

"Lengthy Talk" Start Of Helldorado Fete

"A lengthy talk" led to the inauguration of the annual Helldorado celebration in Las Vegas under auspices of the Las Vegas Elks lodge, according to the minutes of the lodge.

It was on March 14, 1935, that the first steps toward the start of the fete were taken. A fact almost forgotten during the intervening years is that the meeting where these important discussions took place was held in Boulder City.

Held in Boulder
Through special dispensation of the grand exalted ruler, Thurman D. Robb of Tonopah, the Las Vegas Elks met in the Stray Elks club at Boulder City on that important date.

During the course of the meeting, "Brother Clyde Zerby of Globe, Arizona lodge number 489, made a lengthy talk on putting on a show for the benefit of the lodge. The exalted ruler (A. G. Blad) appointed the following named committee to meet with Brother Zerby and to report back at the next meeting: J. E. Powers, A. S. Henderson, O. K. Adcock, James Cashman, George Smilanick and Joe Ratty."

At the next meeting of the lodge, held in the lodge rooms in Las Vegas on March 21, 1935, Powers as chairman of the special committee made a favorable report, and "considerable discussion on the matter" was held by the lodge members. The exalted ruler then referred the celebration plans to the special committee already appointed and added to that group Dr. J. D. Smith, Wm. L. Scott, A. C. Grant, and E. A. Clark. Named to assist them were the chair officers of the lodge, who then were: A. G. Blad, exalted ruler; Dr. R. R. Myers, leading knight; Harry C. Gravelle, loyal knight; Frank Gusewelle, lecturing knight; P. J. Gallagher, secretary; Walter R. Bracken, treasurer; Eugene Goldstucker, tiler; and Otis J. Smith, James Cashman, and O. K. Adcock, trustees.

Plans Mapped
On March 28, 1935, when the lodge met again, plans were well under way for the big celebration, and the name "Helldorado" was first used as the designation for the big show. The lodge minutes show that "favorable talks" were made by several members who were "enthusiastically cooperating with Brother Zerby to help him make the coming Helldorado celebration of old time the best ever held in the city of Las Vegas." John Zerby, son of Clyde Zerby, later featured as star dancer of the first Helldorado, performed for the Elks during a short recess in the meeting. His dance act was enjoyed by all the members pres-

ent, the minutes show. "When lodge was convened again, Brother Zerby read the pledge known as the 'whisker pledge' which was signed by more than 100 members of the lodge present at the meeting."

As a result of this action, growing of whiskers by all the male population of the community became a tradition with the annual Helldorado celebration.

Prize Awarded
On April 4, 1935, at the lodge meeting a prize was awarded by Zerby to Pete Mileterno for the "toughest looking whiskers" worn by any lodge member at the meeting. Plans were discussed then too for a good will tour to be made to the surrounding lodges to promote interest in the Helldorado celebration. This policy was carried on annually until the war prevented promotion of travel to Las Vegas for the fete, and the celebration was continued principally for war workers and military personnel residing in this area or here on leave.

The first fete was held late in April, 1935, and was entirely a local show. The Elks held their annual election of officers, just after the first Helldorado, naming the following: Dr. R. R. Myers, exalted ruler; Frank Gusewelle, leading knight; Fred O'Donnell, loyal knight; Carl Rau, lecturing knight; Walter R. Bracken, treasurer; Merle F. Jesse, tiler, P. J. Gallagher, secretary; and J. E. Powers, trustee for three years. First mention of the rodeo in conjunction with the Helldorado was made in a lodge meeting on May 9, 1935, and was proposed by Dr. R. R. Myers, exalted ruler elect. He proposed that the rodeo be held with the 1936 Helldorado, and the plan was put over for later discussion.

Integral Part
"Kangaroo court" became an integral part of the celebration on March 28, 1935, when the first court was held, and it was ordered that "any brother without whiskers would suffer a severe penalty," the lodge minutes show. The time of the annual Elks election was changed, and before the second annual Helldorado took place in 1936, Dr. Myers had been replaced by Frank Gusewelle as exalted ruler. That year the rodeo was added to the Helldorado celebration and has been a regular feature ever since. Since those early days the Elks lodge has carried on the traditions established during the first two fetes: The celebration has grown in fame, and when the war is over, it is expected that it will become one of the most famous annual festivals in the nation.



QUEEN CONTESTANTS—In 1937 there was a whole coterie of beauties seeking queen honors. Here is a unique shot of some of the entrants. In the group can be found Frances Kramer, Sonya Worshy, Pauline Honrath, Betty Eichley, Fran McNamee and Pat Murphy.

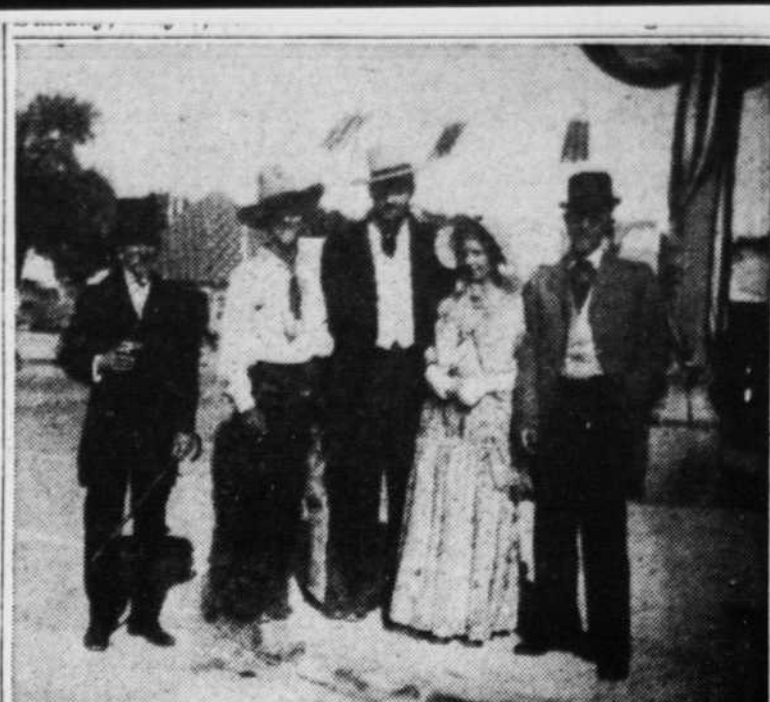
1945 Rodeo Queen Will Be Selected

Selection of the 1945 rodeo queen will be one of the special events on the afternoon of May 21, when the closing rodeo of the tenth annual Helldorado celebration will be held.

Queen contestants will be required to ride before the crowds, and cowboy judges will select the winner on the basis of riding ability, cowgirl outfit, and appearance.

Mrs. Wilson Stewart of Alamo, who was chosen last year on this basis, will reign as the 1944 queen. She will perform before the rodeo fans and will set the pace to be followed by the contestants this year.

Former rodeo queens who are still residents of Las Vegas will be featured with Mrs. Stewart in the rodeo parades preceding the events. They will participate in the colorful grand entry at the rodeo grounds which will launch each day's events.



HELLDORADO HILLBILLIES—Shown here is a photo taken during the first Helldorado in which the women, as well as the men, joined in the big dress-up affair. From left to right are shown Kirby Willetts, Bob Russell, James Powers, Mrs. James Powers and Art Harrington, gathered on the corner for a conversation.

Permanent Band Planned by Elks

Las Vegas Review-Journal, April 2, 1937—A permanent band for the city of Las Vegas loomed last evening with the appointment by Fred O'Donnell, new exalted ruler of the Elks lodge, of a committee to lay plans for a uniformed band to become part and parcel of the local fraternal order.

The band will be known as the Las Vegas Elks band and will wear the colors of the fraternity. Membership will be limited to Elks, John Kelly and John Graglia, member of the committee, announced.

Tri-State Golfing Tourney Is Set

Las Vegas Review-Journal, April 3, 1937—The second leg of the tri-state golf tournament will be played tomorrow morning at Boulder City.

The Las Vegas team will be selected from the following: K. Krause, C. Krause, E. Faxon, C. D. Keeler, Judge Wm. E. Orr, Dr. R. W. Martin, Dr. Woodbury, Dr. W. S. Park, S. Gene Parks, M. W. Davis, W. E. Benedict, L. Crandall, Wm. Pike, L. E. Burke, Woody Pierce, Gerry Crowe and Wm. Morley.

Indian Battle at Indian Springs Is Told by Pioneer

A strange but authentic story was revealed in Las Vegas a few years ago when an old-timer of this region brought to life again the true tale of the huge Indian battle at Indian Springs, 40 miles north of Las Vegas, in the days when Nevada was but a few years old.

The story, as told by Willard H. George, formerly of Las Vegas and now of Los Angeles, tells of the huge massacre of one Indian tribe by another. A band of Piutes had wandered up into the Lake Tahoe country in search of new hunting land and had been set upon by a large tribe of Shoshones. The Shoshones trailed the Piutes until the latter reached a point a few miles from Indian Springs. Here the Piute ranks were swelled by the entire tribe of this section. For days the Piutes circled the Shoshones, not allowing them to approach for water or food.

At last the Shoshones were so weakened from hunger and thirst that they could no longer offer resistance, and they were set upon and massacred by their enemies.

George estimated that 1,000 Indians died in this battle. He still has bows and arrows as evidence of this historic conflict, which were given to him by an old Indian chief who fought in this battle and related the story.

Footprinters Plan On Charter Night

Las Vegas Review-Journal, April 6, 1937—Plans for the presentation of the charter of the Las Vegas Footprinters, were outlined last night at a meeting of the organization, and it was decided to stage the affair at the Meadows on Saturday night, April 17.

Five members of the Los Angeles chapter, which fathered the Las Vegas organization, will bring the charter to this city and will preside at the presentation, Roger Foley, organizer in Las Vegas, said.

Monetary Trouble Menaces Rodeo

Las Vegas Review - Journal, April 1, 1937—The troubles that have beset the annual rodeo planned in conjunction with the Helldorado celebration in the city of Las Vegas have been roped, thrown and hog-tied, according to the officials of the organization, and after being on and off like a buckaroo on an unbroken bronco, apparently the festival is firmly in the saddle for good.

The fund drive which met with little early success, has been gathering momentum and the \$2,000 goal set by the Horsemen's association, which is staging the rodeo, is in sight and probably will be achieved by the end of the present week.

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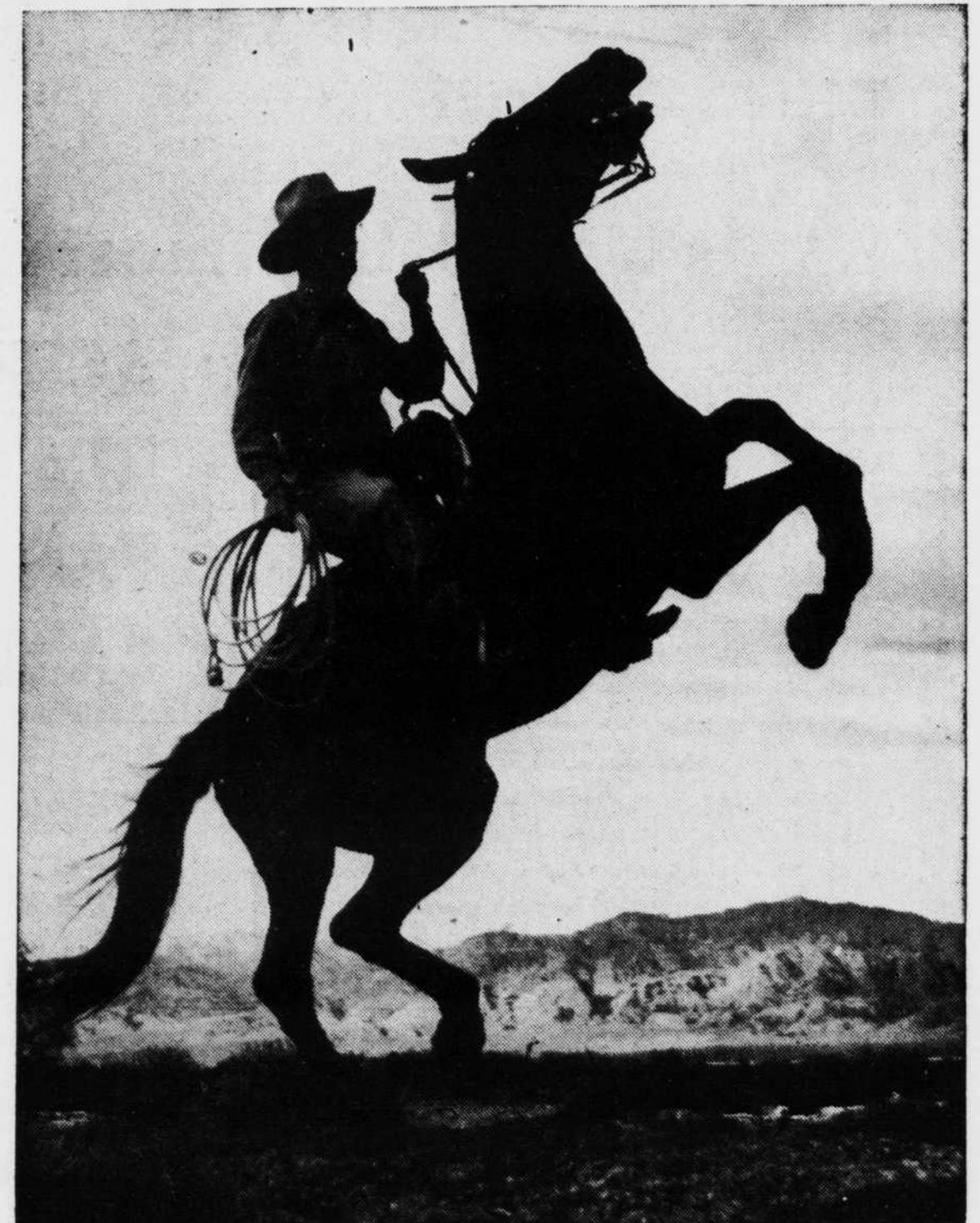
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