

## **Guide to the Southern Nevada Historical Society Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc.**

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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>	Southern Nevada Historical Society
<b>Title:</b>	Southern Nevada Historical Society Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc.
<b>ID:</b>	PH-00230
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1941-1942
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.2 Linear Feet (2 hanging folders)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Southern Nevada Historical Society Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc. contains photographs of the construction of Basic Magnesium Inc.'s plants and buildings from 1941 to 1942. The photographs primarily depict aerial views of the plant site and various buildings, including the administration building, tent camp, chlorination buildings, electrolysis facilities, electrical distribution systems, and warehouses. The photographs also depict Lake Mead and the early buildings in Henderson, Nevada.

### Preferred Citation

Southern Nevada Historical Society Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc., 1941-1942. PH-00230. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Historical Background for Basic Magnesium, Inc.

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During the Second World War, the British government was experiencing a shortage of magnesium, which was an important component in aircraft and weapon construction. Basic Refractories, Inc., an American company based in Ohio, had already established magnesium mining operations in Brucite, a town in northwestern Nye County, Nevada. In June 1941, Basic Refractories joined the British company Elektron, Limited and formed Basic Magnesium, Inc. in order to extract more ore from Nevada and ship it to the United Kingdom.

By the end of 1941, 82 workers were extracting and refining magnesium, and they lived in Gabbs, Nevada. By June 1942, 325 workers were extracting ore, which was being transported to a facility just south of Las Vegas, Nevada, which became the town of Henderson, Nevada. The site was chosen because of its proximity to the waters of Lake Mead and the electricity produced by the Boulder Dam.

Source:

Marschall, Peter. "Gabbs." *Online Nevada Encyclopedia*. December 12, 2010. <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/gabbs>

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## Historical Background of the Southern Nevada Historical Society

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Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, a Nevada historian educated at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), and Celesta Lowe, the first director of UNLV Libraries' Special Collections, founded the Southern Nevada Historical Society (SNHS) in the 1950s. SNHS operated unofficially until July 28, 1959 when the society was officially incorporated and recognized by the state of Nevada. Former Nevadan governor Vail Pittman served as the first Chairman of the Board of Directors. The society's initial goals outlined in the bylaws were to conduct historical research about Southern Nevada, produce public lecture programs, sponsor field trips to historical and archaeological sites, develop historical libraries, assist in the building and operation of local museums, submit publications to history journals, and fund history scholarships.

In the early years of the SNHS, members formed a collection committee that gathered artifacts documenting the early settlement of the area and visited archaeological sites in Southern Nevada. The society also was integral to the campaign to have the Las Vegas Mormon Fort declared as a state historic site and the formation of the group the Friends of the Fort in the 1980s. The SNHS held annual banquets with guest speakers from various academic fields, published the *Backtrails* newsletter that documented the society's activities, and organized many historical field trips. The SNHS ended in the mid-1980s.

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## Scope and Contents Note

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The Southern Nevada Historical Society Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc. contains photographs of the construction of Basic Magnesium Inc.'s plants and buildings from 1941 to 1942. The photographs primarily depict aerial views of the plant site and various buildings, including the administration building, tent camp, chlorination buildings, electrolysis facilities, electrical

distribution systems, and warehouses. The photographs also depict Lake Mead and the early buildings in Henderson, Nevada.

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## Arrangement

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Materials are arranged chronologically.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

Collection is open for research. Some collection material has been digitized and is [available online](#).

### Publication Rights

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Reproductions and Use](#) on the UNLV Special Collections website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

### Processing Note

Materials were processed by Special Collections staff. In 2015, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Lindsay Oden wrote the collection description in compliance with current professional standards.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

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

Southern Nevada Historical Society Records, 1948-1983. MS-00205. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Basic Magnesium, Inc. (BMI) Records, 1933-1965. MS-00126. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ernest Clary Collection, 1944. MS-00044. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

H. E. and Ruth Hazard Collection on Politics in Nevada, 1937-1977. MS-00134. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Dow Metals-BMI Collection, 1940s-1950s. MS-00242. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

David G. Malcolm Collection, 1944-1978. MS-00252. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Victor Kunkel Photograph Collection, 1892-1943. PH-00072. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Howard Eells Photograph Collection on Basic Magnesium, Inc., 1941-1942. PH-00154. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Henderson Public Library Photograph Collection, 1941-1957. PH-00254. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Myers, Harry. Interview, February 27, 1977. OH-01359. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Darrell, Luce. Interview, September 28, 2003. OH-01156. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ellsworth, Charlotte. Interview, March 22, 1977. OH-00534. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Dondero, Harvey N. Interview, March 2, 1973. OH-00473. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Borsack, Donald Edward. March 2, 1980. OH-00224. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Cox, Owen Earl. March 6, 1981. OH-00436. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Campbell, Jesse (J. W.). February 19, 1979. OH-00327. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Coblentz, Thelma. February 17, 1980. OH-00400. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Names and Subjects

- photographs
- Mines and mineral resources
- Basic Magnesium, Inc.

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	folder 02
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