



Guide to the Milton Norman Photograph Collection

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Norman, Milton, 1924-2009
Contributor:	Saylor, Donald, 1922-2005
Title:	Milton Norman Photograph Collection
ID:	PH-00259
Date [inclusive]:	1943 to 1970
Physical Description:	0.71 Cubic Feet (2 hanging files and 1 shared box of negatives)
Physical Description:	0.67 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Milton Norman Photograph Collection (1943-1970) consists of black-and-white photographic prints and negatives taken by City of Las Vegas Code Enforcement officer Milton Norman. The images were recorded as part of a survey of substandard residential dwellings built in the then racially segregated communities of the Westside and Vegas Heights in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Preferred Citation

Milton Norman Photograph Collection, 1943-1970. PH-00259. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Historical Background

During the 1930s and early 1940s Las Vegas faced a severe housing shortage. The problem resulted from a rapid influx of job seekers for the Hoover Dam and Basic Magnesium, Inc. and was exacerbated by increasing levels of racial discrimination and segregation in the city. Restrictive covenants and red-lining (denial of services based on financial risk, most often associated with race) made it impossible for black residents to rent or purchase housing in the city and pushed them into the Westside. This area, located across the railroad tracks to the west of the city, was the location of J. T. McWilliams' unsuccessful 1904 townsite. By 1940, the Westside had become a

patchwork of tents, sheds, and wooden shacks. Roads were unpaved and the area lacked access to sewer, water, electricity, and telephone service. Periodic flooding turned the streets and lots into a muddy quagmire, earning the area the title of "Mudtown."

After the start of World War II, the Westside's population exploded as black Americans were recruited from southern states for defense industry jobs. Restricted from white owned communities and businesses, black residents worked to build a community of their own, leading to a boom in black-owned businesses and another increase in the Westside population. Combined with war-time shortages, this rapid growth led to more substandard housing. In 1943, the Westside residents petitioned the city of Las Vegas to provide basic improvements. The community saw no response until 1944, when mayor C. D. Baker authorized the demolition of over 300 homes the city deemed "unsafe." There was no attempt to rehouse the displaced residents after the destruction.

A survey of the Westside completed by black activists in 1949 found that over 80% of the residences lacked running water and toilets. Bypassing local government, the community delivered the results to the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). The FHA responded by funding the 100-unit Marble Manor housing area; the project opened in 1952. Two years later, Berkeley Square, a sub-division of 154 single family homes designed by architect Paul Revere Williams opened, and in 1955 the city paved the streets, completed a sewer system, and put street lights throughout the Westside. In 1959 a second federally funded housing project opened with an immediate waiting list; even with the improvements, many of the Westside's residents were still living in substandard housing.

In 1964 the city of Las Vegas annexed a 158-acre parcel immediately to the northwest of Berkeley Square. Like the Westside, the area called Vegas Heights lacked amenities or basic infrastructure; the black and Hispanic residents lived in shacks and trailers along unpaved roads. Under the direction of City Planner Donald Saylor, a survey of Vegas Heights and the Westside was completed in 1965. The survey showed no infrastructure improvements in the Vegas Heights area and a high level of substandard housing in the Westside.

Under the new mayor, Oran Gragson, the city's response was to work with the community to improve the situation. By 1966 Vegas Heights had temporary paving, sewer lines, and electric services. With the consent of residents offered alternative housing arrangements, Westside homes deemed beyond repair were demolished or burned, and by 1975 the city completed planned housing developments in both Vegas Heights and the Westside.

Sources:

Ainlay, Thomas and Judy Dixon Gabaldon. *Las Vegas: The Fabulous First Century*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.

"Berkeley Square Historic District, Las Vegas, Nevada." Accessed December 12, 2019, <http://www.paulwilliamsproject.org/gallery/berkeley-square-historic-district-las-vegas-nevada/>

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Vegas Heights Off-site Improvements Project. Prepared by the Community Development Block Grant Unity, Department of Community Development, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1975.

Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City In The Sunbelt, Las Vegas 1930-2000*. Second edition. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

Orleck, Annelise. *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2005.

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Biographical Note

Milton Norman was born in New Jersey in 1924, the son of Laura Walker and William Norman. Milton Norman married Ruth Estelle McFadden in the early 1940s; the couple had two children. Norman moved to Las Vegas, Nevada around 1959 and began working as a code enforcement officer for the City of Las Vegas. In this position he was tasked with surveying the areas known as the Westside and the newly annexed Vegas Heights for the city's planning director Don Saylor. Milton Norman died in Las Vegas, Nevada on April 11, 2009.

Donald Saylor was born July 22, 1922 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the son of Jessie Emberts and George Saylor. Saylor served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and returned to civilian life in 1946. He began his career in city planning soon after, finally settling in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1956. Saylor served as a deputy city manager and city planning director before being named special projects manager. Donald Saylor retired from city planning in 1990 and died April 15, 2005.

Sources:

Genealogical research on "Milton Norman." Accessed December 11, 2019 on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org

Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City In The Sunbelt, Las Vegas 1930-2000*. Second edition. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

"Former chief LV planner Saylor dies." *Las Vegas Sun*, April 18, 2005. Accessed December 11, 2019. <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2005/apr/18/former-chief-lv-planner-saylor-dies/>

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Scope and Contents Note

The Milton Norman Photograph Collection (1943-1970) consists of black-and-white photographic prints and negatives taken by City of Las Vegas Code Enforcement officer Milton Norman. The images were recorded as part of a survey of substandard residential dwellings built in the then racially segregated communities of the Westside and Vegas Heights in Las Vegas, Nevada. The collection illustrates the lack of drainage, plumbing, electricity, and overall marginal living conditions in these communities and provides graphic evidence of the struggles the city's black community faced as they battled social and political discrimination.

Also included is a paper written by Donald Saylor, discussing the City of Las Vegas Code Enforcement office's efforts to encourage community involvement and cooperation in the remediation and improvement of private dwellings.

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Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 1990 by Milton Norman; accession number 90-61.

Processing Note

In 2019, as part of an archival backlog elimination project, Melise Leech wrote the finding aid and entered the data into ArchivesSpace.

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Names and Subjects

- Photography
- Housing -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- African Americans -- Las Vegas (Nev.)

- Discrimination

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Saylor, Don J. "Code Assistance: Code Enforcement Las Vegas Style", approximately 1960 to 1970	folder 01
Corner of D Street and Jefferson Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_001)	folder 01 box SH-030
West Madison Avenue and E Street, Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_002)	folder 01 box SH-030
C to D Streets and West Monroe Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_003)	folder 01 box SH-030
Looking northeast on West Monroe Avenue. With no air conditioning, many of the houses, shelters, and shacks had removable tarps instead of roofs: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_004)	folder 01 box SH-030
Northeast corner of D Street and West Jefferson Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_005)	folder 01 box SH-030
Corner of C Street and West Jefferson Avenue. Structure foundations were typically wooden blocks: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_006)	folder 01 box SH-030
The backyards of dwellings at D Street and West Jackson Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. In the war economy, scrap wood was a valuable commodity, both for building and fuel: photographic print, approximately 1943 (0259_007)	folder 01
C to D Streets and Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1943 (0259_008)	folder 01 box SH-030
La Salle Street and Lake Mead Boulevard, in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_009)	folder 01

Lexington Street and Miller Avenue, in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_010)	folder 01
West Balzar Avenue and La Salle Street, in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_011)	folder 01
Burning structure in Vegas Heights, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_012)	folder 01
Hassell Avenue and Highland Avenue in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_013)	folder 01
Lexington Street and Carey Avenue, in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_014)	folder 01
West Balzar Avenue and Revere Street in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_015)	folder 01
Revere Street and Hart Avenue in the Vegas Heights subdivision, Las Vegas, Nevada. Flooding due to lack of sewers and proper drainage: photographic print, approximately 1964 (0259_016)	folder 01
Wooden shack at 1100 D Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Access to building at alley next to the New Jerusalem Church: photographic print, 1962 April 24 (0259_017)	folder 01
Three buildings at 610 West Monroe Avenue, in west Las Vegas, Nevada, accessible only through the alleyway. Two are storage and the third is an outhouse used by three families: photographic print and negative, 1962 April 17 (0259_018) Physical Description: 2 Photographic Prints	folder 01 box SH-030
Front view of a house at 617 G Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1965 July 28 (0259_019)	folder 01
Burned house at 1305 F Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, approximately 1962 (0259_020)	folder 01
Trailer at 1208 E Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Outhouse next to trailer: photographic print and negative, 1962 February 21 (0259_021)	folder 01 box SH-030
Substandard building at 310 West Van Buren Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada, showing evaporative cooler: photographic print and negative, approximately 1962 (0259_022)	folder 01 box SH-030
Rear of a trailer at 606 Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1962 July 10 (0259_023)	folder 01
Shack at 1305 F Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada, with children playing in the yard: photographic print and negative, approximately 1962 (0259_024)	

	folder 01
	box SH-030
Three shacks in rear of 911 E Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Accessible only by the alleyway. Demolished December 10, 1967: photographic print, 1962 July 12 (0259_025)	folder 01
123 West Adams Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1965 July 28 (0259_026)	folder 02
Shacks at 512 Wilson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Demolished after out-of-state owner contacted: photographic print and negative, approximately 1962 (0259_027)	folder 02
	box SH-030
View of substandard building in west Las Vegas, Nevada. Also shows storage shed and trailer: photographic print, approximately 1962 (0259_028)	folder 02
1524 South Second Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, approximately 1962 (0259_029)	folder 02
Substandard housing at 216 West Washington Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Photographs labeled "Ida Hicks" on verso: photographic print, 1960 July 29 (0259_030)	folder 02
Physical Description: 2 Photographic Prints	
Duplex and trailer at 908 "B" Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1962 April 23 (0259_031)	folder 02
Physical Description: 2 Photographic Prints	
Proposed structure demolitions at 1526 and 1526 ½ South Second Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1960 to 1965 (0259_032)	folder 02
	box SH-030
Remains of 908 B Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1962 April 23 (0259_033)	folder 02
Duplex and triplex at 908 ½ B Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1962 April 23 (0259_034)	folder 02
Physical Description: 2 Photographic Prints	
House at 1102 B Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Structure burned in August 1965: photographic print and negative, 1965 July 28 (0259_035)	folder 02
	box SH-030
Ruins of 908 B Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, 1962 April 23 (0259_036)	folder 02

	box SH-030
621 H Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, approximately 1960 to 1965 (0259_037)	folder 02
422 Morgan Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. House had no bathroom facilities, no foundation, no water or sewer. It had hazardous wiring and inadequate room sizes. Demolished July 2, 1962: photographic print, 1960 September 01 (0259_038)	folder 02
606 Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Photograph labeled "Mrs. Kennedy" on verso: photographic print and negative, 1962 February 10 (0259_039)	folder 02 box SH-030
Shacks on Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print, 1962 February 14 (0259_040)	folder 02
Shack at 302 McWilliams Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Structure burned in August, 1965: photographic print, 1965 July 28 (0259_041)	folder 02
Shacks in west Las Vegas, Nevada, behind the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino, looking south from McWilliams Avenue: photographic print, approximately 1960 to 1965 (0259_042)	folder 02
Shack at 619 Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, 1962 July 14 (0259_043)	folder 02 box SH-030
Tar paper shack at 1102 North B Street. Structure burned in August, 1965: photographic print, 1965 July 28 (0259_044)	folder 02
Shack at 313 ½ Jackson, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, approximately 1960 to 1965 (0259_045)	folder 02 box SH-030
713 Jackson Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada, showing house and outhouse: photographic print and negative, 1967 April 20 (0259_046) Physical Description: 2 Photographic Prints	folder 02 box SH-030
Substandard building at 1022 West Washington Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Labeled "Isodore Washington" on verso: photographic print and negative, 1960 September 22 (0259_047)	folder 02 box SH-030
112 and 120 McWilliams Avenue, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Labeled "Hines and Smith families" on verso: photographic print and negative, approximately 1960 to 1965 (0259_048)	folder 02

box
SH-030

630 and 632 South First Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Structures burned
January 26, 1965: photographic print and negative, 1964 December 28
(0259_049)

folder
02

box
SH-030

320 West Van Buren Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada. Structure burned
February 25, 1965: photographic print and negative, 1965 January 27
(0259_050)

folder
02

box
SH-030

618 H Street, west Las Vegas. Storage shed and outhouse combined. Labeled
"Quinn family" on verso: photographic print, 1962 March 20 (0259_051)

folder
02

box
SH-030

721 E Street, west Las Vegas, Nevada: photographic print and negative, 1965
July 22 (0259_052)

folder
02

box
SH-030