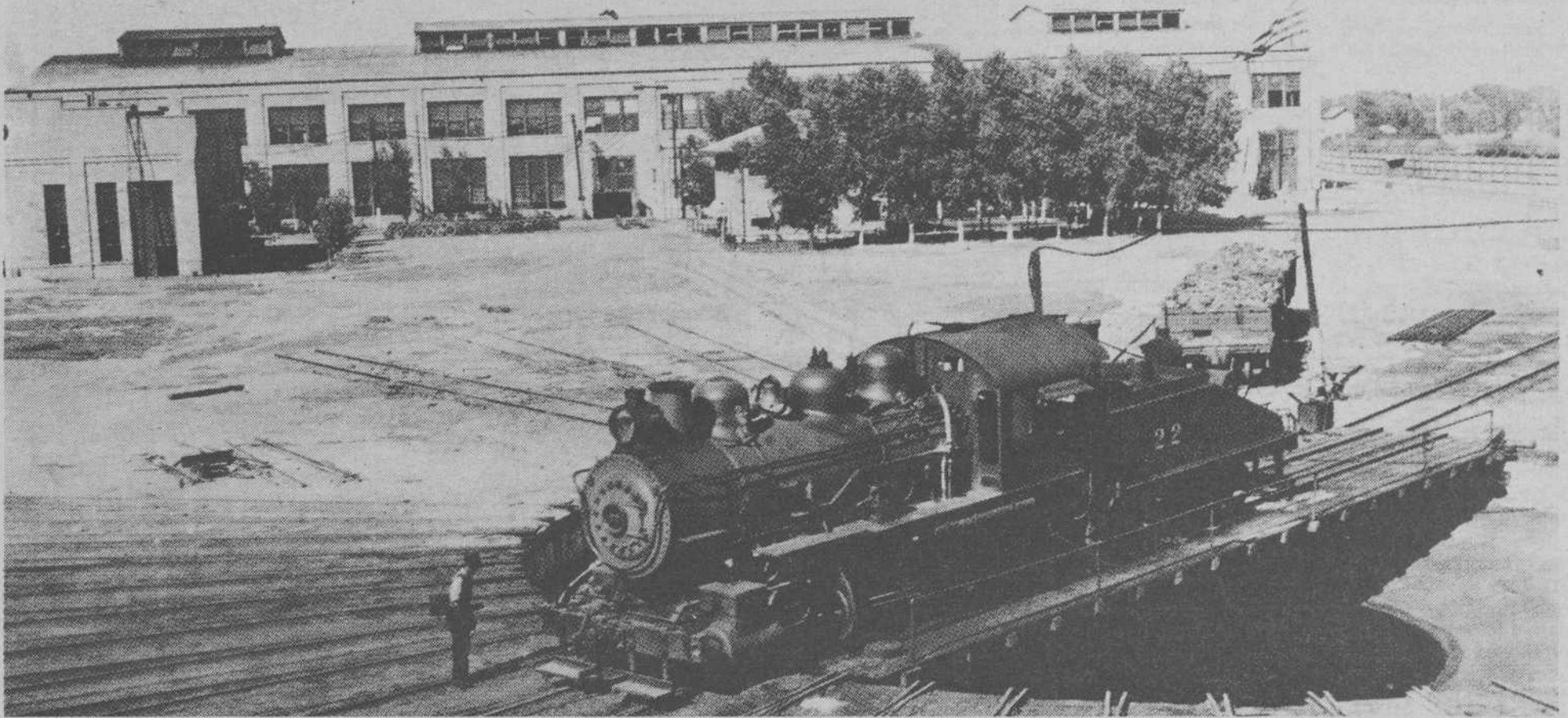


BEST FRIEND

IN LAS VEGAS IN THE EARLY YEARS



from page 6

whenever Negroes, with experience, could be found."

Experience had not been a prerequisite to employment for others who sought work. The contract did have a certain racial restriction. It had stated quite clearly that "no one of the Mongolian race would be hired on the project." There were other restrictions also. Basically, the contract had stated that preference would be given to American citizens who had participated in either the Spanish American War of 1898 or World War I. It was suggested that Nevada citizenship was also desired. The latter, however, was not a strict requirement. At any rate, most of the newcomers who arrived early, had satisfied residency requirements prior to initiation of construction on the project.

Local Blacks and those who came from other parts of the United States, were not hired. Following numerous efforts it was realized that it was necessary that they unite in order to

alter hiring policies on the dam. The Colored Citizens Labor and Protective Association was formed. Its purpose was to secure employment on the dam for Blacks. Leland Hawking, field representative of the NAACP, Vegas Age reported on those activities. "Specific instances were cited by various speakers in which building programs and construction work was under progress with no Negro labor whatsoever. It was charged that on some of these jobs there were

foreigners working while Negro American citizens were denied employment."

By late 1931, there were 1,350 men working on the project. The task at hand was to excavate tunnels in order to divert the river. There were no Blacks employed. O.B. Allbritton of CCLPA penned a letter to the editor in which he stated that "many colored over sea soldiers and citizens have applied in person, with their discharge papers, for work on the Hoover Dam Project." All were denied. That letter

had no impact on the sentiments of those doing the hiring and firing.

For the first two years of the project, Blacks were excluded from the

work force. They were with those rightminded termed vagrants and rascals who refused to relinquish their religion not working. In reality of racism. (To be continued.)



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