiles will be allowed in the wedding party section." In fact, nothing that would indicate the prevailing modern ways would be admitted.

"Prospectors, miners, desert-rats, ox-teams, old time breakdowns, dance hall and dancing girls will be the delight of many old-timers, as well as the new generation, who were too late to see these things."

"To bring them to life again will be one of the missions of the Helldorado."

"Once again the rattle of the old stage coach, the lash of the whip, and the imprecations of the bewhiskered driver, will be heard, bringing memories of the old west."

"Old desert rats will mingle with the throngs and display the buckskin bags that once held real nuggets of pure gold."

"Strange tales of lost mines, days spent on the desert without water, and fighting Indians will be told."

"Memories of the gold trail will be refreshed and the name of Captain Sutter will be recalled vividly."

"The old time gambler will return to take his part in the activities. All the attractions will be depicted as relics of the past. A fat and red-faced bartender will be at everyone's service."

It was on April 16, 1935, that it was reported that "Ploche mining interests, anticipating use of Boulder dam power in development of that area, are prepared to sign contracts immediately," according to representatives of the mining district. On that date it was announced that approximately 4,000 persons had registered for the city election in Las Vegas.

R. B. Denton, head of the Union Pacific news bureau in Los Angeles, came to Las Vegas and took a number of pictures and gathered information for many stories to publicize the celebration. Denton has continued to be one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the annual fete. He distributed pictures all over the United States and was one of the principal factors in spreading the fame of the fete throughout the nation.

First Helldorado
Finally on April 25, 1935, the big day arrived, bringing the first day of the fete. The Review-Journal heralded the celebration with a banner line and story which stated:

"The Helldorado celebration, depicting the days when the Union Pacific laid out the townsite of Las Vegas, will get away to a rip-roaring start this evening when the 'Pay Streak Trail' village is opened to the throngs pouring into the community by the Boulder dam for four days of joy unconfined."
"Tonight at 7 o'clock sharp, Lieutenant Governor Fred S.

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