

**McWilliams  
Townsite**

(Continued from Page 5)

church in West Las Vegas was the Pilgrim Church of Christ on "D" Street.

Howard Washington arrived by covered wagon from Milford, Utah, with his parents in 1914. The trip took 30 days as the only available route was to follow the tracks of the S.P., L.A., and S.L. railroad. Washington later worked as a miner, delivered mail in a two-wheel cart, worked for the railroad, helped to construct the dam, and worked at Basic Magnesium as a carpenter.

The United States entered World War I toward the end of this decade and a long period of wartime rationing, shortages, and victory gardens followed. Nevadans volunteered to fight in record numbers. Shortly after the soldiers returned home, prohibition began and Las Vegas fell into an economic slump. Many feared the city would never grow.

**1921-1930**

Rumors that a dam would be constructed in Black Canyon on the Colorado River began to circulate in the early 20's and fueled optimism among Las Vegas as the economic slump continued. By the mid-20's, the city's population was about 5,000 but the blacks numbered only about 50 in 1922 and probably did not exceed 75 until the early 30's.

Even though prohibition was in full swing, nightclubs and speakeasies flourished. Block 16 (the red light district) became known as the place where "every Saturday night is New Year's Eve." Clubs like the Golden Camel, the Nevada Bar, the LaSalle, and Trivoli were said to serve bootleg rum 24 hours a day. The classiest establishment of these was probably the Arizona Club.

Prominent blacks who arrived during this period included Clarence Ray, George Harris, and perhaps the most famous black pioneers of all, Lucretia and Ernest Stevens, as well as lesser known property owners such as Sam Nettles, Ike Pullum, and Levy Irvine.

Clarence Ray, who later founded the Nevada Voters League as a branch of the NAACP, arrived in 1922. George Harris brought his family here from Louisiana in 1927. Eight of his 12 children were born here. One daughter, Donna, became the first native black Las Vegas to earn a master's degree.

Lucretia Stevens and her husband, Ernest, arrived in Las

(See McWilliams, Page 18)

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