

AN ERA

Talliths. Perry Edwards Smith of Elko and Richard Eugene Hickock were arrested in Las Vegas for the murder of the Herbert Clutter family of Garden City, Kansas. So what? You might ask. Well, I'll tell you— those two mass murderers and perhaps even the people who would deface a Synagogue could rent a room, buy a cup of coffee, shoot some craps, catch a lounge act, go to a dinner show, sit down front at the El Portal Theater, get a private room at any hospital or worship at any church of their choice in the city of Las Vegas, Nevada. Black people could not. We were not good enough. A murderer, who happened to be white, could possibly be given the key to the city.

Can you imagine how good, law abiding, God fearing Black people had to have felt knowing that fact. The human spirit can tolerate just so much.

In mid March of 1960, the local chapter of the NAACP, under the leadership of its President Dr. James McMillan, threw down the gauntlet "Unless segregation is ended in Las Vegas within ten days, we will march on the Strip and Fremont Street". That one statement generated MORE ACTION THAN THE COMBINED ACTIVITY throughout the "green felt jungle".

Jack Entratter, the manager of the Sands Hotel, said: "How can we fight it. This is a social revolution we have to accept." Some others

accused the NAACP of trying to hurt Las Vegas. They were some of the same people who, when things are not going their way, go out on strike and shut down airports, taxi companies, hotels, garbage collections, schools, fire departments, schools and anything else. As soon as a group of Black people — not because they're seeking better working conditions, better retirement, better insurance; shorter hours, longer breaks, more money and less work — but for the realization of democracy for themselves and their posterity, they become the enemies of the state. The NAACP was not SEEKING TO HURT Las Vegas but to "encourage" Las Vegas to cease hurting Black

people. Dr. McMillan realized that such a protest would "bring most unsavory national publicity to Las Vegas and seriously impede its progress as a convention city". The price of freedom, however, is never cheap unless good people do the right things. Ed Fountain, City Commissioner, agreed with a recommendation that members of the resort community meet with delegates of the NAACP to discuss the problem. Harris Sharp, on the other hand, was in opposition to "any city ordinance forcing businessmen to allow Negroes or anyone else they choose to deem unacceptable into their establishments."

The NAACP called on Mayor Oran Gragson for help. After all, were they too not part of the city? He set about trying to get the two entities to meet. He said, however, that "he could not guarantee that discrimination would end". Strip Hotel operators met at the Riviera, where Duke Ellington was performing, to determine if Black people should be permitted to enter. Maybe they had not taken a good look at Ellington. Al Bramlet, Business Agent for the Culinary Union, had this to say: "Our union will not become involved in this issue. We take only the position that any of the union's members can be fired only if there is just cause and this cause cannot be related to race, color or creed." The rumors of economic reprisals were hushed

with that statement.

Isn't this exciting?

Not too many months earlier, the clan of Sinatra, Martin, Lawford, Davis and Bishop had filmed "Oceans 11" in Las Vegas at the Riviera Hotel. A few people probably remember the "summit" meetings held in several of the hotels during that time. No Black people remember them because Black people could not go in those places. A few months later, the NAACP was calling on Governor Grant Sawyer for help. Sawyer was a man who could read the writing on the wall along with being a good governor. He stated very clearly that discrimination "was bad for Las Vegas and all of Nevada". There were yet some die hards who were determined that the problem would not be solved peacefully.

It was reported that the proposed meeting would be opened to the public and that there would be trouble. Hank Greenspun, who always seems to side with the underdog, became a kind of mediator. He arranged for a closed meeting between officers of the NAACP, the Resort Association, the Mayor and the Governor. The ten days were almost up. The meeting was held at the Coffee Shop of the Moulin Rouge and a solution was reached.

Almost to the last moment the script was played out. The town was electric. Some few were saying things like "if they try to march on the strip, we'll be

waiting for them". Others were wondering: "If it does come down to a march on the Strip, will we be able to raise the projected 300 marchers?" If you've ever been somewhere at a time when high drama was being played out and the odds were much higher than the championship of the NCAA, you can imagine the aura which permeated the entire valley. History was being made.

Robert Cannon of the Tropicana announced that "we will accept Negroes or any other racial or religious group in our hotel". Allard Roen of the Desert Inn and Stardust said that "facilities at those hotels will be open to all people regardless of race, color or creed." Dr. McMillan reported that the NAACP had "received assurances from the majority of downtown and Strip businesses that the policy of racial discrimination in Las Vegas has ended.

It was 6:00 p.m. March 26, 1960. Just twenty-one years ago.

How many times had we asked
A like number we had been denied
But ever that was better than
To report that we had not tried
The Caesar of old, he did not listen
I will not beware "the ideas of March" said he
Those at the Palace, the Beachcomber and the Sultans Table
Took seriously the threat, of the March of the NAACP.

OUTSTANDING BLACK BUSINESS OF THE WEEK



SARAH ALLEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CREDIT UNION, 820 Bonanza Road, chartered Aug. 17, 1979 with their grand opening on Sept. 4, 1979, set out to establish a solid economic base principally for low and moderate income residents in the WEST and NORTH LAS VEGAS areas. To date, a approximately 300 individuals have joined the Credit Union, bringing a very helpful agency to the community. Its management has worked hard to provide loans to those in need at reachable interest rates. There are two types of loans: (1) the Home Improvement Loan for those residing in NSA I & II and (2) personal collateral loans at a low interest rate for those of good credit and approved by the Credit Committee. It's enlightening to learn that the services of the Sarah Allen Credit Union is also available to individuals outside of the areas described above. Presently, they have funds on hand to serve many who desire such assistance and are throwing out the call for everyone to participate. The Sarah Allen Community Development Credit Union is a solid business, which has grown economically and financially to help those in the time of need. For their sincere interest in helping the community, families and individuals, the management and staff of the LAS VEGAS SENTINEL has selected the Sarah Allen Community Development Credit Union as this week's recipient of the Las Vegas Sentinel Outstanding Black Business Award.

OPERATION LIFE

community development corporation
Medical Center



"Operation Life Community Development Corporation.....dreams become realities."

Operation Life Community Development Corporation
Medical Center provides out-patient health services to
families of Las Vegas.

Services

General Medicine	Dermatology
Hypertension	Pre-Natal Clinic
Nephrology	Post-Natal Clinic
Cardiac Care	Immunizations
Diabetes Mellitus	Nutrition
Well Child Clinic	Health Education
Laboratory	Volunteer Family Planning
Group Therapy (6:00-7:00 P.M., 1 day per week)	
(Obesity) (Alcoholism) (Smoking)	

School Physicals - Min. Fee Cost

Persons will be charged for services on a sliding fee scale, based on income. Medicare, medicaid and personal insurance will be acceptable.

Hours of Operation

Monday thru Friday - 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Location

400 West Jackson Street, Las Vegas, NV, 89106. For further information and to make appointments, please call: 647-8784 or 648-0013.