



Guide to the Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada (PEPCON) Records

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Summary Information

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Repository: | University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. |
| Creator: | Pacific Engineering and Production Company |
| Title: | Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada (PEPCON) Records |
| ID: | MS-00004 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1986-1989 |
| Physical Description: | 0.30 Cubic Feet |
| Physical Description: | 0.42 Linear Feet |
| Language of the Material: | English |
| Abstract: | The Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada Records (1986-1989) are comprised of magazine articles, newspaper clippings, official reports, a profile of Jim Gibson, and a prospectus for a park named after Gibbons. |

Preferred Citation

The Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada (PEPCON), 1986-1989. MS-00004. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Historical Note

The Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada, built by Fred Gibson, Sr. and two partners, began operating in 1958. The plant produced ammonium perchlorate, an oxidizer used in National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) space shuttle and the defense industry's Titan missile programs. The plant was built just southeast of Las Vegas, Nevada near the city of Henderson, Nevada, where Gibson's son James (Jim) served as Mayor from 1997 to 2009. Inexpensive hydro-power from nearby Hoover Dam and the dry climate was ideal for handling and storage of the product.

On May 4, 1988, a series of explosions rattled the plant and surrounding area. Company officials estimated about 4,500 tons of ammonium perchlorate were in the plant at the time of the

explosion. A nearby natural gas pipeline was ruptured by the explosions, which resulted in large flames that were visible for miles. Two employees were killed and more than 300 were injured.

After the explosion, the plant moved to Iron County in Southern Utah and was renamed Western Electrochemical Company.

Source: <http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/fire/Pages/PepconExplosion.aspx>

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Scope and Contents Note

The Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada Records (1986-1989) are comprised of magazine articles, newspaper clippings, official reports, a profile of Jim Gibson, and a prospectus for a park named after Gibbons.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Processing Note

Records were processed in 2016 by Joyce Moore.

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Names and Subjects

- Engineering firms -- United States -- History
- Mineral industries

- Water rights

Collection Inventory

| Title/Description | Containers |
|---|------------|
| "Impact Widening from Explosion of Nevada Rocket Oxidizer Plant," magazine article, 1988 August 8 | box 01 |
| "PEPCON Explosion," magazine article, 1988 October | box 01 |
| Official records, 1988 November | box 01 |
| "Thunder in the Valley," Las Vegas Sun, 1988 May-June | box 01 |
| Annual Report, 1980 | box 01 |
| Letter from T. L. War, Executive Vice President of PEPCON to Joseph F. McDonald regarding production of ammonium perchlorate, 1959 February 3 | box 01 |
| "Facing the Next Challenger," Las Vegas Business Press, 1987 January 23 | box 01 |
| Gibson Industrial Park Prospectus, 1986 | box 01 |
| Jim Gibson profile, Las Vegas Review Journal, 1988 February 21 | box 01 |
| Newspaper clippings, 1988 May 5-1989 February 6 | box 01 |