

Early Historical Events of Las Vegas

By
Delphine Squires

Las Vegas, like other communities, had both the good and bad sides out to it and we tried at all times to be thankful that the good seemed to predominate. In June, 1908, the artesian well which Edward W. Clark and R. C. Ronnow were having drilled on their ranch eight miles south of town, proved to be a regular "gusher". The flow measured 20 miners inches and was sufficient to bring 80 acres under cultivation. This big flowing well in this district, which was called Paradise Valley, brought with it visions of green fields, blooming orchards and comfortable homes. In our mind's eye we could see green pastures and lowing herds

"winding o'er the lea" and it was a very pretty picture. It proved beyond a doubt that the land in our valley could be made into farming land like that in the Muddy Valley and this certainly made it easier to face the future.

We will never forget the watermelons which were raised on the Clark ranch that first summer—those big rattlesnake melons that made just the right sound when broken open.

A few years later Mr. McGriff and his family came from Ogden and purchased the Wixon ranch, not far from the Clark-Ronnow ranch, where another well had been drilled. Mr. McGriff was a horticulturist and knew the kind of fruit to raise in this soil and climate and how to raise it. His selections and methods were watched with interest. While waiting for his orchards to come into bearing he grew strawberries and such luscious strawberries! The picking and marketing was the busiest more than the McGriff family could stand. They were not able to get anyone to help pick the fruit as the ranch was too far from town (this was in the horse-and-buggy era).

Strawberries and Peaches
Mrs. McGriff, Grandmother Della (now Mrs. Frank DeVinney) would pick berries all day while Mr. McGriff would drive the horse to town with the fruit picked the day before. Bending over strawberry plants all day in the hot sun is backbreaking work to say the least. Mr. McGriff would have to drive the eight miles carefully so that the fruit would arrive in a proper condition. He would then get home as quickly as possible and pick as long as it was light and the next day do it all over again. After a year or two the berries, like the little pigs, were plowed under although with a better reason. Later when the orchard came into bearing he brought in the finest peaches we ever had the pleasure of eating—great luscious Elbertas. My mouth waters just thinking of them.

On July 17 of that year Mrs. James McFadden, the mother of Edward W. Clark died in Salt Lake City. She had lived for many years in Pioche where she had raised her family.

Firecracker Tragedy
A terrible tragedy visited Las Vegas Sunday morning July 5th, 1908 when the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Wyatt was burned to death in a fire which destroyed their home. We were at church in the little old school house when we heard the cry of "fire." We rushed out and saw a cottage across the street burst into flames and heard the terrific cry of a little child and the frantic scream of a mother.

It seems that the baby was in her highchair in the kitchen, the mother was in the yard, and the two little sons were playing with some leftover firecrackers on the back enclosed porch. A spark from one of the firecrackers ignited some excelsior in a box and when the boys saw the flames they rushed out to call their mother but before she could reach the house the flames had caused a can of gasoline to explode and the whole house was a flaming torch. The sympathy went to the grief-stricken family and this tragedy was the beginning of the movement that finally resulted in banning firecrackers from Las Vegas.

August 2 there occurred in Las Vegas an event which was noteworthy in the church life of the community, as services were held in Christ Episcopal Church, corner of Carson and Second streets. It was the first time that a church service was ever held in a church building in the town.

Pioche Then Capital
The main topic of conversation that summer and fall, no matter where you went or with whom you talked was "County division." Of course the people in the northern part of the county weren't so hot for it—in fact they were "agin" it. You couldn't blame them as it must have been a little galling to have this young up-start, Las Vegas, a mere babe in arms, hardly dry behind the ears, telling them what they were to do, and trying to take away the one thing that remained to them of the old days—the county seat.

Until Vegas came into being Pioche had reigned supreme in the southern part of the state. She was far removed from everything and everybody without even the connecting link of a railroad. Lincoln County had been created by an act of the legislature of February 26, 1866, when it was cut off from Nye county. By an act of 1867 Hiko was made the temporary county seat but in 1871 the matter of a permanent capital was settled by a local election and Pioche became the seat of the county government. The year of 1872 marked Pioche's greatest prosperity, as \$5,500,000 in bullion was taken from her mines. The camp grew to be a thriving and industrious mining center with a population of over 7,000 men.

It then remained for the new county to be created by an act of the Legislature and its boundaries set. The Legislature was to meet in January.

At this time W. E. Orr retired from the editorship of the Pioche Record, which he had filled with credit for two years. Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Bracken moved from the old ranch to the home on Fremont street they had purchased from Dan Noland. Frank Grace, superintendent of the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad built a home on the corner of Fremont and Fifth streets, which was moved a few years ago over on Ninth street, and J. J. Caughlin built the home on Fremont street which is now next to the El Portal Theater.

Miss Jeanne Wier, secretary of the State Historical Society, spent several weeks in Lincoln county and while in Las Vegas she formed a branch of the society here. Its officers were Mrs. Helen J. Stewart, president; Mrs. Anna Bracken, secretary and Mrs. Nancy S. Park, treasurer.

Die With Boots On

It boasted of a cemetery on "Boot Hill" of 79 graves, the occupants of which had all died with their boots on. A big fire swept through the camp in 1871 causing a lot of damage because of the lack of firefighting apparatus. The residents considered they were getting quick service when supplies and equipment began to arrive within thirty days after the fire, which wasn't bad for a camp so far from a railroad and without telegraph service. The town was rapidly and more substantially rebuilt.

The Deseret Telegraph Company (Brigham Young, president) built the first telegraph line into the camp—an extension of the line which had been built to St. George, Utah. Upon its completion there was a big celebration and many messages were sent to "important persons" as far as San Francisco. Pioche still has untold riches in blocked-out ores in her mines. The name "Pioche" was taken from an old prospector named F. L. A. Pioche.

It is not to be wondered at that this town that had been so prominent in the mining world should rebel at thinking of giving in to a lesser light.

Then County Division
The county division organizers built up a wonderful organization called the Lincoln County Division Club and it was the one thing in which both the Democrats and Republicans worked side by side. They called a big mass meeting for July 29 to open the campaign. In an August issue The Age, in commenting on the matter, said that "relief must come in some form to do away with the long journey to the county seat—either county division or county seat removal."

In framing up the organization a plan had been adopted of appointing prominent men to visit the various communities and apprise the residents of the feasibility of county division. It was evident that they had accomplished what they had been sent to do as when the Democratic convention convened in Pioche in September after a bitter fight a resolution declaring for county division carried by a vote of 34 to 20. Searchlight joined with Pioche in fighting the measure.

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Mrs. Fay Leavitt, accompanied by her daughters Caroline and Clara, left last week for Pittsburgh, California, to spend a month with her sister.

Florien Houston has gone to Los Angeles, where he has employment for the summer.

Jimmy Jones of St. George, is visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jones in Mesquite.

Miss Bowman of the Farm Extension office at Las Vegas spent Friday in Mesquite testing pressure cookers.

Mrs. Leah Tobler, Virgin Valley high school teacher, has moved to Los Angeles, where she will spend the summer.

Mrs. Morgan Adams is in Washington, Utah, visiting relatives.

Boost for Muddy Valley

During the fall of 1908 there was a state fair in Reno with Lincoln county taking all the blue ribbons for the agricultural display and as the display was all grown in the Muddy Valley we were terribly proud of our very nice winery. In both the Reno and Los Angeles papers. Special mention was made of the Thompson seedless grapes grown in the Muddy Valley, which was once a barren desert but had produced 22 tons to the acre that year. Some of the grapes were an inch long and 3/4 of an inch in thickness and 4 pounds of the clusters weighed 4 pounds. The raisins made from these grapes excelled in size, flavor and firmness any other raisins. We were feeling quite cocky about this item when another appeared in the Los Angeles sheet, sent in by the same reporter, which showed either shameful ignorance or a lamentable disregard for the truth.

Slam Lenten

The article was damaging to the county and to Las Vegas and was sent by direct wire from Reno.

"Devil's Garden Land Too Hot for any Life—Nothing Grows in Fertile Soil at Las Vegas—Experimenter Gives up After Trying Mesquite—Temperature Beyond Human Endurance."

Virgin Valley Radio Hour

Mrs. Derb West, Overton, is spending a week with her mother, Mrs. Florence Burgess in Mesquite.

Mr. and Mrs. Fenton Frehner spent Sunday in Las Vegas attending the Helldorado Rodeo. J. L. Pulsipher and Heber Hardy returned Wednesday from Ogden, where they went for a load of farm machinery.

Joe Leavitt spent Monday in Las Vegas on business.

Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon for little Herbert "Derb" Waite, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Waite, who was drowned Sunday evening in a crash at the family home.

Mr. and Mrs. James Pulsipher made a business trip to Las Vegas Wednesday.

Robert Hort is spending a few days furlough in Mesquite with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. D. A. Hort. Hort is in the navy, training at Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco bay.

Grant Hardy of Las Vegas spent Wednesday in Mesquite on business.

E. B. Cobb of Moapa, made a business trip to Mesquite Thursday afternoon.

Lt. Horace Lund is spending a few days furlough visiting relatives in the Virgin Air Corps. Lt. Lund is in the Virgin Air Corps, and stationed at Deming, New Mexico.

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The Walker River Valley he speaks of is only 70 miles from Reno and fully 270 miles from Las Vegas. His knowledge of geography reminds one of the average catspinner who imagines that Los Angeles bounds San Francisco on the south. When a considerable number of people are living here in happiness and comfort it is rather galling to have such untruths published to the world."

Postwar Plans Developing

Although development of the recreational airfields in northern Michigan's vacationland is intended to be a postwar plan, Walsh said he expects a number of the smaller airports to be put in preliminary shape this year.

Walsh also declared that marked progress is being made on the state's postwar airport construction program which will involve building of 299 fields throughout the state.

"Our ultimate goal is to have a chain of airports throughout the state so that an aviator will never be more than 12 1/2 miles from a good, safe landing field," the state director asserted.

The state legislature recently appropriated \$200,000 for preparation of plans for the airport network.

SMALL BOY'S PRAYER

"Thank Roosevelt for the bread we eat,
"Thank Roosevelt for the meat we eat,
"Thank Roosevelt for the water we drink,
"Hey, who we going to thank when Roosevelt is gone?"
"Thank the Lord, son."
—Anonymous.

500 Skycamps Predicted for Michigan Use

By DOUGLAS GRAHAM
United Press Staff Correspondent
LANSING, Mich., May 27 (UP) Michigan will have from 500 to 600 "skycamps" in recreational areas to which postwar aviation enthusiasts may fly within a few hours from crowded metropolitan centers. It was predicted by Thomas E. Walsh, director of the state board of aeronautics.

The "skycamp" plan, developed by the Michigan planning commission, provides for a multitude of small class I airports immediately adjacent to lakes, streams or vacation hotels, Walsh explained.

The more elaborate "skycamps" will provide overnight cabins for fliers, eating facilities and provisions for swimming, boating, fishing, tennis and golf.

Reports Keen Interest
"In the future an aviator may whisk his family or friends from hot metropolitan areas throughout the midwest and within a few hours set his plane down at some northern Michigan 'skycamp' where he can spend a week end or more handy to any recreational feature he may desire," Walsh declared.

"Already scores of resorts and a number of counties have written for information about the 'skycamps' and we expect a number will be ready even this summer."

"The army's release of a number of smaller planes previously used in pilot training has already resulted in a marked upturn in private flying," Walsh pointed out.

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FUN FOR ALL!

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He didn't know secretaries... she didn't know shorthand!

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in "STANDING ROOM ONLY"

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Color Cartoon - News

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YOU CAN NOW ENJOY THE SAME DELICIOUS FOODS IN THE APACHE CAFE OR LOUNGE FROM 11 A.M. TO 12 MIDNIGHT EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK AND WITHOUT THE 30% TAX. MAKE THE APACHE LOUNGE YOUR BANQUET AND PARTY HEADQUARTERS—MAKE THE APACHE CAFE YOUR DINING HEADQUARTERS.

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NEVADA BILTMORE HOTEL

Today's \$1.50 Dinner

Assorted Relishes
CHOICE
Chicken Soup ala Supreme Fresh Shrimp Cocktail
Mixed Fruit Cup Chef's Salad
ROAST YOUNG DUCKLING
Dressing Spiced Apples
Breaded Barracuda, Creole Sauce
Creamed Chipped Beef on Buttered Toast
Breaded Calf Sweetbreads with Cream Sauce
Baked Virginia Ham, Apple Fritters
Pan Fried Pork Chops, Apple Sauce
ROAST YOUNG TOM TURKEY
Celery Dressing Jelly
Spring Vegetables Whipped Potatoes
DESSERTS
Chef's Special Pudding Jello Sherbert Ice Cream
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Salad Monday \$1.00 * Mixed at Your Table
by Nick Mondor Maitre de

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