



## Guide to the Ronzone Family Papers

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Ronzone, Richard James, 1917-1989
<b>Title:</b>	Ronzone Family Papers
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00509
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1900-1991
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1950s-1980s (bulk)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.75 Cubic Feet (3 boxes)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.5 Linear Feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Ronzone Family Papers (1900-1991) include newspaper clippings, business documents, correspondence, certificates, yearbooks, publications, artifacts, and photographs. The papers document their lives in Nevada, their department store, and Dick Ronzone's involvement in local politics.

### Preferred Citation

Ronzone Family Papers, 1900-1991. MS-00509. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Biographical Note

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At the turn of the 20th century, newlyweds Bertha and Ben Ronzone followed the gold rush from California to Nome, Alaska, where their first child Amy was born. With the news of silver in central Nevada in the early 1900s, the Ronzones soon followed, settling in a mining camp in Tonopah in 1904. The financial uncertainties of mining in Nevada then led the Ronzones to move from Manhattan, Nevada to Goldfield, Nevada and then to California in the space of five years. They returned to Manhattan, Nevada in 1910, where children Esther and Richard (Dick) were born in 1917 and 1920. It was in the mining camps that Bertha Ronzone noted that the local miners had no way to get basic supplies such as socks, clothing and light hardware, other than making the

long trek to California. Bertha began traveling to Oakland, California buying in bulk and selling these items to the miners.

Between 1915 and 1920, the Ronzones opened retail stores in Tonopah, Manhattan, Silver Peak, and Beatty, Nevada. The Ronzone's retail business suffered from the drop in mining activity and in 1929 the family moved to Las Vegas, Nevada and opened a ladies ready-to-wear store situated downtown at Carson and First streets, one of the first such stores in the tiny city.

The construction of nearby Hoover Dam afforded Southern Nevada economic development opportunities that were not available to most of the United States. The Ronzone's downtown store was profitable and grew over the years, first moving in 1935 to Fremont Street where a men's department was added. When Ben Ronzone died in 1938, Dick Ronzone took an active role managing the store.

Dick Ronzone joined the Nevada National Guard soon thereafter (1941) and served in an anti-aircraft battalion in World War II, spending two years in Europe. He returned from service in 1946 to become the general manager of the store, by now a popular fixture in the commercial district of Las Vegas; under his management the store moved to an even larger space a few blocks up Fremont Street in 1946. He married Ann Roeth in January 1947. Meanwhile the family purchased the large Gray-Reid store in Reno, which Amy and Al Adams ran until the 1980s. In 1969 Bertha Ronzone, the driving force behind the family business and an active community leader, passed away. That same year the Ronzone's store moved to Las Vegas' first mall, the Boulevard on Maryland Parkway, where it was sold the following year to the national Dayton-Hudson chain and later renamed Diamonds and eventually became a Dillard's department store.

Dick Ronzone's interest in local politics began in the 1950s when he was elected to the Clark County School District, served as a member of the Nevada Southern Campus fund, and acted as founding chairman of the Las Vegas Downtown Improvement Committee (now the Las Vegas Downtown Progress Association). After selling the store in 1970, Ronzone became even more involved in state and local politics, serving as Clark County Commissioner from 1972 to 1984, Nevada State Assemblyman for the 1971-1972 session, and sat on the first University Board of Regents in the 1950s and 1960s. Ronzone also took leadership roles in the Las Vegas Valley Water District, the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, and the Regional Transportation Commission. Education and water supply were important issues for him. Ronzone was an active member of the Las Vegas Valley Water District and was elected its president in 1978. He helped shape the Municipal Golf Course and was active in local chapters of the Elks Lodge, Rotary Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Reserve Officers Association, and the Boulder Dam Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Richard (Dick) Ronzone passed away in January of 1989.

Sources:

Hyman, Harold. "Las Vegas Leader Ronzone Dies." *Las Vegas Sun*. January 22, 1989.

Thompson, Sandy. "What they did for love: Ronzones helped dusty town grow into flowering community." *Las Vegas Weekend*, January 25, 1985.

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## Scope and Contents Note

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Ronzone Family Papers (1900-1991) document their lives in Nevada, their department store, and Dick Ronzone's involvement in local politics. Other topics covered include Ann (Roeth) Ronzone's community activities from 1950 through the 1990s. Most materials range from the 1950s through the early 1990s and include newspaper clippings, documents, correspondence, certificates, yearbooks, publications, artifacts, and photographs.

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## Arrangement

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The collection is divided into five series:

Series I. Dick Ronzone's political papers;

Series II. Ronzone family history materials;

Series III. Ronzone's Department Store materials;

Series IV. Ann Ronzone's community activity files;

Series V. Local History.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access

Collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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### Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2005 by Ann Ronzone; accession number 2005-027.

## Processing Note

Collection was processed in 2006 by Dana Miller. In 2017 Joyce Moore revised and enhanced the collection description.

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## Related Materials

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### Separated Materials

Some of the photographs in this acquisition were removed from the collection and placed in Richard Ronzone Photographs, 1920-2001. MS-00343. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

### Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection.

Ronzone, Richard. Oral Interview, 1972 October 20. OH-1594. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

James Cashman Papers, 1911-1969. MS-00144. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada

Harmon Family Papers, 1910-1961. MS-00301. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas Board of Commissioners Collection, 1921-1946. MS-00245. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas Nevada.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- History
- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- Politics and government
- photographs
- Businessmen -- United States -- Biography
- Ronzone's Department Store (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Rotary Club (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Greater Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

- Las Vegas Valley Water District (Nev.)
- Ronzone, Ann Barbara, 1913-2007
- Ronzone, Bertha Bishop, 1885-1969

## Collection Inventory

### Series I. Dick Ronzone's Political Papers, 1920s-1990s

Physical Description: 9 folders

Scope and Contents Note: Series I reflects Dick Ronzone's long commitment to improving his community through his involvement in local politics. It includes a 1965 Rotary Club member directory with biographical entries and photographs of prominent businessmen of the day; certificates from Nevada senators and representatives and local institutions; an informal oral history interview conducted by a student and long-time acquaintance, and images of Ronzone throughout his life (most numerous as a middle-aged and older man in political contexts). The series also contains records and documents kept during his 1980 and 1982 political campaigns; political newspaper clippings including reports, editorials and campaign ads; correspondence mostly comprised of informal cards and invitations, especially from President Ronald Reagan and Senator Richard Bryan in the 1980s; and bound publications showcasing Las Vegas and Nevada related newsletters and booklets, regarding local history, politics, mining and environmental issues.

Publications include: *Water District, 1981; Country Club, 1978; Nevada Archeological Survey Report, 1969; Hoover Dam Photo Card, undated; NV Highways and Parks, 1973; Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, 1975; Census Data, 1980; Greater Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce Magazine, 1976; Las Vegas Magazine, 1952; Sunrise Sentinel, 1969; Clark County Preservation Association, 1994; California Mines Information Service, 1963,1964; Nevada Power Co. Livewire Magazine, 1981; Guide to Clark County, NV, 1965; Chamber of Commerce Historical Data, 1935; Dixie Folklore and Pioneer Memoirs, 1964.*

Arrangement: Materials are arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Artifacts and Rotary Club Book, 1965, 1980s	box 1	folder 1
Certificates, 1970, 1985	box 1	folder 2
Oral History with Edna Goodman, 1985	box 1	folder 3
Photographs, 1920s-1980s	box 1	folder 4
Political Campaign Materials, 1980-1982	box 1	folder 5
Political Career, clippings 1 of 2, 1962, 1972- 1979	box 1	folder 6
Political Career, clippings 2 of 2, 1980-1989	box 1	folder 7
Political Correspondence, 1954-1991, 1980-1989	box 1	folder 8
Publications, 1935-1994	box 1	folder 9

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### Series II: Ronzone Family History Materials, 1900-1991

Physical Description: (7 folders)

Scope and Contents Notes: Series II provides a history of the Ronzone family, mostly through newspaper clippings and photographs. Thirteen black and white photographs depict scenes in turn-of-the-20th-century mining towns in Alaska, possibly including Nome and Sitka. Bertha and her husband A. B. "Ben" Ronzone were originally in Alaska during the gold rush between 1900 and 1904 before they came to Nevada; these pictures were taken just after that time. Six other photographs in this series feature Ann, Dick, and Bertha Ronzone in social and other contexts. There are also newspaper clippings about Bertha Ronzone and the rest of the family, telling the story of their pioneer years in central Nevada and their migration to and success in Las Vegas. Finally, there are various obituaries for Dick Ronzone, a list of possible Ronzone relatives, and some personal programs and ephemera from funeral and other personal events.

Arrangement: Material is arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Alaska photographs, approximately 1900-1916	box 1	folder 10
Bertha Ronzone: clippings, 1978, 1981	box 1	folder 11
Obituaries and Eulogies for Dick Ronzone, 1989, 1991	box 1	folder 12
Ronzone Family History: Clippings various ( includes Ben Ronzone obituary, and Dick and Ann's 35th anniversary), 1938-1985	box 1	folder 13
Ronzone Family Photographs, 1940s-1960s	box 1	folder 14
Ronzone Family Relatives Listing, undated	box 1	folder 15
Personal Programs and Ephemera, 1940, 1980s	box 1	folder 16
Miscellaneous photographs in Alaska, undated	box 3	

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### Series III: Ronzone's Department Store Materials, 1955-1985

Physical Description: 4 folders

Scope and Contents Note: Series III focuses on the iconic department store owned and operated in Las Vegas by the Ronzones from the late 1920s until 1970. There are clippings containing news articles and advertisements for the store; memorabilia such as sheet music, wrapping paper, a copy of a roadside billboard ad; manuals and receipts for audio equipment probably purchased for the store; and photographs of the storefront, its employees, and Ronzone family members in the store.

Arrangement: Material is arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Ronzone Department Store: Clippings, 1955-1985	box 1	folder 17
Ronzone Department Store: Memorabilia, approximately 1964	box 1	folder 18
Ronzone's Department Store: Photographs, 1940s-1960s		

box 1 folder  
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Stereo and Phonograph Manuals, 1968-1975

box 1 folder  
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## Series IV: Ann Ronzone's Community Activity Files, 1955-1990s

Physical Description: 7 folders

Scope and Contents Note: Series IV contains some of the community work of Ann Ronzone, beginning with an extensive collection of clippings devoted to her volunteer work, as well as documents and certificates that reflect her hospital activities and winning skill in golf tournaments. There are also a large number of clippings that record the activities and obituaries of Ann's friends and other prominent Las Vegasans.

Arrangement: Material is arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
Charity and Social Events, Clippings, 1955-1989 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 1	folder 21, 22
Certificates, 1981, undated	box 1	folder 23
Friends, Contacts, and Clippings, 1950s-1990s Physical Description: 2 Files	box 1	folder 24, 25
Hospital Incorporation Documents, 1955-1956	box 1	folder 26
Miscellaneous clippings, 1944, 1970s-1980s	box 1	folder 27

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## Series V: Local History, 1935-1994

Physical Description: 4 large folders

Scope and Contents Note: Series V contains miscellaneous materials on social and cultural community issues in Las Vegas. These materials include newspaper clippings and lengthy news editorials on general Las Vegas and Nevada history, as well as two Las Vegas High School Reunion Yearbooks from 1983 that contain remembrances and biographical sketches from graduates of the classes of 1935 and 1936. There are two guides showing the state of the real estate market in the late 1980s.

Arrangement: Material is arranged alphabetically.

Title/Description	Containers	
General Las Vegas and Nevada History clippings, 1963-1994 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 2	folder 1
Las Vegas High School 1935-1936 Reunion Yearbooks, approximately 1983	box 2	folder 3
Las Vegas Real Estate Guides, 1987, 1989	box 2	folder 4

Miscellaneous photographs , undated

box 3

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