

Vegas Birthday To Be Observed

Las Vegas will have a birthday on May 15—it will be 39 years old. Three days later, another important event in the history of the community will take place. The tenth annual Helldorado celebration will be launched and will continue for four days.

Thus every year for the past 10 years, Las Vegas has observed two important occasions in the spring. One points with pride to the community of today, which has grown from a frontier outpost for travel-weary land and gold seekers to the present thriving metropolis of the desert. The other looks back over those early days to the unique founding of the town.

First Birthday

The saga of the first birthday of Las Vegas goes back 95 years to the boom period of the gold rush of 1849. Then the Oregon and Santa Fe trails were crowded with gold-crazed easterners. Fremont, Carson, Bonneville, all famous as leaders and trail breakers, were pioneering in conquest and leading the way.

Water was more important than an easy trail across the desert. The route chosen from Salt Lake City, Utah, to San Bernardino, California, was through Las Vegas, then in the territory of New Mexico.

Records of those early days have been compiled in the Nevada State Historical Society Papers, taken from reports of the Church of the Latter Day Saints by Miss Jane Wier of Reno.

Travelers Pass

From these accounts it is learned that travelers passed "over the Spanish Trail, to the patch of meadows known by the Spanish name of Las Vegas (the meadows)," which became a popular camping ground in the midst of the desert and one of the few places where good water could be obtained for men and animals.

The next era in the history was the founding of a settlement by the Latter Day Saints in Las Vegas in 1855. The church missionaries arrived on June 14, of that year. One of their first tasks was the erection of a fort, and the remains of the old fort with its protecting wall still stand in good condition at the Old Ranch on North Fifth street. At the curve in the street passing the ranch, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers of Las Vegas have erected a monument to those early settlers.

A report prepared by one of the Mormon leaders for the church records shows, "We found Las Vegas to be a nice patch of grass about half a mile wide and two or three miles long, situated at the foot of a bench 40 or 50 feet high. The valley faces the east, and a pretty clear stream of water, about the size of a common millrace, comes from two springs about four miles west of our location. The water of the springs is very clear. They are from 20 to 30 feet in diameter, and at the depth of two feet the white sand bubbles all over."

Chapter Closed

On September 26, 1858, a conference of the missionaries was held and it was decided to abandon the Mormon settlements in Las Vegas and at Muddy Mission. Continuous trouble with the Indians led to this pronouncement, and thus the first chapter of the history of Las Vegas was closed.

Ten years later the Las Vegas ranch was offered for sale by O. D. Gass, proprietor. Between that period and 1905 there is little written history of Las Vegas. A few ranchers remained in the area, and travelers continued to

PROGRAM OF EVENTS Tenth Annual HELLDORADO CELEBRATION

May 18-21, 1944

THURSDAY, MAY 18, 1944

6:00 P. M.—Annual Clark County Children Parade down Fremont, then to Helldorado Village.

8:00 P. M.—First rodeo events at city park arena.

8:00 P. M.—Helldorado Village opens and dancing starts in dance hall.

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1944

6:00 P. M.—Tnnual Clark County Chidren Parade down Fremont, then to Helldorado Village.

7:30 P. M.—Helldrado Village opens for children and adults. Dancing begins.

7:30 P. M.—Second rodeo events in city park.

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1944

7:30 P. M.—Third rodeo events in city park.

7:30 P. M.—Helldorado Village opens and dancing starts.

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 1944

12:30 P. M.—Rodeo parade downtown, leading to city park.

1:15 P. M.—Final rodeo events and selection of 1945 rodeo queen.

6:00 P. M.—Annual Bathing Beauty Parade, leading down Fremont to Helldorado Village, where the 1944 bathing beauty queen will be chosen.

6:30 P. M.—Opening of Helldorado Village and beginning of dancing.



FIRST WHISKER DERBY—And Mrs. Herman Grayson finding out who has the longest beard for the prize. This picture, taken in 1937, shows one of the most successful of the whisker contests held in the Helldorado fete.

"Doc" Sorenson To Handle Rodeo

J. C. "Doc" Sorenson, owner of the "Flying U" ranch at Camas, Idaho, who has furnished the stock for the annual rodeo in Las Vegas for several years, will be back again for the tenth annual fete.

Sorenson, one of the most famous stock men in the nation, provides stock for the Madison Square Gardens, for the famous Cheyenne Frontier Days celebration, and many other nationally known shows.

He will bring 180 head of stock to Las Vegas from his Idaho ranch for the show this year.

Rodeo events, which are staged in the city park arena, will be held on the nights of May 18, 19, and 20, and on the afternoon of May 21. Mayor E. W. Cragin of Las Vegas is committee chairman for the Elks lodge in charge of the rodeo.

PARADE LINEUP

The annual old-timers' parade will form on North and South Main streets at 5:30 o'clock on the evening of May 18 to be ready for the start of the parade at 6 o'clock, according to James Cashman, parade chairman. The parade will lead down Fremont to Fifth, thence north to the Helldorado Village, where it will disband.



STARS OF SHOW—John Zerby, son of the originator of Helldorado, and Maxine Wright, the dancing stars of the first Girlie show on the midway of the Helldorado.

Fremont Passed Here, Left Name

stop on their westward treks, but actual events are lost in the haze of the past.

Then on May 15, 1905, modern Las Vegas was born. Again it was a planned project of colonization. In contrast to the religious purpose of the first settlers, it was a commercial enterprise this time. The old San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad company (later purchased by the Union Pacific) was pushing its tracks from Salt Lake and from the coast to form a continuous link. Advertisements ran in newspapers all over the nation announcing that a new town of Las Vegas would be established, and adventurers from every state and territory rushed to the desert to be in on the beginning. They came in every type of conveyance, and some rode in on the first trains.

The late J. T. McWilliams was one of the first to arrive and laid out the "original tent-shack town of Las Vegas," now known as Westside. The railroad company did not permit anyone to camp on any of the property which now comprises the main Las Vegas.

Then on May 15, 1905, the great day came. Land in Las Vegas was sold at auction by the railroad company to the highest bidders. Ben O. Rhodes of Los Angeles acted as auctioneer.

Hot Day

It was a hot day, old timers recall. When the bidding started there were no buildings in the townsite, but by night-fall half a dozen tent stores, restaurants and saloons were doing business.

Las Vegas had a gradual growth until the boom days of Boulder dam, then took a sudden jump in population and building developments. When the dam was completed, tourists discovered the year-around attractions and desirable climate of the area, and a gradual increase in population continued.

The fourth era in the develop-

Fremont street was named for the famed American "Pathfinder," possibly on the sound assumption that when someone does you a good turn reciprocity is strictly in order.

It was General John C. Fremont who called this place—then not a city—Las Vegas, Spanish for "the meadows," and that euphonious name stuck to the community that is now the celebrated last frontier.

You'll scarcely recall the incident because it was quite a while ago—100 years last Wednesday, to be exact. No witnesses remain to tell the story, but the general's account does.

The indomitable explorer had been commissioned by President Tyler to "size up" this newly-acquired territory in the far west. After weary desert marches his caravan came upon a refreshing spring in a green vale so pleasing that he gave the countryside appropriate designation.

As the town eventually developed Fremont's spring was the source of water supply for many years. It indicated artesian possibilities and wells yielding abundantly were sunk later. When the Los Angeles, San Pedro & Salt Lake railway (now UP) came in 1905, this water supply made Las Vegas a strategic division point, as it is today.

Well over half a century elapsed before the city's streets were titled and the principal thoroughfare became "Fremont."

The "Pathfinder" had, indeed, found the way!



Exalted Ruler

Ralph S. Purdy

Calls all you cowhands and cowgirls to join Las Vegas Elks Lodge No. 1468 in the 10th Annual Helldorado-Rodeo, May 18, 19, 20 and 21. Get into your frontier pants, high-heeled boots, ten-gallon hats, strap on your shootin' iron, and join in Helldorado "Whoopie"!

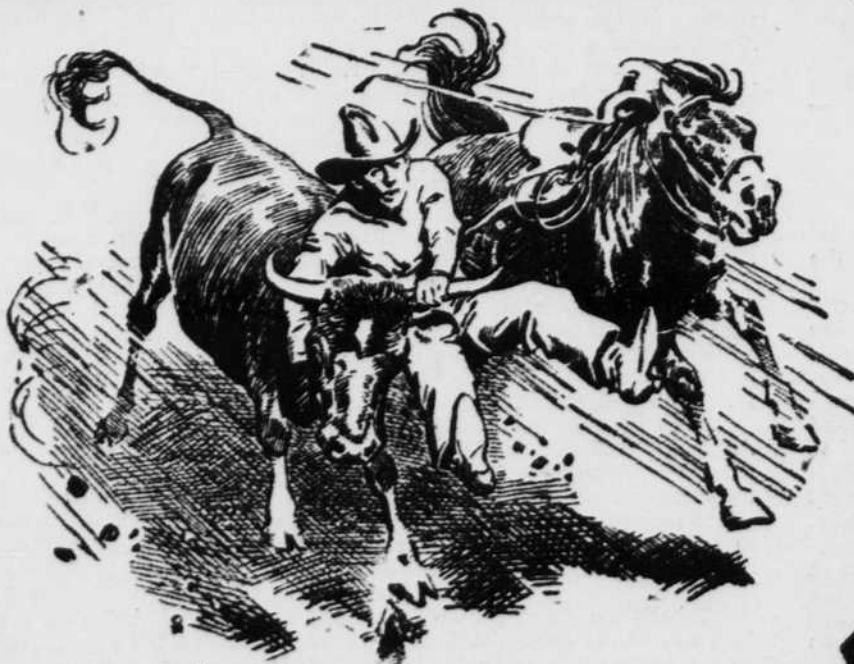
It's fun for the soldiers, defense workers and all Nevadans. Three big parades, four rip-roaring rodeos, excitement at the Helldorado Village!

Let's Go Western! It's Helldorado Time!

BEST OF LUCK TO THE ELKS!

ON THEIR

10th HELLDORADO



CHRISTENSEN'S

"YOUR JEWELER"

Phone 636

2225 Fremont

UNION PACIFIC TIME INSPECTOR FOR 16 YRS.

