

Helldorado Village Monument To Co-Operation of All City

The Helldorado Village on North Fifth street in Las Vegas stands as a monument to community cooperation and enterprise.

Construction of the Village was a project in which almost every public-spirited resident of Las Vegas had a part, donating time, energy, and work for the construction of the buildings and fence to provide a suitable locale for the annual celebration.

Starts in 1940
The work was started in 1940, just prior to the sixth annual Helldorado, when Fred Bartlett was serving as exalted ruler of the Elks. The first project was the fence.

A sawmill owned by R. E. Griffith and used in early days for cutting lumber in Kyle canyon on Mt. Charleston, was brought from the mountains to the Helldorado grounds, and the sawing of logs was carried out right there. Griffith supervised the sawmill operations.

The forest service surveyed trees in Lee canyon and marked the ones which should be cut, taking care to choose those which should be thinned out in order to provide room for greater growth of the timber stand. Trees were cut by WPA and CCC labor.

At that time the WPA was under the direction of Claude Mackey, who supervised that part of the project. Donation of the trees was made by one of the earliest Las Vegas pioneers, the late J. T. McWilliams of Westside, who came to Las Vegas in 1904 and remained until his death about two years ago. He and the late Senator Key Pittman had owned a vast amount of land in the Lee canyon area, which since has become a popular summer recreation area, where a summer camp for the children of Clark county has been established.

Major Project
Hauling of the logs from Lee canyon to Las Vegas was a major project. Sometimes WPA and CCC trucks were used, but more often trucks owned by local business men were taken out on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, with volunteers driving the trucks and doing the loading.

Frank Gusevich past exalted ruler of the Elks, recalls the difficulty encountered in getting the logs from the canyon down to the Helldorado Village site. On almost every trip, the trucks would get stuck in the snow, which stayed late on the ground in the high altitudes where the cutting was done. It was hard work, requiring great toil and bringing more than a few hardships. But the volunteers were faithful to their jobs and managed to complete the arduous task.

O. J. Smith and the late Perry Young supplied hot coffee and lunches for the workers, sometimes feeding as many as 25 or 50 men on a trip to the canyon. Once the logs reached the Helldorado Village site, the cutting was started. Thick slabs covered with the bark of the trees were selected for the fence and for the exterior of the buildings, so that the Village would represent an old-time mining camp.

The fence was planned so that the northwest corner would end in the big dance hall and bar building, which was undertaken as the second project even before the fence was completed.

Motley Crew
Professional carpenters, business men little accustomed to handling a hammer and saw, CCC enrollees, WPA workers, city jail prisoners . . . these comprised the motley crew who worked on the construction. The volunteers, however, comprised the main force of workers.

Every Sunday was a "work day," and the clatter of hammers and the rasping of saws were the usual sounds of the area. Some business men, who realized their own efforts would be somewhat futile, hired experienced carpenters to take their place on the work days.

The board of city commissioners agreed at a meeting early in April, 1940, to assist the Elks Helldorado committee in getting the grounds in shape for the coming celebration. City equipment and labor crews were assigned to begin work immediately.

The late Mayor John Russell declared at the meeting of the city board that the city should assist "in any way possible," and City Commissioners Joe Ronnow and Al Corradetti termed the cause "a worthy one which should be encouraged."

On April 18, the Elks Helldorado committee announced that all carpenters in the city were asked to work on Saturday and Sunday, as the need at that time was for "skilled workmen." The city and county had cooperated in getting the Helldorado grounds in shape, and an "out-of-town contracting firm had provided the Elks with much needed hauling facilities to bring logs down out of the mountains for use at the grounds."

Story Tells It
From the files of the Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal is a story on April 20, 1940, which tells of the developments. In part it is as follows:

"A bevy of carpenters from the Las Vegas local descended on the Helldorado Village this morning,

and after some four hours of labor had sent four sections of the bar and dance hall skyward, leaving only three more sections to go.

"The structure upon which the carpenters were working today will form the main portion of the Helldorado Village this year, and with it completed the sponsors of the affair are looking forward to finishing the entire community before the 1941 celebration.

"Some 20 carpenters, all of whom were donating their services to the community affair, were at work this morning and the effects of their labor were plainly discernable to the visitors who passed by the Village today.

"The VFW building at the grounds also is going up rapidly, with workmen laboring regularly on the structure, and the Boy Scout troop also has erected its permanent building.

"The volunteer fire department has remodeled the front of its Helldorado cafe and has put in a wooden sidewalk. With the VFW structure next door and the bar and dance hall at the end of the street, the northern corner of the Village will be thickly populated.

Mill Operates
"The saw mill still is in operation at the grounds and is turning out lumber with great rapidity. The fence around the Village should be finished in the next week or so, as well as the bar and dance hall building."

During the week end of April 27-28, more than 150 volunteers assisted with the work and were served free lunches and beer by the Elks committee, with Smith and Young in charge. The dance hall building was brought near to completion, and part of the roof was put in place during that week end. Work was being rushed in time for the opening of the four-day fete on May 18, 1940.

The first week end in May that year, union members poured the huge cement slab which comprises the floor of the dance hall and bar. It was one of the biggest jobs of this type ever undertaken. Concrete workers and plasterers handled this task. Other volunteer workers were busy finishing the roof, while the floor was being poured.

Largest Crowd
On May 4, when one of the largest crews ever assembled for a "work day" was at the Helldorado Village, Rex Bell, motion picture actor and rancher of Searchlight, supplied the hind quarter of a beef, which was barbecued by Smith and Young to feed the throng, while work was in progress.

The Overton chamber of commerce then was building an old-fashioned livery stable, and the Eagles lodge was starting work on its building on the Village grounds. Work also was progressing on other structures in the Village.

When the sixth annual Helldorado opened on May 18, Nevada's latest "ghost town" was ready for the gaiety which always has characterized the annual fete.

Files of the Review-Journal show a story on May 14, describing the Helldorado Village as follows: "The dominating structure in the Village today is the old time dance hall, constructed by volunteer labor from all sections of the county during numerous community work days staged over a period of about a month."

"Flanking the dance hall on the west is the VFW 'camp kitchen', a building made from a railroad box car with an old-fashioned store front.

"Adjoining the VFW structure is the Helldorado Cafe, operated by the Las Vegas volunteer fire department. This is the second largest building in the city and was the first permanent structure built there. The interior of the cafe has been remodeled, with murals painted on the walls, and it is quite an imposing building along 'Highgrade Gulch,' the main stem of the Village.

Stables Up
"Further to the south, the Moopaville stables, an old-fashioned livery establishment has been constructed, and this will add plenty of atmosphere to the Village, the plotters of the town declare.

"Rasmussen's lumber establishment adjoins the stables to the south, and further along 'Highgrade Gulch,' stands the Boy Scouts building, Pop Robinson's pop-corn establishment and another Boy Scout structure.

"On the south side of the 'Gulch' stands the Helldorado Flats mine equipment store, the Rancho Grande Creamery building, the Kiwanis establishment, the Legion structure, and the Eagles building, the latter the third largest in the Village.

"Thirteen permanent buildings have been erected this year, and these will be flanked by temporary tents which will be pitched to house the overflow of business which is expected to operate during the celebration.

"The largest tent to be erected for the fete in the Helldorado Village will house 'The Drunkard,' horse opera of an earlier day and the hit of the show last year when it was staged for the first time.

"Rides for the children were being moved into position today, and by Thursday night Helldorado will be popping on 'High-grade Gulch.'"

Records Broken
Attendance at the Helldorado Village broke all records in 1940, with the new permanent buildings erected there. There were 13,463 paid admissions, with an average of 3,366 per night during the four-day show.

In 1941, the national forest service erected a small building which has become one of the permanent structures in the Helldorado Village. Displays pertaining to the forest service work are shown here.

With the advent of the war, further developments in the Helldorado Village came to a standstill. Only a new roof to the dance hall was added last year. This was necessary in order to preserve the building, as the wind had played havoc with the original roof.

The Elks Helldorado committee has outlined plans for many developments in the Village as soon as conditions permit. One of the most popular is the possibility of constructing a museum building on the grounds, where collections of artifacts of early history and furniture, clothing, and implements of pioneers can be placed on display and kept open the year around for tourist interest.

It is proposed that a church, an exact replica of some famous church in a Nevada mining camp, will be built and can be kept open the year around as a spot where bridal couples coming to Las Vegas can exchange their wedding vows, and sacred services can be held at Christmas, Easter, and on other special occasions.

Show Place
It is planned that the Helldorado Village will be developed into a real show place, not only for the annual celebration, but



FIRST PRE-HELLDORADO DANCE—Which was held at the Meadows resort prior to the first Helldorado. Old-timers say it was Dr. Forrest R. Mildren's birthday party. Anyway, some of the dancers who can be distinguished are James Cashman and his wife in the left center; C. P. Squires, right; Mayor E. W. Cragin, showing between the heads of Squires and his partner, and in the right rear, Allye Lawson. With his back to the camera in the foreground is the late Dr. Roy W. Martin. Dr. R. D. Balcom can be seen just in back of Dr. Martin.

THOSE WHISKERS

A gallant laddie wooed a fair,
With beauty, wealth and graces rare.
And vainly had proffered his claim,
The maiden owned no answering flame.

At length, by doubt and anguish torn,
If thus my hand you painful to be borne,
Low at her feet he humbly kneeled,
And thus his ardent love revealed:

"Pity my grief, angelic fair,
Behold my anguish and despair,
For you this heart must ever burn,
Now bless it with a kind return."

"Well, then, dear generous youth!" she cries,
If thus my hand you really prize,
And wish to link your fate with mine,
On one condition, I am thine"

"Oh speak," he said, "dear maiden, speak—
Speak your command and send me hence.
I'll brave the African jungle dread
Or Arabia's sandy desert tread."

"Well, then, as it becomes my pleasing duty
To contemplate a husband's beauty,
And gazing on his manly face,
His feelings and his wishes trace,"

And with a smile of queenly grace, she said
"Cut those huge whiskers from your face!"
And oh, what strange surprise
Was pictured in her lover's eyes.

'Twas thus the Prince of Denmark stared
When first his father's ghost appeared.
Like lightning from the ground he sprang,
While wild amazement tied his tongue.

"My whiskers? Zounds!" he cried,
He looked as though he'd rather die.
"My whiskers! Oh, ye gods,
I'd rather lose my ears, by odds!"

He quietly retreated through the door
To seek a less obdurate fair
That would take the beau with all his hair,

Golden Wedding Fete Observed at 1937 Helldorado

Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal, April 27, 1937—The golden wedding ceremony of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pauff, who took their vows with grace and dignity before a crowd of spell-bound spectators at the Helldorado grounds last night, was one of the most impressive ceremonies possible to be staged honoring the early pioneers.

The 80-year-old bride, wearing a white satin and lace wedding gown and a lace veil held in place by a wreath of orange blossoms across her silver hair, and carrying a nosegay of red roses, made an unforgettable picture.

The bridegroom wore a costume of the period when he and his bride first took their wedding vows, 63 years ago. Mrs. Ed Von Tobel, as matron of honor, wore a lavender silk gown, fashioned with a hoop skirt and a small polk bonnet to match. She also carried a nosegay. Ed Von Tobel, Las Vegas pioneer, acted as the best man.

Miss Billie Mott, wearing an old-fashioned costume of green, and Miss Ethel Cory, wearing pink, acted as flower girls in the ceremony and threw white rose petals along the path before the bride. Also on the platform with the wedding party were Mrs. Stella Hawkins, who wore a gown of the 1900 period, and Owen Pauff, daughter and son of the elderly bride and groom. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. C. H. Sloan, Baptist minister.

The bridegroom was born in Sheffield township, Ohio, August 19, 1847. The bride was born seven years later in Lockburn, Ohio, on December 26, 1854. The two were married on

January 20, 1872, and came to Las Vegas 29 years ago, shortly after this city was founded. Mr. and Mrs. Pauff still reside in Las Vegas. Mrs. Pauff enjoys good health, but recently her husband has grown weaker and is confined to bed at his home and is under the care of a nurse.



He's Headin' for

HELLDORADO RODEO

AND WE'LL ALL BE RIGHT WITH HIM!

CONGRAULATIONS, ELKS, ON THE 10th YEAR OF THIS FINE SHOW

SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY

828 South Main Street

Yip-ee!

HELLDORADO DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN!!

MAY 18-21

Pull on them boots . . . strap on them shootin' irons . . . and let's go all out for Helldorado time. Doc Sorenson is furnishin' the five rodeo shows. Yep, Helldorado is just around the corner and we're all gonna have a wonderful time. You'll shore be missin' out if you don't rig out in western duds . . . and the Kangaroo Court will be lookin' for you, too. So let your whiskers blossom forth and start rollin' your own from now on . . . Helldorado time is here again!

Western Clothing for the Entire Family

RONZONE'S

SOUTHERN NEVADA'S LEADING DEPARTMENT STORE FOR TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

10th Annual Helldorado Celebration

After all is said and done---the best drink in town is still clear, sparkling, healthful

WATER

(Not Rationed—Yet)

Las Vegas Land and Water Company