

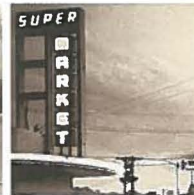
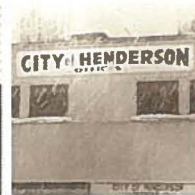
50
Years



A Place To Call Home

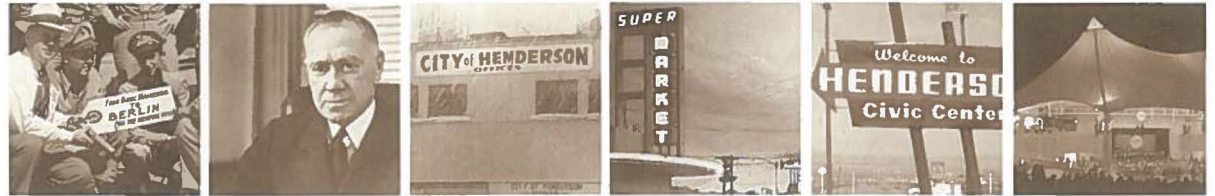
AN AMERICAN
JOURNEY

HENDERSON



50
Years

HENDERSON



AN AMERICAN
JOURNEY



© 2004 City of Henderson, Nevada. All rights, including the right of presentation or reproduction in whole or in part in any form, are reserved under the Universal Copyright Convention (the UCC). Contact Monica M. Simmons, City Clerk, concerning publication of this volume.

*Design and cover printing by On-Press Printing Services, Inc.
Text printing by Las Vegas Color Graphics, Inc.*

*Contact Monica M. Simmons, City Clerk at (702) 267.1400
concerning publication of this volume.*

AN AMERICAN JOURNEY

Dedicated to

...PRESERVING THE HERITAGE OF A TOWNSHIP BORN
IN AMERICA'S DEFENSE, CELEBRATING OUR PAST, AND INSPIRING
FUTURE GENERATIONS TO LIVE THE AMERICAN DREAM
IN HENDERSON - A PLACE WE CALL HOME.

James B. Gibson

MAYOR

Jack K. Clark
COUNCILMAN

Amanda M. Cyphers
COUNCILMAN

Arthur A. Hafen
COUNCILMAN

Steven D. Kirk
COUNCILMAN

Philip D. Speight
CITY MANAGER

Monica M. Simmons
CITY CLERK

Shauna M. Hughes
CITY ATTORNEY

FORWARD

Recent estimates by the United States Census Bureau list the population of the City of Henderson at nearly 218,000 people. That is an incredible fact, especially when you realize that our city today has a population larger than did the entire State of Nevada in 1953, when the City of Henderson was first incorporated.

Our 50-year journey has been filled with history, success and wonder. As a child, I remember playing with my friends and neighbors in Victory Village. Growing up I remember the dances at the old Downtown Recreation Center and watching my father and grandfather as they worked to help build this city we have all grown to love.

Born from the Nevada desert in the defense of our country, the City of Henderson has a wonderful heritage and a legacy unique from any other city in our state. We have survived when at times we faced what might have seemed insurmountable odds.

Those early adversities we faced only served to make us stronger and more resilient as a community, and for 50 years we have worked together to create what has become one of the premiere cities in the entire nation, the City of Henderson.

On behalf of my colleagues on the city council and the citizens of what has become one of the fastest growing and most attractive cities in the country, I invite you to join us as we relive the wonderful history of Henderson. This impressive compilation of the written and pictorial history of our city brings together years of hard work and research to tell our tale.

I express my thanks to the many men and women who have labored for so long to bring this important historical reference to life. The history contained herein is invaluable. It helps remind us of who we are and where we came from. It lifts and inspires us and ultimately, will help propel us into what promises to be an even brighter future in this City of Henderson, a Place to Call Home.

James B. Gibson
MAYOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	i
FORWARD	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	iv
CHAPTER 1: DEFENSIVE MEASURES	1
CHAPTER 2: BUILDING A FUTURE	17
CHAPTER 3: AND A CITY EMERGES	29
CHAPTER 4: EXPANSION BEGINS	47
CHAPTER 5: A FOCUS IS REALIZED	63
CHAPTER 6: A PLACE TO CALL HOME	75
TIME CAPSULE DEDICATION	84
AFTERWORD	87
SOCIAL HISTORY	88

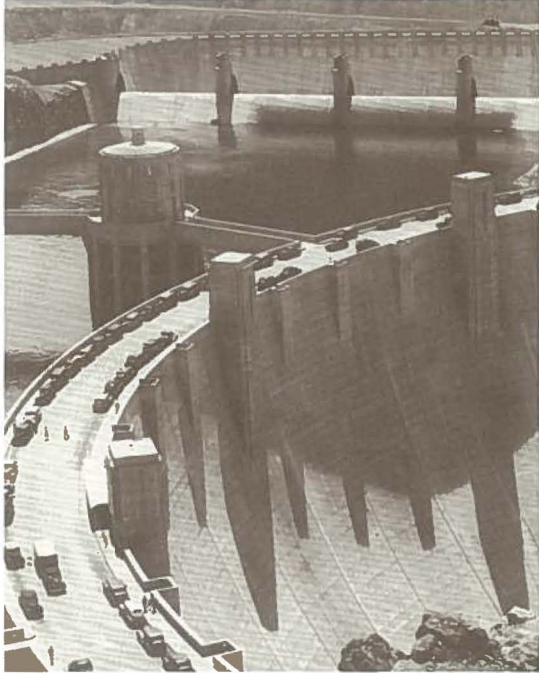
AN AMERICAN JOURNEY



DEFENSIVE
Measures

CHAPTER 1

Southern Nevada was transformed by the railroad, and characterized by legalized gambling, easy divorces, quick marriages, and an incipient tourism industry. Federal funding energized southern Nevada's economy in the early twentieth century,



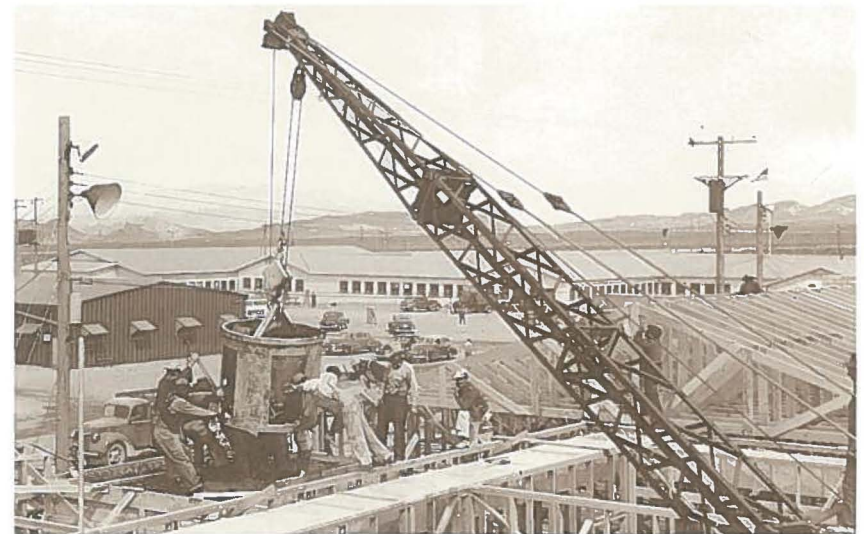
Hoover Dam, built in Black Canyon, completed in 1936

and seemingly overnight, transformed sleepy railroad stops like Las Vegas into centers of industry and raw materials. The federal government invested approximately forty million dollars in the western United States throughout the 1930s.¹ Federal spending in Nevada reached seventy million dollars between 1930 and 1939,

nineteen million dollars of which went towards the construction of Boulder Dam (now known as Hoover Dam).² Completed in 1936, Hoover Dam provided southern Nevada with abundant quantities of water and electrical power that were eventually indispensable in the establishment of heavy industry in the Las Vegas Valley.³

Federal funding, in the form of dam construction and other New Deal spending, remade the southern Nevada economy in the 1930s. Just

when it seemed as though federal spending was on the decline in the Las Vegas Valley, the outbreak of World War II sparked the second major infusion of federal capital that further transformed Las Vegas and its surrounding environs. Southern Nevada was ideally suited to the production of war material. Power and water provided by Hoover Dam were far underutilized, and the valley's location provided several immediate advantages, among them a remote position well out of the range of German and Japanese bombers. Existing rail service provided a direct link with Los Angeles, home to many of the nation's aircraft manufacturers. Furthermore, southern Nevada enjoyed a relatively close proximity to numerous western ordinance depots.⁴ Nevada's abundance of extensive mineral, ore, and elemental deposits fueled the production of war material. Particularly, the magnesium produced in Henderson was an essential component in many of the incendiary munitions and aircraft components produced for the war.



Construction of the BMI plant began in 1941

Although Henderson was not Nevada's only success story that occurred as a result of the war, the development of heavy industry in southern Nevada "invigorated" the local economy following the completion of Hoover Dam, which ultimately marked a slump in widespread federal funding.⁵ The establishment of a major defense industry in southern Nevada was responsible for the creation of an urban area. Prior to the construction of the plant, one did not previously exist.

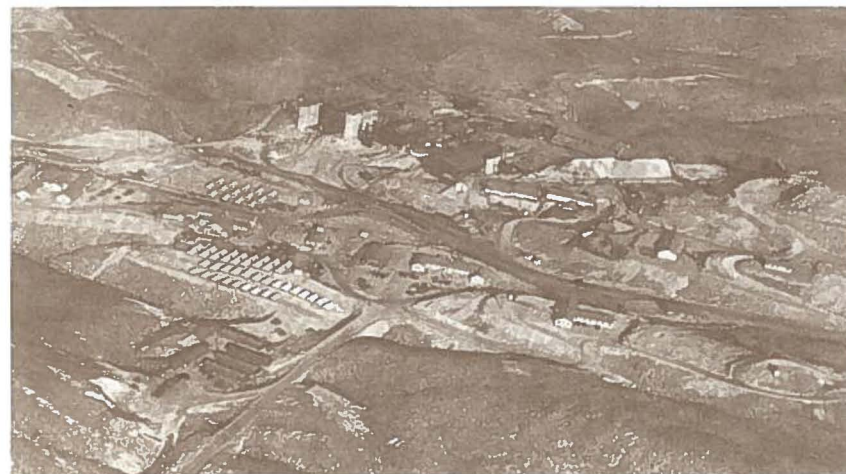


Howard P. Eells, President of Basic Refractories, circa 1939

*H*enderson's story begins with Basic Refractories, Incorporated (BRI), of Cleveland, Ohio.⁶ In the fall of 1939, Howard P. Eells, president of Basic Refractories, dispatched geologists into the wilds of Nevada in search of mineral ores that could be used in a newly patented refractory process.⁷ This new process utilized mineral ores in the production of

refractory bricks. Essentially fire and acid resistant, refractory bricks could withstand temperatures of over thirty-seven hundred degrees and were used by the steel industry to line furnaces used in the production of steel.⁸ Refractories were commonly used in the metals industry. In November 1939, BRI geologists discovered multiple brucite and magnesite claims in Gabbs, Nevada, a small mining village approximately three hundred and fifty miles north of Las Vegas. The combined claims of brucite and magnesite mineral ore at Gabbs totaled

more than seventy million tons of commercial grade ore and were the largest known deposits of those minerals in the world.⁹



Magnesium refinery located in Gabbs, Nevada, circa 1939

Although they were traditionally employed in the creation of refractory bricks, brucite and magnesite were also the basic components for magnesium, a recently discovered element whose properties were only vaguely understood in the United States.¹⁰ The United States had only one prominent magnesium producer, Dow Chemical Company, which produced approximately seven million pounds of magnesium in 1939.¹¹ After Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, and the subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom, magnesium experienced high demand. The outbreak of war on the European continent stirred the federal government to act, and by November, Congress had revised the Neutrality Act of 1935. This revision expanded the cash-and-carry program allowing American industry to supply the Allied war effort. In theory, cash-and-carry allowed the United States to provide much needed war supplies to the

European Allies while maintaining some semblance of neutrality. The supplies and material were produced in the United States, but the European Allies paid cash for these supplies and transported them to Europe.



*President Herbert Hoover,
founder of the Reconstruction
Finance Corporation*

Magnesium was a very light and incredibly strong material that had many practical uses in modern war. For example, magnesium could be used to make protective casings for incendiary bombs.¹² These special casings protected the bombs from high, upper atmospheric winds, thus preventing their premature detonation and ensuring the safety of the aircraft crews. The Germans, Russians, and Japanese had been

experimenting with the use of magnesium for military applications since the 1910s. By the 1930s, each of these countries had secretly established facilities for the production of magnesium near significant deposits of magnesite.¹³ Although the technical process for the creation of magnesium was largely unknown in the United States, Howard Eells recognized great wartime demand for the metal. With the assistance of BRI geologist John Lowman, Eells began experimenting with brucite and magnesite mineral ores for use in the production of magnesium. As Lowman researched foreign trade materials, samples of the magnesite from Gabbs were forwarded to the U.S. Bureau of Mines in Pullman, Washington, for examination.¹⁴

Eells was encouraged when the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), became a standard avenue of business support in Washington, DC, and its subsidiary Defense Plant Corporation (DPC), expressed interest in the production of magnesium. The RFC provided an industrial loan for a magnesium plant in Nevada.¹⁵ Nevada's two U.S. Senators, Key Pittman and Pat McCarran, both powers in the Club of ninety-six on Capitol Hill, and Nevada's Governor E.P. "Ted" Carville, actively supported the establishment of a magnesium industry in Nevada. In January 1941, Eells learned that a British



Key Pittman, U.S. Senator, 1913-1940

magnesium manufacturer, Magnesium Elektron, Limited (MEL), was



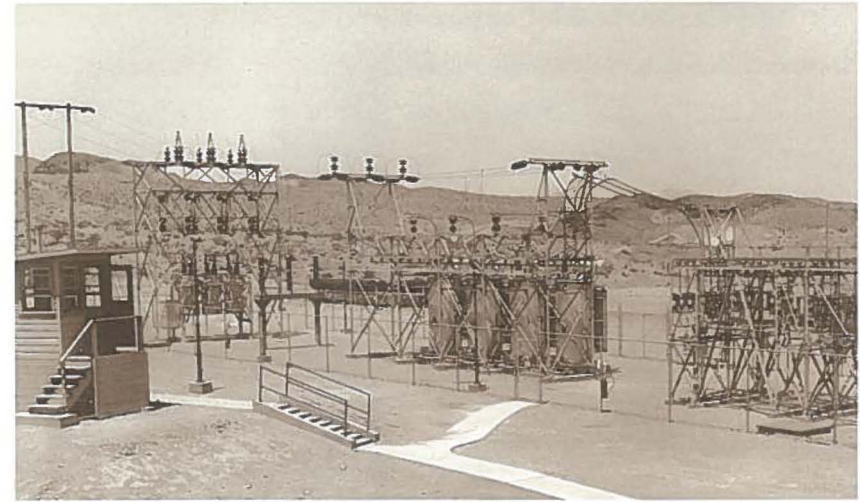
Pat McCarran, U.S. Senator, 1935-1945

interested in constructing a magnesium plant in Canada. Led by Major C.J.P. Ball, MEL had produced magnesium since 1936, although Ball's involvement with the magnesium industry began in World War I. Following the First World War, Ball became interested in the German production of magnesium. Ball first obtained the sales rights for German magnesium, and in 1923, he acquired the manufacturing rights from German manufacturer, I.G.

Farbenindustrie.¹⁶ With the assistance of German technicians, Ball built a magnesium plant in Manchester, England, and began producing magnesium in 1936. Known to the Germans, the plant was targeted and damaged by bombs shortly after World War II broke out in 1939. As a result, Ball sought a new factory beyond the reach of German bombs.

Eells and Ball had mutual interests, and after brief negotiations during the fall and winter of 1940, they agreed to create Basic Magnesium, Incorporated (BMI).¹⁷ This new venture, according to Eells, combined British technical “know how” with American capital for the production of magnesium.¹⁸ The RFC, now chaired by Charles B. Henderson, a former U.S. Senator from Elko, Nevada, and its subsidiary, the DPC, agreed to finance the project. On July 5, 1941, BMI contracted with the DPC to construct the plant.¹⁹ Although the DPC agreed to fund construction, BMI was responsible for designing and constructing the plant and ensuring production once the plant was built. The combined costs for the construction of a magnesite refinery at Gabbs, and a magnesium factory in Southern Nevada, were estimated at roughly seventy million dollars.

The production of magnesium demanded more electricity than any previous industry in Nevada. A magnesium plant of the size under consideration required the equivalent power of that needed to light Los Angeles, California, then a city of 1.8 million.²⁰ Although there was an abundance of ore, Gabbs was too remote and lacked the power and water necessary for the operation of a magnesium plant. Planners



Power needed for the BMI plant was provided by the recently constructed Hoover Dam, circa 1940's

decided that the minerals would be mined in and around Gabbs, and then shipped to a processing plant elsewhere in the State. Power generated at the recently constructed Hoover Dam proved an attractive option. In the late 1930s, few markets existed for magnesium and enough was available to supply a magnesium plant. Lake Mead, fed by the Colorado River, offered an excellent location adjacent to Hoover Dam and had a plentiful supply of fresh water. Eventually, planners decided on a twenty eight hundred acre parcel of land in the foothills of Black Mountain, midway between Boulder City and Las Vegas.²¹ Although Gabbs was linked with Southern Nevada via US 95, the bulk of the ore mined at Gabbs was to be shipped by rail to Southern Nevada. Luning, Nevada, which was thirty-two miles from Gabbs, was the nearest town with a rail station.²² The magnesite ore was to be refined and concentrated in Gabbs, shipped by truck to Luning, and loaded onto rail cars for the almost twelve hundred mile trip through

Measures

Salt Lake City to the BMI project in Southern Nevada. Even by today's standards, this was an elaborate transportation project undertaken because of the supply of water and power available from Hoover Dam.

On September 15, 1941, a brief groundbreaking ceremony preceded the beginning of construction on the new plant.²³ The plant construction

was supervised by MEL representatives and carried out by the Los Angeles, California based McNeil Construction Company, which installed three hundred and five miles of pipe, three hundred and fifty fire hydrants, and twelve million dollars in electrical equipment at the



McNeil Construction Company cleared large sections of the desert for the BMI facility, circa 1941

site.²⁴ Plant construction required six million pounds of copper, fifty thousand tons of structural steel, thirty million feet of lumber, twenty million building and refractory bricks, two hundred thousand yards of concrete, eleven hundred gallons of paint, and eighteen miles of railroad track.²⁵ These are the same tracks that now run beneath the U.S. 95 near the Green Valley area. A single electrical trans-

former used at the plant weighed over one hundred tons, and the federal government had to loan the plant over twenty-three million dollars in pure silver bars, some over twelve feet long, to conduct the heavy currents of electricity to the new plant.²⁶ The Montgomery Engineering



Eighteen miles of railroad track existed on the BMI plant site



Several of BMI's 13,000 workers, circa 1940's

Company, also of Los Angeles, California was subcontracted by BMI to construct water and transmission lines from Hoover Dam and Lake Mead as well as water reservoirs at the BMI property.²⁷ When water was eventually pumped into the reservoirs at the BMI site on March 30, 1942, the pipeline was forty inches wide by fourteen miles long, and had the capacity to handle over thirty million gallons of water per day.²⁸ As construction of the BMI plant continued, a group of sixteen engineers left for England on December 7, 1941. Following their arrival in England, the engineers were trained in the production of magnesium. The onset of World War II accelerated the need for large quantities of magnesium. The attack on Pearl Harbor pointed out great weaknesses in the American defense network, not the least of which was an absence of industrial



Senator Pat McCarran with \$23,000,000 in silver bars, circa 1941



On a destroyer bound for London, 16 engineers set sail to study the technology of magnesium production in anticipation of the BMI plant operation. Fred Daniel Gibson, involved in the completion and start up of the plant, is shown top right.

capability in the western half of the nation. The magnesium took on much greater significance as a result, but completing construction of the plant was a challenge as the mobilization for wartime production changed the face of the American workforce. Finding a workforce proved a surmountable problem. Many of the workers building the plant were drafted into military service by 1942. Because the area had so few people, replacements could not be found in the Las Vegas Valley. In their stead, workers were recruited from elsewhere in the country, largely from the South. The influx of workers strained local resources, especially housing. The need to devote raw materials to the war effort prohibited the construction of new homes, making housing a scarce

commodity. Throughout late 1941 and early 1942, plant workers camped in the deserts around the BMI site. Longtime resident, Jack Jeffrey, along with his family, arrived in Henderson in 1942. He recalls, "You were fortunate if you had a tent ... my father slept in his car for three months."²⁹



Single male workers lived in tents surrounding the plant site, known as Tent City, circa 1942

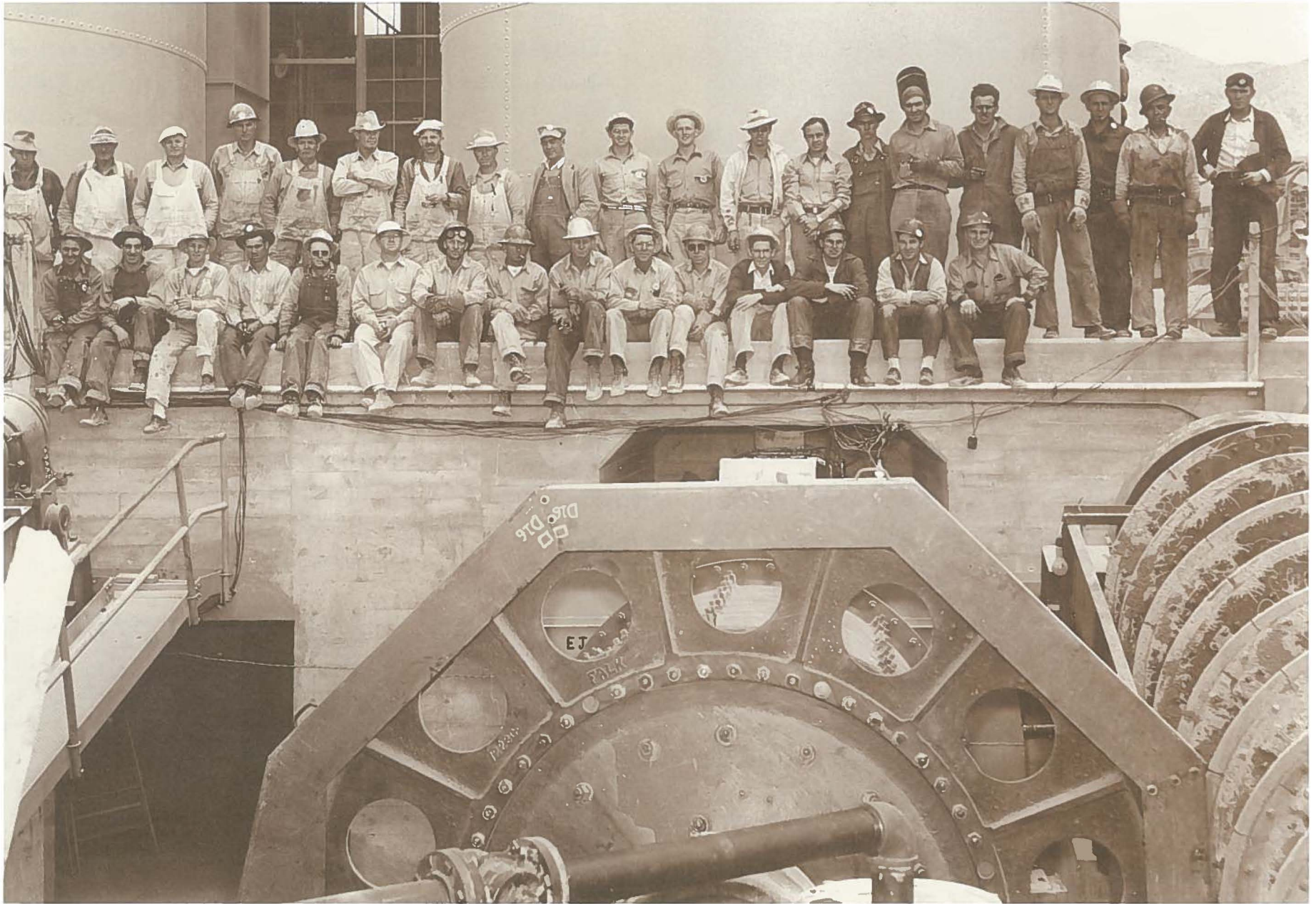
In an effort to alleviate conditions for his workers, Eells appealed to the DPC for housing for the workers at BMI. This sparked conflict between the plant and the Las Vegas community. Las Vegas civic groups and newly appointed U.S. Senator Berkeley Bunker fought construction of housing near the plant, because they feared that it would take business from Las Vegas as the construction of Boulder City had done ten years earlier. The DPC ultimately approved construction of one thousand homes adjacent to the plant. Constructed by McNeil Construction Company, this cluster of homes was labeled Basic Townsite.³⁰ As a concession to Las Vegas interests, the DPC stipulated that the housing

remain temporary in character. Las Vegas hoped that this would prevent the establishment of a new town that might compete for local, state, and national influence with Las Vegas following the conclusion of the war. McNeil began construction of demountable homes in February of 1942, and by April, more than fifty of them were ready for occupancy.³¹



Early Townsite neighborhood, circa 1942

On June 28, 1942, construction was completed on the refining and oxidation plant at Gabbs, Nevada, and the first batch of magnesium oxide was shipped by rail to the BMI plant in Southern Nevada. Once the storage silos at the BMI plant were filled with magnesium oxide, workers connected electricity to electrolytic cells that were integral to the production of magnesium.³² On August 31, plant engineers successfully tested the first batch of magnesium. Although the construction of additional electrolytic cells continued at the facility, BMI had successfully produced its first magnesium ingots, for a defense plant in Los Angeles, California. The production of magnesium continued at the BMI plant throughout 1942.³³



Several of the 13,000 workers at the Basic Magnesium, Inc. plant, circa 1942



Production of magnesium ingots, circa 1940

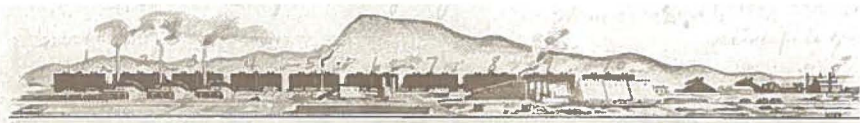


Supply of magnesium ingots (bricks), circa 1940

A work force of this size required an enormous support network. Workers at the plant ate in a dining room that accommodated two thousand diners at any one time. Three hundred and fifty kitchen workers and waitresses from the Anderson Brothers Company provided food for the BMI employees.³⁴ In one day, Anderson's staff used more than fifteen hundred pounds of sugar, four hundred pounds of bacon, twelve thousand soft drinks, six thousand eggs, nine thousand pints of bottled milk, and five hundred gallons of powdered milk. In a single week, more than three hundred thousand pounds of food were shipped to the BMI site from Los Angeles.³⁵ The plant had its own weekly newsletter, known as *Big Job*, established in the summer of 1942, and its bi-weekly successor was named *Basic Bombardier*. Plant management also authorized funding for a school in the Townsite that was expected to accommodate one thousand children from grades one through twelve. Congressman James Scrugham and BMI associate, Major Ball, attended the school's opening on October 3, 1942. The auditorium at the new school became the unofficial recreation center for employees and their families.³⁶



Three of the three hundred and fifty kitchen workers from Anderson Brothers Company who prepared meals for BMI employees, circa 1942



BASIC BOMBARDIER

VOLUME 11, No. 34 (79-30) HENDERSON, NEVADA NOVEMBER 17, 1944

GENERAL MANAGER CASE SAYS "THANKS FOR GRAND JOB"



Because of surplus magnesium stocks and the exigencies of war our BMI metal production has stopped and this is the last issue of the BOMBARDIER. We have crossed another milestone in BMI's war record. Many of our associates have left and others will follow as soon as they complete their part of our war assignment.

These developments bring sadness to all of us, but they should not detract in any way from our pride in BMI's record of achievements. The loyalty, resourcefulness and teamwork of our entire organization have enabled BMI to establish a new magnesium process under the stress of war conditions and to produce in record time over 150,000,000 pounds of magnesium when it was vitally needed for our armed forces and those of our allies.

I shall always be very proud of the fact that I have had the privilege of being associated with such a fine group and that all of you have given me your loyalty and friendship. On behalf of our staff and management I extend to you again sincere thanks for a grand job well done and best wishes for the future.

F. O. Case
General Manager

MAGNESIUM TO BECOME BIG FACTOR — HOBBSINS



J. D. HOBBSINS
PRESIDENT, ANACONDA COPPER MINING CO. and BASIC MAGNESIUM, INC.

I believe that we all, as citizens of the United States, are proud and happy over the tremendous industrial accomplishments and the rapid increases in production that have been made in critical war material and equipment. Not the least of these accomplishments is that which has been achieved in the magnesium industry, which, in the late 30's was producing less than 10,000,000 pounds per year and which in 1943 produced above 400,000,000 pounds.

The fact that in the midst of total war, in many important fields, curtailment and cut-backs can be ordered and that critical production has so far exceeded requirements should give us all a feeling of great gratitude as well as assurance as to the ability of our people to meet whatever crisis is presented. BMI has been a great accomplishment from the early inception of the project. The bringing to America by our British associates of MBL the plans and the know-how, the assembling on the desert of a vast organization of men, including some of the finest technical skill in America, within the comparatively short time which has elapsed since 1941 marks this project out as one of the great industrial accomplishments of the war. This plant was designed to produce at the rate of 112,000,000 pounds of magnesium per year. At its early stages it was freely predicted that it could not reach maximum production and perhaps not produce at all. However, the plant has for a period produced metal at the rate of approximately 120,000,000 pounds per year.

From an industrial point of view I am most grateful that this plant was not able to operate at capacity for at least another year. It is my opinion that with the continued improvements in the process, greater mechanization and higher efficiencies, operating costs could have been achieved which would have been competitive with any other magnesium plant in the country.

To the men and women of Basic whose loyalty, industry, skill and vision have made possible the success of this great project I extend on behalf of myself and my associates, our very sincere gratitude and thanks. This plant achieved a peak of production at a time when magnesium was most needed for the war and, thus, fulfilled its purpose as a great contributor to the war effort. The future of the plant I can not predict as that rests entirely in the hands of our government. I do predict however, that within a comparatively few years MAGNESIUM WILL BECOME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THIS NATION.

J. D. Hobbsins
J. D. HOBBSINS

FEDERAL LOAN ADMINISTRATOR SENDS MESSAGE

BY DIRECTOR WILSON FROM
WESTERN UNION NOV 9 1944

RUI 185 GOVT-WASHINGTON DC NOV 2 1944 950P
F. O. CASE, MANAGER & ALL EMPLOYEES OF BMI
LAS VEGAS NEV

THE DEMANDS FOR MAGNESIUM FOR THE WAR EFFORT HAVING BEEN MORE THAN MET BY COOPERATION FOR GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY AND LABOR WE NOW APPROACH THE TIME WHEN GOVERNMENT OPERATION OF MAGNESIUM PLANTS WILL CEASE AMONG THE 15 MAGNESIUM PLANTS OWNED BY THE RECONSTRUCTION FINANCE CORPORATION THROUGH ITS SUBSIDIARY DEFENSE PLANT CORPORATION THE PLANT OPERATED BY BASIC AT LAS VEGAS HAS BEEN AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMER ITS PRODUCTION OF 166 MILLION POUNDS OF MAGNESIUM REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 25 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL PRODUCED BY ALL PLANTS YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED UPON YOUR EFFICIENT PERFORMANCE AT THIS OPERATION. YOUR EFFORTS CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT AND AT THE SAME TIME THROUGH IMPROVEMENTS IN METHODS OF OPERATION THE COST OF PRODUCTION HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE POINT WHERE THERE IS REASON TO HOPE THAT BASIC WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN OUR CIVILIAN ECONOMY WHENEVER THE DEMANDS FOR MAGNESIUM WILL JUSTIFY ITS OPERATION BY PRIVATE INTERESTS I EXTEND THE THANKS AND APPRECIATION OF MYSELF AND THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH ME IN THE RFC FOR YOUR FINE SPIRITS OF COOPERATION.

JESSE H. JONES,
(606A)

13 166 25



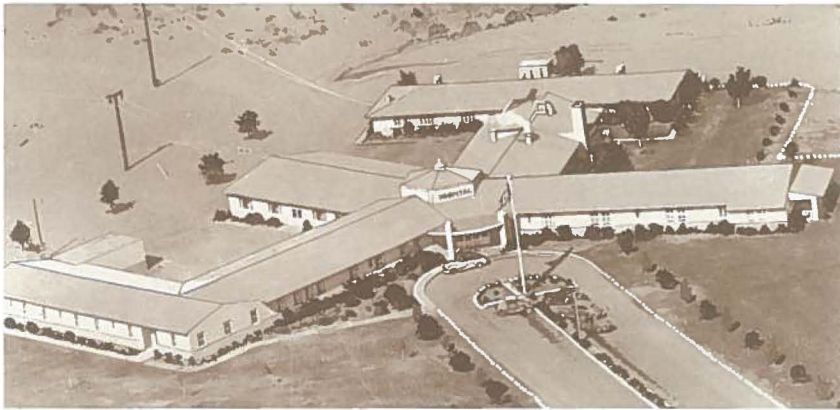
Despite the sense of routine that descended upon the BMI plant and Townsite in 1942, life at BMI and the plant itself was not entirely without controversy. The school had yet to receive funding from the federal government in December 1942, and teachers at the new school, on the job since October, had yet to be paid. Roy Petrie, the superintendent of the newly organized Henderson School District, was forced to borrow twenty five thousand dollars from the Las Vegas First National Bank to pay teachers in time for the Christmas holiday.³⁷



Original Townsite School constructed in 1942, accommodated grades K-12; currently the site of City Hall, the school was located on Water Street between Atlantic Street and Basic Road

BMI's newspaper (formerly known as the "Big Job"); final issue dated November 17, 1944

The biggest news of 1942 involved a shake-up in the management of the BMI plant. Following unsubstantiated accusations of mismanagement by Nevada's U.S. Senator Berkeley Bunker, Eells decided to sell his stake in BMI. On October 27, 1942, Anaconda Copper Mining Company assumed management duties at the BMI facilities. The new General Manager, F.O. Case, maintained the status quo and the production of magnesium continued unabated. Improvement to the plant and the Townsite continued throughout the fall of 1942, and into winter 1943. The McNeil Construction Company built a fifty-bed hospital that opened in November 1942 known as the Basic Magnesium Hospital.



BMI's 50-bed hospital opened in 1942, later named St. Rose Dominican, Rose de Lima Campus

In 1943, the O.J. Scherer Construction Company, at the direction of the Federal Public Housing Authority, completed the construction of two racially and gender-segregated apartment complexes on the east side of the Boulder Highway. The Victory Village Apartments housed three hundred and twenty-four white families and one hundred and seventy five single white men. By contrast, the Carver Park Apartments, also

located on the east side of Boulder Highway, named after leading African-American figure George Washington Carver, housed only black families.³⁸ Betty Lou Anderson arrived in Henderson in March 1943 from Glendive, Montana with her mother and father. Betty Lou recalls, "My parents were traveling down Boulder Highway and saw the BMI Plant...my father decided to stop and see if he could get a job." She shared, "Coming from Montana, I had never seen a black person or a nun ... so I was quite interested."³⁹



Carver Park opened on October 11, 1943, with an initial 40 apartment units. The Robert C. Williams family was the first to take occupancy, circa 1943

The Clark County Sheriff built a substation on the Townsite, and concessionaires to the federal government established various, small commercial and entertainment facilities. The McNeil Construction Company completed construction on the tenth and final metal magnesium production unit in May 1943.⁴⁰ When power was transmitted to the final electrolytic cell on

July 31, 1943, less than one year after production had started at the plant, BMI became the world's largest producer of magnesium.⁴¹

Perhaps not as significant as the establishment of a magnesium factory off Boulder Highway, the establishment of a post office within the Basic Townsite in January 1944, was an event of singular importance in Henderson's history. On January 10, the new Postmaster, Harold Baldwin, a BMI employee, announced the change in name from the Basic Townsite to Henderson, Nevada. The post office was named for Charles B. Henderson, former U.S. Senator from Elko, Nevada, and former Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, as a tribute to his efforts in establishing the BMI plant. The name change furthered the developing sense of community among workers at the plant and enhanced Henderson's unique and emerging identity. In less



*Harold Baldwin, first Postmaster
of Henderson, circa 1944*

than five years, Henderson's population had grown to approximately thirteen thousand plant employees and their family members. The uncertainty caused by the war in Europe contrasted with Henderson's seemingly secure future.

As the American military made its final push towards Berlin and Tokyo and the end of the war became a real prospect, the War Production Board, citing a surplus of magnesium, halted production

on November 15, 1944.⁴² The plant had been in continuous operation for eight hundred and seven days and had produced 166,322,685 pounds of magnesium ingots.⁴³



The first post office located on Army and Market Streets opened January 1944



An over abundance of magnesium ingots causes production to halt on November 15, 1944

The end of production meant drastic changes to the lives of the thirteen thousand former BMI employees and their family members. Many fanned out across the country in search of new employment or returned home to the various neighboring states and home communities. Those who remained in Henderson found more than one-half of the homes in the neighborhood vacant. The exodus reduced enrollment in the local school system by two-thirds.⁴⁴ Betty Lou Anderson recalls, "... Henderson was sort of a ghost town after the war."⁴⁵ The community seemed headed for the fate of so many Nevada towns of the mining era. Abandonment and decline were a sad reflection of the importance of the work done in the BMI plant. Henderson's first era came to an end in an instant.



Early business district at Market and Army Streets, circa 1940s



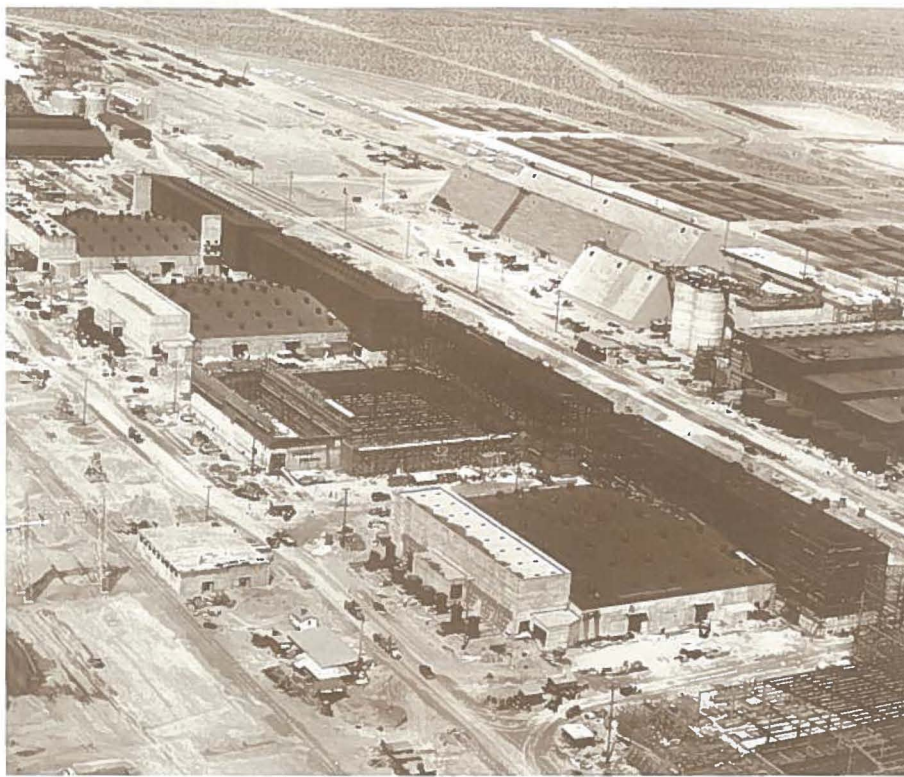
The site of Anderson Camp and Tent City which housed single male workers from the BMI facility, circa 1942



BUILDING A
Future

CHAPTER 2

The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which had originally financed the construction of the BMI project, assumed control of the BMI facilities when magnesium production ceased on November 15, 1944.⁴⁶ Its first move was to transform the plant from wartime to peacetime production. Initially, the RFC leased sections of the facility to businesses of varying type and size, including, “a motion picture production firm, various warehousing companies, and a lapidary (gem cutting) work shop utilizing Nevada gem stones.”⁴⁷ None succeeded. Henderson’s already dubious future was thrown even further into question when Rheem Manufacturing Company, a plant lessee under contract with the United States military for the production of artillery shells, closed its World War II operations.⁴⁸



Basic Magnesium, Inc. complex, circa 1944

Despite these many setbacks in the development of a viable post-war industrial center, the RFC was soon able to attract several large industrial firms to the BMI facility. In May 1945, Stauffer Chemical Company, then a sixty year old independent chemical manufacturer based in San Francisco, leased the caustics and chlorine plants at the BMI complex.⁴⁹ The chemical products produced by Stauffer and its

many affiliates at the BMI plant were important components in the manufacture of aviation gasoline and synthetic rubber, or were utilized for various water purification and waste disposal purposes.⁵⁰ Later that same month, Western Electrochemical Company (WECCO) signed a lease for portions of BMI.⁵¹ WECCO produced chlorates and perchlorates, which were solid fuel propellants for use in military applications as well as agriculture, and electrolytic manganese.⁵² These two projects provided more than one thousand jobs at the BMI complex.

Even with the addition of the Stauffer Chemical Company, WECCO, and other various tenants, Henderson’s future was far from secure. Throughout 1945, the availability of power and water became more of a concern to Southern Nevadans. The State of Nevada had access to the elec-

tricity generated by Hoover Dam’s Number 7 Generator which was constructed to produce power for the operation of BMI during World War II. If the State chose to accept any power from the generator, it was required by previous agreement with the federal government to purchase all of the generator’s output. In 1945, the only entity in the Las Vegas Valley that could use that amount of electricity, the BMI

complex, was mostly vacant.⁵³ It was conceivable that if the State agreed to purchase the power produced by the Number 7 Generator, much of it would not be used, and there were no guarantees that any unused power could be sold for profit. The cost for power generated by this unit was three hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars annually, and the State would have to sell as much power as possible in order to defray the cost.⁵⁴ The State had until November 7, 1945, to claim its share of the power from the Number 7 unit. If it opted not to withdraw power from Hoover Dam, the industries established at BMI would be without the necessary electricity to operate the leased portions of the BMI complex, and the lack of power would significantly hinder the future of Henderson's industrialization.

To ensure that the State of Nevada did not opt out of purchasing power generated at Hoover Dam, a group of concerned Henderson business people formed the Henderson Chamber of Commerce. Led by President William Byrne, the



*A five-hundred-ton rotating field of one of the largest generators in the world,
Hoover Dam, July 31, 1936*

Administrator of the Basic Magnesium Hospital and former staff assistant at BMI, the Chamber was established to secure the resources necessary for Henderson's existing businesses and industry.⁵⁵ Ultimately, the Chamber sought to ensure Henderson's viability as Nevada's industrial center. Byrne and his fellow Chamber members were consumed with Henderson's electrical power crisis from their first meeting on August 24, 1945.⁵⁶ By August 30, 1945, the Chamber drafted an open letter imploring Nevadans to ensure that the State had the energy necessary to power its industries.⁵⁷ Initially, the letter was distributed to the many government and commercial parties with a vested interest in the successful resolution of the power crisis. Thereafter, the Chamber used three-column advertisements to reprint the editorial in several of Nevada's major newspapers. Finally, the editorial was forwarded via telegram to Nevada's only congressman and senators as well as various federal agencies.⁵⁸



Charles B. Henderson,
RFC Chairman, U.S. Senator,
1918-1921, and the City's
namesake, circa 1950's

In response, the Chamber received letters of support from various state, local and national groups and individuals. Charles B. Henderson lent his prestige to the Chamber's goals. Nevada Senators Pat McCarran and E.P. "Ted" Carville also offered their support. At the same time, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce supported other efforts to keep industry in the area. It supported attempts by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce to ensure the continued federal operation of

the Las Vegas Army Air Field (now known as Nellis Air Force Base).⁵⁹

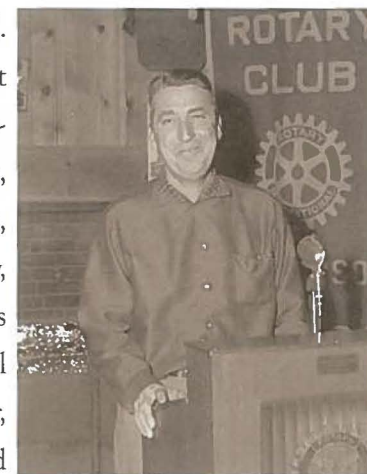
The air base remained, undergoing an initial expansion in December 1945. Air Force officials visited Henderson in order to secure housing for airmen and their dependents. Units at the Carver Park and Victory Village apartment complexes became housing for airmen stationed at the Las Vegas Army Airfield.⁶⁰ This stimulus helped avert the power crisis. Nevada agreed to accept the power allotment generated by the Number 7 unit at Hoover Dam, selling excess to other entities. By 1946, both the Stauffer Chemical Company and WECCO operated at a profit.



E.P. "Ted" Carville, U.S.
Nevada Governor 1939-1945
and Senator, 1945-1947

The campaign to assure power for the BMI plant and Southern Nevada industry offered a temporary respite from the many obstacles Henderson's residents faced in their effort to make the community permanent. Indeed, they faced a serious threat from the Truman administration, which was determined to cut the enormous national debt created by the war by selling off the government's defense plant assets and using the revenue to close the budget gap.⁶¹ By October 1946, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation had transferred the BMI project to the War Assets Administration (WAA) for liquidation.⁶² Richard Greenburg, Comptroller for the southwestern division of the WAA, arranged for the disposal of the BMI project.⁶³ The WAA established a Henderson office and after several personnel changes, appointed R. Julian Moore as the Chief Custodian and Maintenance Officer of the BMI facility.⁶⁴ The WAA contracted with the Guy F. Atkinson Company to administer these facilities until the liquidation plans for the BMI project were finalized.

The plant facilities and the adjacent Townsite, including the homes, apartment buildings, a business center, shops, a post office, recreation facilities, schools, a fire station, churches, a library, and a hospital were all described in sales brochures.⁶⁵ The WAA intended to sell the BMI property to the highest bidder, and the sales brochures were distributed to interested parties throughout the United States and abroad.




R. Julian Moore, Chief Custodian
and Maintenance Officer,
BMI facility, circa 1946

HENDERSON TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

HOUSING
Known as Townsite, Plancor 201-H

Located at
HENDERSON NEVADA
and
Adjacent to
Metals Plant

•
Basic Magnesium
Inc.
(Plancor 201)



AVAILABILITY AND DISPOSAL
INFORMATION THROUGH THE
WAR ASSETS ADMINISTRATION
Washington 25, D. C.

HOMES

20 TWO-BEDROOM HOUSES



Size: 24' x 28'
Area: 672 sq. ft.
Ceiling: 8-1/2 ft. h.
Culding: 8' 3" h.
Floor: One

Roofing: Asphalt
Siding: Natural brick veneer—Exposure coating
Windows: Insulation
Partitions and fixtures: Full


21 THREE-BEDROOM HOUSES

Size: 25' x 36' over all
Area: 792 sq. ft.
Ceiling: 8-1/2 ft. h.
Culding: 8' 3" h.
Floor: One

Roofing: Asphalt
Siding: Natural brick veneer—Exposure coating
Windows: Insulation
Partitions and fixtures: Full

A TOWN Complete
Right down to the Fire House




PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project is adjacent to the metals plant, known as Basic Magnesium Inc. (Plancor 201), at Henderson, Nevada.

Project borders on United States Highway Number 95 and is situated about midway between Las Vegas and Boulder City, approximately 12 miles from each. Roads are excellent.

War Assets Administration (WAA) Brochure offering the sale of the entire Townsite area



SCHOOLS AND RECREATION



THE 5-STAR BUILDING

Size: 40' x 110'
Area: 22,000 sq. ft.
Ceiling: 10-0 ft. h.
Culding: 12' average
Floor: One, plus a second-story penthouse bank

Roofing: Asphalt
Siding: Ply-boarded framing, composition coated
Floor: Concrete
Roofing: Asphalt
Siding: Natural brick veneer, 1/2" rubber tile and dash. Exposed
Partitions and fixtures: Full



As former Henderson City Councilman and Clark County Commissioner Lou LaPorta recalls, "I think the reason why War Assets wasn't too successful is that it was too large a project for one big company to come in and take over all of those industrial facilities and the Townsite."⁶⁶ In the end, the WAA only managed to liquidate some of the industrial and manufacturing equipment contained at the plant site.⁶⁷



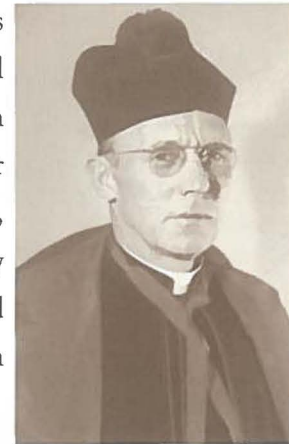
Lou LaPorta, member of first City Council, 1953-1959; Clark County Commissioner

Despite WAA plans for disposing of BMI's facilities, the Clark County Central Labor Council lobbied Congress to support the continued operation of the Basic Magnesium Hospital.⁶⁸ Founded in 1942 to serve the medical needs of BMI employees and their families, the Basic Magnesium Hospital originally had a capacity of fifty persons, an x-ray facility, and two operating rooms.⁶⁹ The hospital property and the administration duties were transferred from the War Assets Administration to the Dominican Order of Catholic Sisters on May 6, 1947. The Adrian Dominican Sisterhood of Adrian, Michigan, purchased the hospital from the WAA for one dollar and committed to remain at the facility for twenty-five years.⁷⁰ In addition, the order assumed all of the hospital's debts and agreed to operate the hospital as a non-profit



The Dominican Sisters of Adrian, Michigan

institution. Betty Lou Anderson remembers that, "Father Moran had been very instrumental in securing the hospital for the sisters for a dollar ... he was really worried as to whether or not it would be viable."⁷¹ On June 27, 1947, seven nuns from the Sisterhood, led by Sister Mary Carolyn, Administrator, assumed control of the newly renamed St. Rose de Lima Hospital.



Father Peter V. Moran, first pastor of St. Peter's Parish

In an effort to secure the future of Henderson's industrial facilities on February 28, 1947, the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce invited the Nevada Legislature to tour the complex. The Chamber hoped to inspire the Legislature to pursue both state administration of the BMI project, as well as the construction of the Number 8 Generator at Hoover Dam.⁷² Over forty legislators arrived in Southern Nevada on March 8, 1947. The weekend proved highly successful and the legislators pledged their support securing the BMI facilities from the federal government. The Nevada Legislature worked quickly and decisively to fulfill their promise to Southern Nevada. In a special night session on March 13, 1947, lawmakers passed Assembly Bill 162 authorizing the Colorado River Commission (CRC) to act as an agent of the State, and "to negotiate with the federal government to purchase, lease, or accept as a gift, the huge plant and facilities at Henderson."⁷³ On March 27, Governor Vail Pittman signed Assembly Bills 161 and 162, which further authorized the CRC to negotiate on behalf of the State for the construction of an additional power generator at Hoover Dam.

As the Nevada State Attorney General, Alan Bible successfully negotiated the sale of the BMI complex to Nevada. The State purchased the BMI facility for twenty-four million dollars from the War Assets Administration. Nevada Governor Vail Pittman signed State Assembly Bill 162, which authorized purchase of the BMI facility, and Townsite for twenty four million dollars.



Nevada Legislature on their tour of the BMI facility, March 8, 1947



*Alan Bible,
Nevada State Attorney
General, 1943-1947*

The WAA hired Reno, Nevada attorney John Mueller to make arrangements for the transfer of the BMI facility from the federal government to the CRC, which was represented by State Attorney General Alan Bible. The process took over nine months,



*Vail Pittman,
Nevada Governor, 1945-1950*

as WAA Comptroller Richard Greenburg and a staff of eighty inventoried the remaining property at BMI.⁷⁴ During this period, maintenance for the BMI

utility system and Townsite homes cost the State of Nevada more than two hundred thousand dollars, and tension between the townspeople and the CRC grew.⁷⁵ Townsite residents resisted CRC attempts to raise rental and utility rates, and the CRC considered returning the BMI facilities to the WAA.⁷⁶ Throughout the latter months of 1947, the CRC met frequently to determine the future of the industrial facility and Townsite.



Members of the Colorado River Commission, circa 1948

At a CRC meeting in Las Vegas on January 6, 1948, the State learned that the Defense Department had authorized the sale of the plant. The Defense Department agreed to an arrangement in which tenants would be allowed a greater freedom in operating the BMI complex. The State, through the CRC, would retain custody of the BMI complex.⁷⁷ While the CRC would retain direct control of the Townsite, Basic Management Incorporated was created to manage the industrial complex.⁷⁸ As the managing body, Basic Management, Incorporated was responsible for the distribution of utilities, including power and water, to the factory's tenants, and maintenance of the common facilities on

the property. It was decided that Basic Management, Incorporated would be comprised of one representative from each tenant at the BMI facility. These representatives would act as a Board of Directors, electing a chairman from among their body and hiring a manager to “direct the activities set forth in the by-laws.” The federal government further alleviated the financial burden of the CRC when it assumed non-interest bearing notes and mortgages, and advanced the Board of Directors at BMI three hundred thousand dollars for the maintenance of the utility systems.⁷⁹

On March 17, 1948, the WAA approved the transfer of the BMI industrial facility to the State.⁸⁰ The State of Nevada purchased the BMI complex and Townsite neighborhood for twenty-four million dollars.⁸¹ A one-dollar down payment began the process, with the remainder to be paid from profits



Telephone operators hard at work at the Henderson Telephone Company, circa 1950



Local dress store draws window shoppers, circa 1950

earned during the next twenty years. The CRC, acting as the agent for the State, took possession of BMI facilities on April 1, 1948, and established offices in the former Basic Magnesium administration building. Henderson residents had mobilized in anticipation of the transfer of property from the federal government to the State. Representatives of Henderson’s various civic organizations formed the Henderson Coordinating Council, led by President Harry Parsons, in an effort to assume the temporary role of a local government. Townsite residents formed a Tenants’ Council, which advocated for the sale of state-owned homes to residents. Despite these and other efforts to organize Henderson residents, the Clark County Commission and not the Henderson Coordinating Council nor the Basic Townsite Tenants’ Council, held the legal mandate to carry out the functions of local government.



Grand Opening Day at the Victory Theatre located at Army and Panama Streets, circa 1940's



Downtown Henderson on Market and Army Streets, circa 1943

The Henderson Chamber of Commerce, inactive since a voluntary dissolution of its membership in October 1947, reconvened in the summer of 1948 to discuss the many problems facing the future of their community.⁸² John Mueller of the CRC proposed a plan to allow Henderson residents to purchase their residences in the Townsite. The Chamber successfully obtained signs from the Nevada Department of Highways acknowledging Henderson's presence on the Boulder Highway. The Chamber developed a program that promoted Henderson's local merchants and encouraged the community to "trade-at-home," rather than in larger nearby Las Vegas.⁸³



Townsite Drug Co., located on the corner of Market and Army Streets, circa 1940's

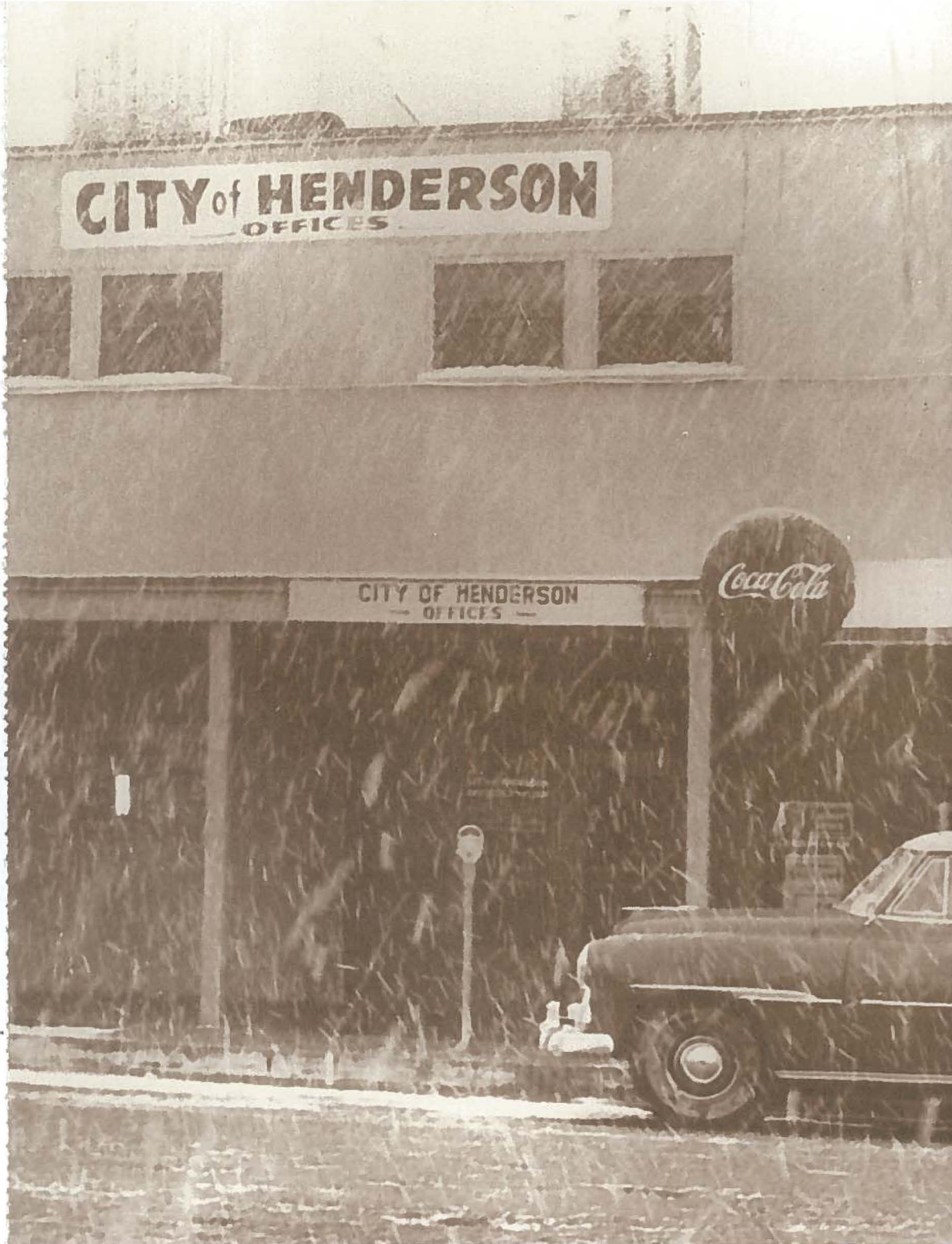
The Chamber's most significant action occurred when the Federal Housing Administration, in league with the Clark County Housing Authority, sought to demolish the Victory Village and Carver Park apartment complexes. The two hundred and fifty fully furnished and completely unoccupied apartments were to be destroyed under the terms of the Lanham Act of 1940, which called for the sale or destruction of those facilities created for wartime purposes, so as not to interfere with the local housing market.⁸⁴ The Chamber mounted a campaign to publicize the vacancies. On December 15, Air Force

officials visited the facilities and notified the CRC of their intention to house seventy Air Force families soon to be transferred from California to the Las Vegas Air Field. The Clark County Housing Authority remodeled and redecorated the furnished units at Victory Village and Carver Park, and both apartment complexes were spared demolition.

As the 1940s came to a close, Henderson was mired in a sea of state and federal bureaucracy. Although citizens had, on several occasions, successfully organized on behalf of a perceived community interest, none of these groups carried a mandate from the community. The incredible financial burden incurred by the State for the procurement and maintenance of the BMI facility threatened the facility's very existence. Uncertainty generated by the impermanent nature of the BMI project undermined the ability of local leaders to permanently settle the future of the unincorporated town of Henderson. Residents wanted to own their own homes, and the community needed to attract long-term or permanent tenants to the BMI facility. Community leaders knew that private property ownership would induce Henderson's residents to aggressively pursue a permanent settlement for Henderson's future.



Townsite Market, circa 1940's



AND A CITY
Emerges

CHAPTER 3

By 1950, residents in the still unincorporated City of Henderson and various civic organizations pressed for the private ownership of homes in the Townsite. Member of the first City Council, Lou LaPorta, remembers, "In that period, pre-incorporation was a very frustrating time ... we didn't see the permanency in this area."⁸⁵ Amazingly, Henderson continued to thrive despite the mass exodus of approximately two-thirds of the more than thirteen thousand Basic Magnesium employees following closure in November 1944. This resembled the experience of Boulder City in 1936, when thousands of dam workers left for the Grand Coulee and other projects, but hundreds more remained in town, determined to make the community permanent. The 1950 U.S. Census indicated that by June 1950, Henderson had a population of 5,717 residents.⁸⁶ The Colorado River Commission (CRC), which owned the approximately one thousand homes in the Townsite, leased many of these homes to an increasingly diverse population. Some residents worked for Basic Magnesium during the War, staying in the community following the cessation of magnesium production at the plant. Many of them found new employment at the plant when production at BMI shifted to the commercial pursuits of peacetime. The postwar housing shortage in Las Vegas forced many to take up residence in the Townsite. Others arrived in Henderson when private organizations like Stauffer Chemical Company, Western Electrochemical Company, and others relocated to the former defense plant. In the immediate postwar years, Henderson still owed its existence to the industrial facility, and for the next thirty years the fate of many of its residents would remain inextricably linked together.



Townsite Home, circa 1951

Housing continued to spark controversy; the CRC hesitated to consider the sale of the Townsite residences to private citizens because the industrial facility remained largely vacant. Despite the fact that many residents of the Townsite neighborhood

worked at the BMI facility, the company sought to ensure that future tenants at the industrial facility would have adequate housing for their employees. S.R. DuBravac, who succeeded John Mueller as the BMI plant manager in early 1950, announced, "the CRC is desirous of having the people own their own homes." DuBravac qualified the assertion: "The selling of the houses at this time might deprive a qualified future employee of the right to live in the Townsite."⁸⁷ By October



Townsite Neighborhood, circa 1951

1950, the CRC initiated a policy that allowed only the employees of the BMI tenants to rent vacant Townsite homes. However, existing residents in the Townsite who were unaffiliated with the industrial project were not evicted from their Townsite homes.⁸⁸

Although BMI officials wielded an enormous amount of influence at the Townsite, the CRC's legal right to offer Townsite homes to private parties was not certain. Further delaying the issue, the CRC was indebted to the federal government and remained preoccupied with the task of ensuring BMI's profitability. Ultimately, state officials assumed that the CRC could not sell the Townsite homes to private parties because the State of Nevada was still paying the federal government for the industrial plant and the Townsite. The ambiguous legal issues involved in selling the Townsite homes typified the complex problems



Families helped to build Manganese Park in the area of Joshua Street and Tuna Avenue, circa 1950's

facing Henderson's residents as they struggled with the myriad of federal and state bureaucracies. The often tangled and overlapping responsibilities of various government agencies hampered some aspects of community and commercial development.

Nevertheless, determined Henderson residents fought to establish their own community. They organized civic groups that allowed residents to participate in the shaping of a community identity. In addition to efforts by the Chamber of Commerce, residents developed several new associations to strengthen ties from within. For example, the Devlin Memorial Association brought together some of the most prominent citizens in the unincorporated city who worked to build a community center in Henderson, while the Henderson Betterment Group emphasized improving existing recreation facilities, such as the bowling alley and pool hall, so as to attract families.⁸⁹

1950, the CRC initiated a policy that allowed only the employees of the BMI tenants to rent vacant Townsite homes. However, existing residents in the Townsite who were unaffiliated with the industrial project were not evicted from their Townsite homes.⁸⁸

Although BMI officials wielded an enormous amount of influence at the Townsite, the CRC's legal right to offer Townsite homes to private parties was not certain. Further delaying the issue, the CRC was indebted to the federal government and remained preoccupied with the task of ensuring BMI's profitability. Ultimately, state officials assumed that the CRC could not sell the Townsite homes to private parties because the State of Nevada was still paying the federal government for the industrial plant and the Townsite. The ambiguous legal issues involved in selling the Townsite homes typified the complex problems



Families helped to build Manganese Park in the area of Joshua Street and Tuna Avenue, circa 1950's

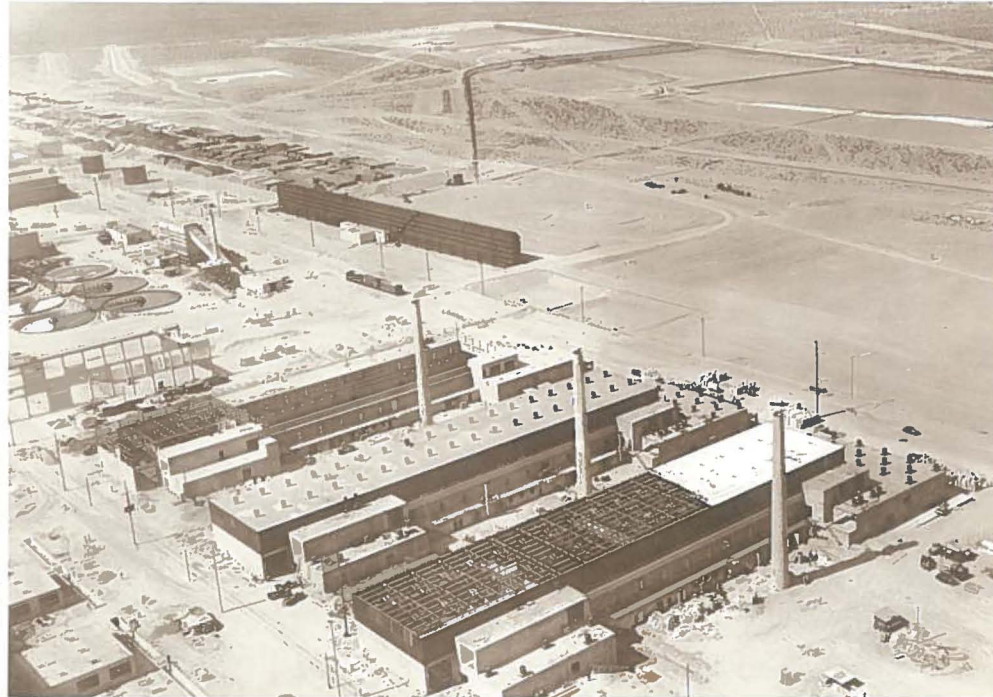
facing Henderson's residents as they struggled with the myriad of federal and state bureaucracies. The often tangled and overlapping responsibilities of various government agencies hampered some aspects of community and commercial development.

Nevertheless, determined Henderson residents fought to establish their own community. They organized civic groups that allowed residents to participate in the shaping of a community identity. In addition to efforts by the Chamber of Commerce, residents developed several new associations to strengthen ties from within. For example, the Devlin Memorial Association brought together some of the most prominent citizens in the unincorporated city who worked to build a community center in Henderson, while the Henderson Betterment Group emphasized improving existing recreation facilities, such as the bowling alley and pool hall, so as to attract families.⁸⁹

The CRC sought permanent residents for the sprawling factory. Throughout the 1950s, BMI flirted with several organizations that had expressed interest in establishing operations at the industrial facility. Yet, because the State of Nevada owed more than twenty million dollars for the industrial plant, the General Services Administration (GSA) exercised considerable influence over the circumstances at the facility.⁹⁰ In January, the Harvey Machine Company of Torrence, California, considered leasing almost two hundred acres at the plant for the production of aluminum.⁹¹ Company representatives were willing to spend five million dollars to renovate the existing facilities at the BMI plant. The firm's executives further speculated that their proposed operations initially would employ approximately four hundred and projected that the work force would increase as the amount of power made available to the firm grew.

By April 1950, it was clear that BMI and CRC officials were unable to persuade the GSA to allot the three hundred million kilowatt hours of electricity annually required for the proposed Harvey project.⁹² GSA was skeptical of the proposed aluminum project and questioned the

ability of the Harvey Machine Company to create an operation that would utilize almost one-third of the State's power allotment from Hoover Dam.⁹³ Officials were concerned that if the company received the three hundred million kilowatt hours of electricity it requested, there would be no surplus power available for future tenants at the BMI



Basic Magnesium, Inc. facility, circa 1940's

facility. Frustrated, officials at the Harvey Machine Company eventually turned their attention to a proposed aluminum operation near Kalispell, Montana's Hungry Horse Dam. Although the Harvey Machine Company was unable to secure financing for the construction of an aluminum plant, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company purchased Harvey's interest in the project, and in 1955, completed construction on a sixty-five million dollar

aluminum plant in Montana. Despite several changes in ownership and numerous multi-million dollar expansions, this plant, operating as the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, was still in operation as of 2003.⁹⁴

The failure to secure the Harvey Company was a major setback for both the BMI facility and the unincorporated town of Henderson, but state

and plant officials were able to lure several other corporations to the BMI facility. While the Harvey Machine Company was unable to secure power at the facility, both Combined Metals Reduction Company, operating as Pioche Manganese, and National Lead Company successfully negotiated first with the State of Nevada, and then with the federal government to lease portions of the industrial



Many deteriorating Townsite homes were damaged in a snow storm in the winter of 1949

facility. When combined, the two projects were expected to generate approximately seven hundred new jobs for Henderson.⁹⁵ Once again, war provided a boost for Henderson. The outbreak of the Korean Conflict in June 1950 greatly intensified the need for war materials. In July, the Western Electrochemical Company (WECCO) announced plans to expand their sodium chlorate operations at the industrial facility and invest five million dollars in new equipment and in the renovation of existing BMI facilities. Once completed, WECCO officials anticipated the need for more than five hundred new employees at their Henderson operation.⁹⁶ The Federal Munitions



Townsite Neighborhood, circa 1950

Board oversaw the production of war materials nationally and was authorized, in time of war, to control all or some of the production by the various tenants at the BMI plant.⁹⁷

As hostilities on the Korean peninsula escalated, the various firms at the plant were employed strictly in the production of defense materials. In March 1951, WECCO secured a contract with the U.S. Army and again

expanded operations at BMI.⁹⁸ By May, officials from the National Lead Company took up residence in the former BMI cafeteria and began preparations for the production of titanium for defense purposes.⁹⁹

Although BMI officials had been successful in attracting numerous clients to the industrial facility, Townsite's future was less assured. Several problems abounded. Many of the temporary Townsite homes were beginning to show their age. Some still had their original roofs, which were only guaranteed for five years. The demountable homes, intended for only temporary use, were prone to leaky roofs during inclement weather.

Indeed, a brief winter storm brought more than one hundred and forty complaints in one day to CRC officials and severely overwhelmed CRC maintenance staff assigned to the Townsite. Angry Townsite residents petitioned Governor Charles Russell, asking for a more proactive approach to maintenance.¹⁰⁰ Despite the lack of permanent housing, the Henderson School District had experienced an incredible eighteen percent rate of growth between January 1949 and January 1951.¹⁰¹ In 1949, the WAA had given the Henderson School District the educational facilities in the Townsite at no cost.¹⁰² The anticipated and unprecedented operating budget for the 1951-1952 school year was more than thirty thousand dollars, with much of the budget earmarked for costs associated with facilities maintenance and growth.¹⁰³ As lessees, the plant and the Townsite residents paid neither state nor county taxes, and the Henderson School District had no sure source of operating income.¹⁰⁴ Eventually, the State Legislature, through the



Gordon McCaw, principal of Basic Elementary, ponders the Universe with students, circa 1950

CRC, loaned the School District sixty thousand dollars. Although both the Townsite maintenance and school budget crises were eventually alleviated, these episodes further underscored the growing inability of the CRC to effectively account for and manage the needs of Henderson's residents.



Charles Russell, Nevada Governor, 1951-1958

Upon taking office in January 1951, Governor Russell, who had defeated incumbent Vail Pittman in November 1950, began exploring the possibility of selling the BMI facility to the lessees at the plant. In February of 1951, Russell replaced three members of the CRC that had been appointed by his predecessor, Governor Pittman. This decision was eventually ruled invalid by the Nevada Attorney General.¹⁰⁵ Despite some resistance to the initial establishment of the BMI facility in the 1940s, many significant Southern Nevadans now voiced their support for a more permanent arrangement for the unincorporated City of Henderson. Clark County Commissioner George Franklin Jr. had long advocated private ownership of the Townsite homes, provided that preference was given to those who worked at the BMI facility.¹⁰⁶

Clark County Commissioner Harley Harmon went a step further, indicating, “The County Commission would go all out in helping Henderson set itself up as a city.”¹⁰⁷ By March of 1951, the CRC, chaired by Governor Russell, worked to determine the future of Henderson. Throughout the proceeding months, various groups proposed to CRC a variety of means for the disposal of the Townsite homes. The Federal Homes Development Company, Incorporated, the Henderson Tenants’ Council, Henderson’s American Legion Post, the Henderson Eagle’s Lodge, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Baptist Church, the Library Association, and even the Girl Scouts offered solutions to the CRC.¹⁰⁸ Yet, after two months of meetings and information sessions, the CRC was still uncertain about Henderson’s future.



*Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
on Ocean and Water Streets, circa 1950*

Finally, in May 1951, the CRC directed BMI Manager Julian Moore to negotiate the sale of commercial properties within the Townsite. By the end of the month, the government had sold the former department store for fifty-nine thousand dollars, the drug store for twenty thousand dollars, the barber shop for forty-five hundred dollars, and one of the recreation centers for fifty thousand dollars. Negotiations for the remaining commercial properties, developed or otherwise, continued throughout summer and fall of 1951.¹⁰⁹ Civic and religious

organizations were given the option to purchase the various portions of the Townsite properties that they had leased from the CRC. Betty Lou Anderson remembers, “Jobs were a little scarce, but new businesses slowly began.”¹¹⁰



Henderson Library located at Water and Pacific Streets, circa 1950

Longtime Henderson resident, Hal Smith, who served in both the State Senate and Assembly, concurs, “The marketplace was kind of limited ... our growth had not really started yet. Shopping in Las Vegas was easier and more established.”¹¹¹ New buildings and businesses were planned in existing and uncultivated sections of the Townsite.¹¹²



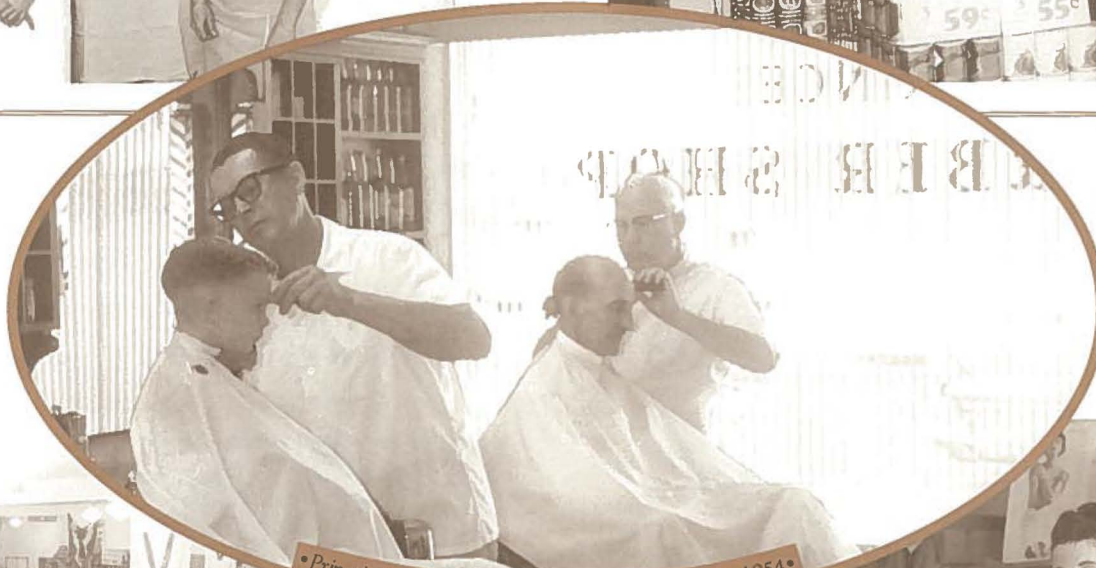
Henderson Girl Scout Troop, circa 1950



Prime Meats employees, circa 1954



Safeway Grocery Store, circa 1950



• Prince's Barber Shop located on Army Street, circa 1954 •



Townsite Market, May 1943



Ladies dress shop, circa 1954

As sales of the commercial property became widely published, the anxious members of the Henderson Tenants' Council again pushed for the sale of homes. The Council also sought the formation of a town board. According to Alan Bible, Special Deputy Attorney General for the CRC, "The CRC acted in a managerial and not in a governmental capacity, and therefore, the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County have the same authority and jurisdiction insofar as the Henderson Townsite is concerned as they would elsewhere in the County of Clark, and thus, an unincorporated town can be formed."¹¹³ The CRC owned the Henderson Townsite, but did not administer it in a governmental capacity. Ultimately, Henderson would not be eligible for a town board until three-fifths of the Townsite's eligible voters became property owners. With no end to the housing issue in sight, the possibility for a town board seemed slim.¹¹⁴

The plant lessees, who had a vested interest in the Townsite's future, became concerned. By June 1951, many of the employers at BMI were unable to provide housing in the Townsite for current and future employees. Hal Smith recalls, "One third of the industrial employed people in Nevada were employed in those plants ... a number of them didn't live in Henderson ... they were



Hal Smith, State Assembly 1967-1974;
State Senate 1989-1994

coming back and forth from Las Vegas."¹¹⁵ Although the housing shortage prohibited many from relocating to Henderson, Smith claims, "Some members of the black community elected to be out there [Las Vegas] because they couldn't buy a house in Henderson."¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, a special meeting between the CRC and the plant lessees revealed that seventy employees were on the waiting list for housing in the Townsite, but projected that lessees at the plant would require as many as fifteen hundred new homes in the following year after the expected influx of plant employees. Not surprisingly, BMI members expressed displeasure that people without affiliation to the plant occupied roughly four hundred and twelve Townsite homes.¹¹⁷

Despite the uncertainty caused by the housing shortage, two lessees at the BMI facility, WECCO, and the National Lead Company, initiated construction at the BMI facility. National Lead, which had contracted with BMI to lease portions of the facility in 1950, commenced work on an anticipated ten million dollar renovation of metal units at the plant for the construction of titanium. Production was tentatively scheduled to begin early in 1952. During this period, Manganese Incorporated, although not a BMI lessee, began renovating a disused manganese processing plant near the Three Kids Mine. The Three Kids Mine is located near the present-day entrance to the Lake Las Vegas development. Manganese Incorporated was expected to hire approximately two hundred and fifty men at the facility to process manganese ores mined from the Three Kids Mine.¹¹⁸ However, by the end of June, the number of BMI employees on the waiting list for housing in the Townsite had risen from seventy nine to one hundred and eight.¹¹⁹

Henderson HOME NEWS

M. M. Zenoff
Editor and Publisher
Box 43

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1951
Serving Henderson (Basic Townsite, Victory Village, Carver Park, Pittman, Whitney.)

FIVE CENTS

Sale of New Homes Here Opens 9 a. m. Saturday Federal Homes Co. to Welcome Public at 147 Water Street

HERE'S WHAT THE NEW HOMES WILL LOOK LIKE

BERT NICHOLAS, COMPANY MANAGER, BELIEVES HOUSES WILL ANSWER COMMUNITY'S NEED FOR LOW COST, EXCELLENT HOUSING



18 Construction Features Offered In New Homes To Be Built Here

- Officials of the Federal Homes Development Company, in announcing their plans for the construction of 350 homes here, revealed, also, some of the construction features of the home which their architects have named the "Freedom House."
- The construction features are: Designed for modern living. Square feet—861 in 2 bedroom home; 1034 in three bedroom. F.H.A. Rigid Standards followed.
- Air Conditioned.
- Steel Sash.
- Electric Heaters
- No. 210 thick butt composition roof.
- Tile Drainboards
- Tile over Tubs.
- Large windows on back and sides with picture window in front.
- Three panel doors.
- Quality Hardware.
- Large Closets.
- Big outside Storage Room.
- Abundant cabinets.
- 2 inch insulation.
- Tile Corner Sink.
- Youngstown Kitchen.

Henderson's demand for new homes starts becoming a reality! Sharply at nine o'clock Saturday morning, the Federal Homes Development Company, builder of some 3,000 homes throughout the west, move into Henderson and start taking orders for a home which they describe as the "Freedom House" and which banking officials describe as one worth from \$1000 to \$1500 more than the purchase price.

Because of the lack of other office space, the company has accepted the offer of this newspaper to use the HOME NEWS offices at 147 Water as its temporary headquarters.

Therefore, then, at nine A. M. Saturday and on thru the day and all day Sunday, Mr. Bert Nicholas, general manager of Federal Homes, along with a representative of Pioneer Title and Trust Company of Las Vegas, will be on hand to show plans, handle all questions, sign up all applicants. Only Pioneer Title and Trust will be allowed to handle any checks or money, inasmuch as that company has been appointed the escrow agent.

The walls of the offices will have posted enlarged floor plans as well as the plot plans for the first unit of homes to be built.

Prospective purchasers will be able to select their lot upon which the two or three bedroom homes will be placed. About one third of the first 40 homes will be three bedroom houses and the remaining two thirds will be two bedrooms.

The down payment of the two bedroom houses will be \$700 and the monthly payment will be \$47.81. The down payment of the three bedroom houses will be \$1200 and the monthly payment \$51.86.

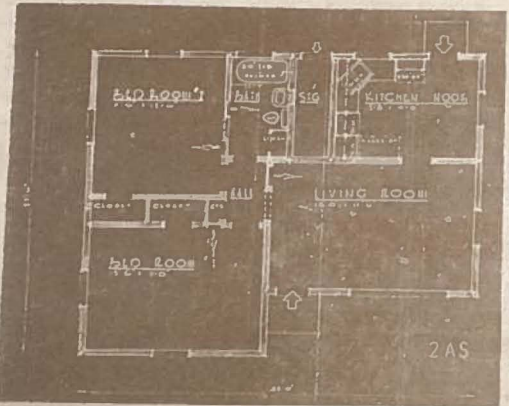
The first unit of houses will be built along Basic Road in the two hundred and three hundred blocks. The lot dimensions vary from 55 by 100 to 80 by 85.

The next units will be built along Victory Road and Basic Magnesium Highway and later in the big triangle area behind the hospital leading down to the point on the Boulder Highway.

A total of 350 houses will be constructed and if the demand is still evident, the company will build more and is prepared to go as high as a 1,000 if necessary.

Title to the land goes with the purchase of each house.

This is one of the types of two bedroom homes to be built in Henderson. It has overall dimensions of 27 feet by 35 feet with an 11 1/2 foot living room. This home will sell for \$6985 with a down payment of \$700 and a monthly payment of \$47.81. The living floor plan is for a two bedroom house. Title to the land goes with the purchase.



Floor Plans For New Homes Show Plenty of Space in Plenty of Rooms

A look at the floor plans of the new homes to be built here shows that the two-bedroom homes have dimensions reading this way:
Living room—18 feet by 11 1/2 feet; front bedroom 15 1/2 feet by 11 feet; rear bedroom 11 1/2 feet by 12 1/2 feet; 6 foot tub with shower attachment; kitchen and dining nook 12 foot 8 inches by nine feet; 35 foot front by 27 1/2 feet depth.

The above is only one of the four different type descriptions for two bedroom homes.
A typical description for a three bedroom home reads:

38 feet deep by 35 feet width; living room 18 by 11 1/2; front bedroom 10 feet by 12 feet 8 inches; middle bedroom 15 1/2 feet by 11 feet; rear bedroom 11 1/2 feet by 12 1/2 feet; kitchen and dining nook 12 feet 8 inches by 9 feet.

Here again there are four floor plans for the buyer to pick from. All these plans will be available to look at at the Henderson Home News office Saturday and Sunday as the sale of the new homes open. There will also be drawings of what the completed home will look like.

Henderson Home News announces sale of new homes October 18, 1951



"Freedom Homes" model home; sales opened October 20, 1951 at 147 Water Street

In response to the housing shortage in the Townsite, and in order to satisfy the plant lessees, the CRC made plans for evicting non-plant tenants from the Townsite, despite the fact that over two hundred units in the Victory Village and Carver Park apartments remained vacant. Furthermore, the Air Force personnel living in the complexes were scheduled to move into housing at the Nellis Air Force Base by September of 1951.¹²⁰ The departure of these servicemen and their families created several hundred more vacancies for plant workers. The Henderson Tenants' Council held a mass meeting, attended by roughly three hundred people, in order to determine a policy for evicting the non-plant affiliated workers. However, rather than agreeing on an eviction policy, the Tenants' Council decided upon a course of action designed to stop the eviction process.¹²¹ The Tenants' Council opposed the Townsite evictions primarily because of the overwhelming number of available units at Victory Village and Carver Park. The costs of a legal campaign, including the hiring of legal counsel to fight each individual notice and publicizing the struggle through advertisements in the local newspapers, were expected to be over four thousand dollars.

The Council opened a bank account at First National Bank in Las Vegas, and solicited donations for the legal fight from its members.¹²²

The housing shortage was temporarily alleviated when the Federal Homes Company announced plans to construct at least three hundred and fifty homes, primarily in the triangle area north of the St. Rose de Lima Hospital. The homes, priced from one thousand dollars, were available in both a two- and three-bedroom version.¹²³ Demand for the homes was high. The leasing office, located on Water Street, opened on Saturday, October 20 1951, and in less than one week, one hundred and fifty homes were sold. Henderson residents purchased over seventy-five percent of the homes sold during that first week. Residents from outside Henderson purchased the remaining twenty five percent.¹²⁴ By November, only eighty-eight home sites were available from the initial offering of three hundred and fifty.¹²⁵

At the same time, members of the CRC sought to resolve the future of BMI and the Henderson Townsite, once and for all. In September of 1951, several lessees at the BMI facility proposed to purchase the BMI industrial plant for seventeen and a half million dollars. Clark County was eager to place the plant on the tax rolls, and the CRC, led by Governor Russell, was anxious to resolve the unsettled question of Henderson's future. In a deal brokered between the CRC and BMI tenants, the latter agreed, pending approval of their corporate entities, to purchase both the plant and the Townsite. On December 18, 1951, it was announced that the Townsite, valued at approximately three and a half million dollars, had been sold to a consortium of plant lessees for

five million dollars.¹²⁶ The group also purchased the industrial facilities for approximately \$13 million. This consortium of tenants included Stauffer Chemical, WECCO, National Lead, Combined Metals, and the Titanium Metals Corporation. The sale was authorized pending the approval of the General Services Administration, and approval was expected by March of the following year. Many Henderson residents anxiously awaited the Townsite's change in ownership from public to private hands.



Lyle Burkholder, former School Superintendent, and Principal of Basic High School

Despite the speculation regarding the future of the Townsite homes, BMI had not publicized any plans for Henderson's future. In 1952, the housing issue, which had long been a source of consternation for local residents, had not yet been resolved. Unable to own their residences, citizens of the still unincorporated City of Henderson could not organize a town board under the Clark County Commission. Buoyed by a renewed

sense of hope, residents seized upon the sale of the Townsite. In February, School Superintendent Lyle Burkholder received federal funding for the construction of a new elementary school.¹²⁷ By March of 1952, Burkholder obtained additional funding for the construction of a new facility for Basic High School.¹²⁸

N.D. VanWagenen, former President of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and the owner of Henderson's Victory Theatre, organized a celebration to commemorate Henderson's tenth anniversary, in what became a precursor to the Henderson Industrial Days.¹²⁹ The festive event focused on Henderson's role as the industrial center of Nevada, and incorporated participants from the residential and commercial communities. Civic groups that addressed a wide spectrum of community issues grew in number.



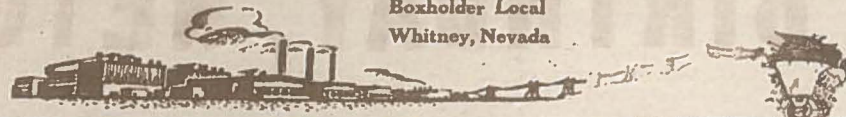
N.D. VanWagenen, first president of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and owner of Victory Theatre, circa 1950



Women's League parade entry, Industrial Days, circa 1950's

HAPPY 10TH BIRTHDAY, HENDERSON

Henderson



Boxholder Local
Whitney, Nevada

HOME NEWS

M. M. Zenoff
Editor and Publisher
Box 43
Offices at
147 Water St. Ph. 888

Serving Henderson (Basic Townsite, Victory Village, Carver Park, Pittman, Whitney.)

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1952

FIVE CENTS

GALA CELEBRATION AS CITY BECOMES CENTER OF INDUSTRY FOR NEVADA

10th Anniversary
SOUVENIR
EDITION

MORRY'S STORY

BY MORRY ZENOFF

From near and far they come today — to help us celebrate our 10th anniversary — the cheeriest, merriest four days in Henderson — short but exciting life.
For, it isn't only the tenth birthday that causes the celebration. It is also the general feeling that this is the birth of a new era — the birth of a new decade — one that promises the growth of a city which could become a community of anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 people.
Already, in its comparative infancy, the city has won the confidence of the state's fourth largest city — next only to Reno, Sparks and Sparks. Before the year is out, it is generally assumed that the first place goal will have been reached.
Already, the city has won the enviable titles as — the titanium center of the world, the chemical center of the southwest, the industrial center of Nevada.
Already, the re-tooling of the Basic plant has gone ahead so far that the firms either in a productive capacity, or within reach of a year's end.
People of all walks of life, from all parts of the country are flocking here for employment.

HENDERSON TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Official Program of Events

- April 17-18-19th. GIGANTIC SALES - All Henderson Merchants.
- THURSDAY, April 17, 8 P.M. MINSTREL SHOW - "Decade Darkies" - by LDS Church, High School Auditorium, Admission \$1.00
- FRIDAY, April 18th, 7 to 9 P.M. OPENING OF EXHIBIT BY PLANT LESSEES & LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS - High School Auditorium, Admission Free.
- April 18th, 8 P.M. MUSICAL CONCERT - Pilgrim Church of Christ Holiness Choir; Dorothy Kennard, soloist. Presented by St. Anne's Guild at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Admission \$1.00.
- April 18th, 9 P.M. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO WINNER OF "MISS HENDERSON" CONTEST. - On Stage at Victory Theatre.
- SATURDAY, ALL-DAY EVENTS

JOIN IN THE FUN!

The long-awaited day is here — the first day of Henderson's big jubilee!
As pulses quicken to the accelerated tempo of the many four-day Tenth Anniversary Celebration, Henderson becomes the focal point of the State of Nevada.
All eyes turn toward our community and it becomes the pride of visitors from near and far — visitors whose purpose is to witness the phenomenon that is Henderson (the industrial center of the State) — visitors to whom we extend our hospitality and best wishes for a joyous occasion.
The gigantic birthday observance comes at a singularly opportune time, for this is not only the completion of a significant decade — it is the beginning of a new era — a period that holds the rich promise of unlimited success.
There are apparently no bounds beyond which Henderson cannot progress. Important developments are dependent upon the resources and resourceful people. Here in Henderson, we have the enthusiasm for the future is reflected in the enthusiasm with which our people have arranged this week's big week-end. During the weeks of planning — weeks during which

Henderson Home News announces Henderson's tenth birthday celebration

The United Citizens for Better Government for the Henderson District, which hoped to represent Henderson residents in the formation of a local government, organized an interim town board in April of 1952.¹³⁰ The housing problem remained an enormous obstacle, but Henderson's residents carved out a unique identity on the Southern Nevada landscape.

As plans for the sale of the Townsite and plant neared completion, lessee companies hurriedly sought state and federal approval for various aspects of privatization. In March, WECCO and Stauffer Chemical Company received approval to purchase their sections of the BMI facility from the State of Nevada Board of Control. The CRC, eager to complete the sale of the BMI facilities and Townsite to the lessees, formed a committee of representatives from the CRC, BMI, the Henderson Tenants' Council, and the Metal Trades Council to iron out the final agreement to the satisfaction of all parties.¹³¹

The sale of the electric service in Henderson to the California-Pacific Utilities Company was finalized on April 16, 1952.¹³² Wasting no time, the CRC and BMI officials then announced that upon completing the sale of the Townsite to BMI, the houses would be sold to qualified, private purchasers. Although qualification criteria were vaguely defined, most assumed that plant employees would have the first option to purchase homes within the Townsite.¹³³ On May 23, 1952, at a meeting of the Colorado River Commission, Basic Management, Incorporated, signed documents transferring ownership of the plant and the Townsite on June 1, 1952. The parties agreed on a transition period that expired on July 1.¹³⁴

Before BMI assumed ownership of the Townsite, the coalition of tenants chose Julian Moore, former plant manager under the CRC, to serve as plant manager for BMI. In early June 1952, BMI indicated individual employers would offer employees homes as early as August for approximately three thousand dollars per home.¹³⁵ John A. Galbreath and Company, hired by BMI to organize the sale and screen occupants for qualification to purchase, began a survey of the homes in the Townsite in July 1952.¹³⁶ In September, transfer of the titles for the nine hundred and ninety-two Townsite homes from the CRC to BMI had been recorded with the county, clearing the way for sale.¹³⁷ By October 1952, the Galbreath Company had identified approximately one hundred non-qualified Townsite residents, and began to evict these unfortunate residents. Those who faced eviction had the option to remain by purchasing a home in the development constructed by the Federal Homes Company and were allowed to remain in their Townsite residences until their new homes were constructed.¹³⁸ As 1953 approached, more than four hundred and forty-five homes in the Townsite had been sold to the following: thirty-two to school teachers; twenty-five to hospital staff; six to police officers; sixty-three to Townsite businesses; twenty to firemen; and twenty-nine to those with special circumstances.¹³⁹

With the Townsite housing issue approaching resolution, local civic leaders focused their attention on developing some form of government for the unincorporated town. A committee established by the Chamber of Commerce and chaired by Lou LaPorta examined the possibility of incorporating.¹⁴⁰ LaPorta reflects, "... BMI gave us a lot

of encouragement to go ahead and see if we can incorporate.”¹⁴¹ By March of 1953, the Chamber developed a plan for incorporation, which in accordance with state law, required that the approximately ten thousand residents of the proposed city be petitioned.

After consulting with local governments and planning consultants, the Chamber estimated that the City’s operating budget would be slightly more than three hundred thousand dollars. The boundaries for the proposed city included the Townsite neighborhood; the small, unincorporated area to the north of the Townsite known as Pittman; Carver Park and Victory Village; Manganese Park, a development constructed by the Federal Homes Company to the south of Carver Park; and the small triangular area bordered by the Boulder Highway, the northern end of Water Street, and State Highway 146. BMI agreed to lease the water and sewer system and the Fire Department to the city, once incorporated, for one dollar per year, with the option to purchase after sixteen years. BMI also agreed to pay one hundred and one thousand dollars annually: twenty thousand dollars for water and sewer utilities and eighty-one thousand dollars for service from the Fire Department, providing a financial baseline for the new city.¹⁴² The Petition to Incorporate, containing the signatures of more than two thousand residents of the proposed City of Henderson was thoroughly reviewed by representatives at the County Assessor’s Office, and then presented to District Judge Albert S. Henderson on April 16, 1953.

Upon receiving the petition, Judge Henderson appointed a five-person committee to oversee elections for the City Council and City Council

members. Henderson residents were entitled to elect a City Council and five Council Members. Judge Henderson’s panel established five City Council wards, set an election date, and on April 23, posted the official election notices.¹⁴³ The election, scheduled for Saturday, May 23, allowed for any taxpaying resident of any recognized ward, with at least one year of residence, to run for City Council or a position on the City Council. Following the election and incorporation, the new City Council, along with the five-person City Council, would appoint city residents to fill various positions. Immediately, more than twenty nine people filed for City Council and the City Council. By election day, forty-two residents had filed for public office and more than thirty-four hundred had registered to vote.¹⁴⁴ On the day of the election, one thousand, nine hundred and seventy-one voters turned out to the polling stations and voted on ballots printed by the *Henderson Home News*.¹⁴⁵



Swearing in of Dr. James French as Henderson’s first Mayor, May 27, 1953

On Wednesday, May 27, the new City Council of Henderson, Dr. James French, and the five City Council members, Van VanWagenen, John Ivary, Lou LaPorta, Bill Engel, and Paul Dickover, were sworn in at the new City Hall, temporarily housed at the central fire station. Immediately following the ceremony, French held an informal City Council

meeting to discuss the most pressing problems facing the City, particularly the lack of revenue and the lack of an enforceable legal code. LaPorta remembers, "Each Council member was responsible for certain areas, whether it was the recreation or whether it was zoning matters."¹⁴⁶

In the first of a series of articles that appeared in the *Henderson Home News*, entitled, "This Is Our City: A Weekly Chat With The People," Mayor French informed the City, "At the present there are no funds available so there is no purpose in anyone applying for any paid city position." In asking for applicants for a volunteer City Planning Board, the City Council tested the residents' commitment to their new city. Would the population offer its help if there was no remuneration?

Municipal services were a major priority. The City negotiated a deal with BMI in which the City would assume responsibility, at least temporarily, for the operation of the Fire Department, as well as the water and sewer system, in exchange for annual payments, providing the City with enough money to expand the City's infrastructure.¹⁴⁷ During the first week of June, Henderson solicited applications for a variety of positions, including a City Attorney, a City Clerk, a City Treasurer, and a City Judge. Two weeks later, the Council had filled all four positions and named



*First City Council Meeting, May 27, 1953;
New members were sworn in by Judge A.S. Henderson*

Councilman Paul Dickover as Fire and Police Commissioner. Harvey Dickerson, the new City Attorney, was hired for one year and paid a four thousand dollar annual salary.¹⁴⁸ Charles Dohrenwend, the Henderson City Judge, was hired for fourteen hundred dollars annually. Tom Haley, the City Treasurer, was hired as a part-time employee and received no pay for his services. Harry Parsons, the City Clerk, received a four-year term of employ-

ment at four hundred dollars per month.¹⁴⁹ In lieu of non-existent city ordinances, French declared that the City would adhere to county ordinances, "until the Council can adopt city ordinances."¹⁵⁰ But even before they could take much action, Bill Engel moved to Boulder City and had to be replaced by Joe Linn, a TIMET employee who had opposed Engel in the earlier election. The Council was also busy negotiating and approving contracts and agreements with various private organizations and state agencies. The Council signed the fire, water, and sewer contract with BMI. It also approved an arrangement in



*Charles Dohrenwend
Henderson's first Judge, 1953-1957*

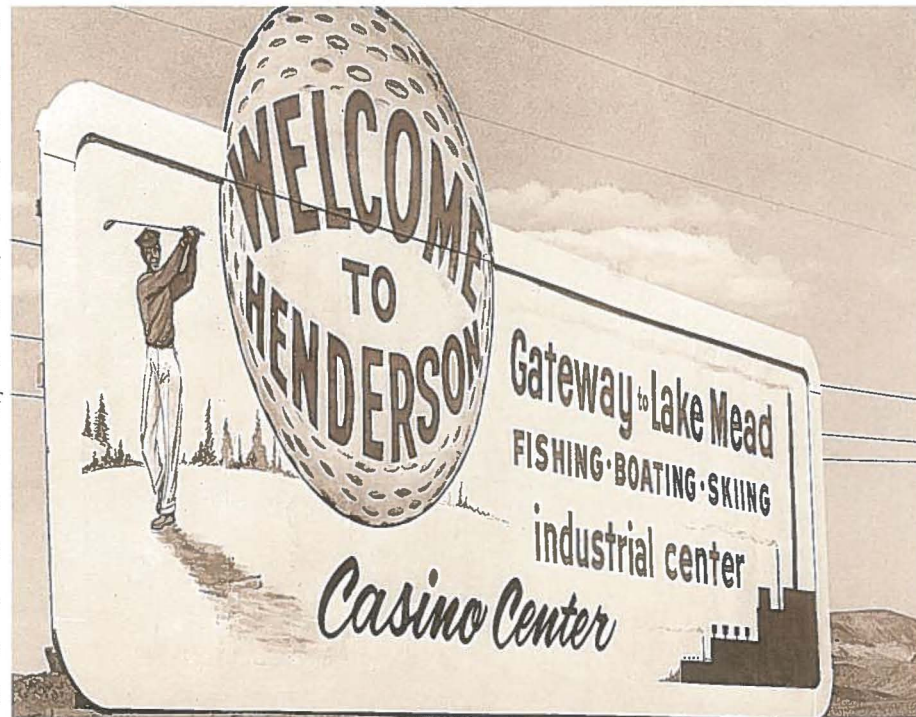
which the State provided traffic equipment on the Boulder Highway, which the City of Henderson maintained. At the first town meeting on June 24, Van VanWagenen explained to a small crowd that the City's budget, estimated at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, would come from three different sources. Even though the factory remained a county island in the midst of the City, BMI agreed to donate approximately

one-third of the budget; the water and sewer fees would make up another one-third of the budget; and miscellaneous licensing fees accounted for the final one-third of the budget.¹⁵¹

The City Council feverishly passed a series of ordinances designed to regulate the most pressing city issues such as zoning, water and sewer infrastructure, and crime. Despite the momentum in Henderson, not everyone was satisfied with the new arrangement. In August, the City Council passed an ordinance that banned gaming and the sale of liquor in the Townsite, but allowed these activities along Boulder Highway. Members of the Pittman neighborhood, particularly the Pittman Chamber of Commerce, were unhappy with the decision. Pittman bordered the highway and was represented by Henderson City Council member Paul Dickover. Leaders believed that nearby gaming and alcohol would have a negative effect on their community.¹⁵² When members of the Pittman Chamber of Commerce could not persuade the Council to change its decision, some considered secession. After feeble attempts to rally support for the idea, the momentum dissipated, and the neighborhood remained part of the new city.

In just over eleven short years, Henderson had been transformed from a barren, inhospitable desert into the thriving industrial capital and Nevada's fifth largest city. Indeed, the initial community issues had been resolved. The homes in the Townsite were in private hands; the BMI facility was privately owned and working in partnership with the City of Henderson; the City of Henderson, once merely a post office address, was now an incorporated community. Yet, as city leaders solved one set of problems, a whole new crop of issues rose in their place.

The City, formerly a federal factory town, had been designed based upon the immediate needs created by a wartime economy without consideration of peacetime challenges. The temporary infrastructure that was adequate for the production of magnesium was ill-suited for the demands of a growing and permanent city. Henderson's future still depended upon the BMI facility and the businesses that brought thousands of jobs to the community. Now legally separated from the industrial facility, Henderson was forging its own identity separate from that of the BMI complex. Ultimately, as the residents of Henderson forged ahead into the future, they moved out of the shadow of BMI.



"Welcome to Henderson" sign, formerly located northbound on Boulder Highway near Race Track Road



EXPANSION
Begins

CHAPTER 4

Under the articles of incorporation, the City settled into a routine. The problems of governing the City, previously the domain of the Colorado River Commission, Basic Management Incorporated, or the Clark County Commission, were now the responsibility of the City's elected leaders. With just under a year of experience, Henderson's City Council, Dr. James French, and five City Council Members had already lost one member and endured the attempted secession of the Pittman neighborhood from the incorporated city. Despite these relatively minor and short-lived crises, the City faced much larger and more pressing challenges in its immediate future. In February 1954, the City Council started to work on an operating budget for the coming year. With revenues of only two hundred and ninety thousand dollars expected for 1954, and a budget

for the previous year of over three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, the City faced its first fiscal challenge. City leaders were forced to re-examine their priorities and make the difficult decision to cut more than sixty thousand dollars from the budget.¹⁵³

At this early stage, the City struggled to pay for the most basic services. The operating costs for the Fire Department were approximately one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per year, while the operating costs for the Police Department were roughly sixty thousand dollars. The annual cost of water and sewage facilities was approximately forty-five thousand dollars. Together, these three departments alone expended more than two hundred and twenty five thousand dollars, leaving only sixty-five thousand dollars in the budget for other municipal expenditures in 1954, including the payroll for city employees.¹⁵⁴ Following a series of meetings, the City Council decided that the Chief of Police, George Crisler, would be appointed Director of Safety, and would assume responsibility for the reorganized Fire and Police Departments. Mayor French, seeking increased revenue, lobbied regents for a Henderson campus of the University of Nevada, which he proposed be located in Victory Village, in order to make the best use of the

EXTRA!
THE COMMUNITY'S NEWSPAPER
Henderson
HOME NEWS
Serving Henderson (Basic Towns), Victory Village, Carver Park, Pittman, Whitney.)
M. M. Zanoff
Editor and Publisher
Box 43
TITANIUM CENTER OF THE WORLD
NEVADA'S THIRD LARGEST CITY
WEDNESDAY
HENDERSON, NEVADA
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1952
FIVE CENTS

INCORPORATION OF HENDERSON NOW UNDER WAY PETITIONS SEEK NECESSARY SIGNATURES

MORRY STORY
BY MORRY LENNY
Add a new day to the Henderson.
It is the day that will see the making of the new city of Henderson. It is the day that will see the making of the new city of Henderson. It is the day that will see the making of the new city of Henderson.

Here Is The Petition Of Incorporation
The petition for the incorporation of Henderson is now being circulated. It is a petition for the incorporation of Henderson. It is a petition for the incorporation of Henderson.

Proposed City Budget
The proposed city budget for 1954 is now being circulated. It is a budget for the city of Henderson. It is a budget for the city of Henderson.

Community's Leaders Endorse Program
The Henderson community has endorsed a program for the city. It is a program for the city of Henderson. It is a program for the city of Henderson.

General Fund	\$ 1,000.00
Special Fund	500.00
Reserve Fund	1,000.00
Total	\$ 2,500.00



George Crisler, Police Chief, 1953-1968

dormitory configuration of the facilities.¹⁵⁵ Despite these aggressive moves, the City, lacking enough of a tax base, soon had to reduce costs.¹⁵⁶ City Council Members each assumed responsibility for various functions of the local government, as many of the City's paid employees were laid off.



Governor Charles Russell places the first direct dial telephone call from Henderson's new dial system, April 1, 1954

Although the City of Henderson faced the reality of a budget crisis much sooner than many had anticipated, the City continued to grow at a rapid pace. The Henderson Home News, previously a once-weekly paper, began a twice-weekly publication.¹⁵⁷ Henderson's phone service was switched to a dial system at a cost of more than three hundred thousand dollars.¹⁵⁸ The Federal Homes Company, in association with Ace Homes, announced

plans for three hundred and eleven new homes in the area south of Carver Park and east of the Boulder Highway.¹⁵⁹ Despite an existing contract, the City of Henderson agreed to purchase the water and sewer systems from BMI. This arrangement ensured a supply of more than five million gallons each day.¹⁶⁰

By December 1954, the City had issued almost four million dollars in building permits. Even the budget crisis, which had loomed largely over

the newly incorporated city in early 1954, was no longer an issue by 1955. On January 3, 1955, the City had over sixty-five thousand dollars in available cash for operating expenses.¹⁶¹ The official operating capacity of the City of Henderson and private enterprises had grown at a phenomenal pace in the year following incorporation.

Problems with the water and sewer system continued to plague the City. A dispute with BMI over the terms of a contract had been successfully resolved when the City purchased the system for more than \$106,371.¹⁶² As the City continued to grow, the infrastructure for water and sewer service remained unaltered. By June of 1955, portions of the City experienced low water pressure. This became a particular problem in the summer when low pressure prevented water from reaching the evaporative coolers that Henderson's residents used to cool their homes.¹⁶³ The lack of water pressure also threatened the Fire Department. Without adequate water pressure, the Fire Department was unable to guarantee an effective response, causing fire insurance rates to rise.¹⁶⁴ Superintendent of Utilities, James Keller, ordered the enforcement of city ordinance no. 37, which



Resident hand pours water on cooler pads due to low water pressure, circa 1955

stipulated the hours during which residents and commercial enterprises could water their landscaping, thus ensuring an adequate level of water pressure during the daylight hours.¹⁶⁵ The City Council sought the assistance of a municipal bond consultant, initiated work on the development of a one million five hundred thousand dollar bond issue for the improvement of the City's water and sewer systems, and held a public meeting to discuss the bond issue.¹⁶⁶ The sewer and water bond initiative was divided into two separate initiatives, both of which were approved by voters in a special bond election in August 1955.¹⁶⁷



Councilman Lou LaPorta and several residents participate in a town meeting, circa 1955

Despite all of these progressive measures, some Pittman residents began circulating petitions calling for secession from Henderson in late 1955.¹⁶⁸ Mayor French, himself a Pittman resident, claimed that by seceding, Pittman would save the City approximately a quarter of a

million dollars that municipal officials had set aside to improve Pittman's water and sewer lines. Led by the Pittman Progressive Association, the secession movement sought to combine residents of the unincorporated Whitney Township and Pittman into an entity known as East Las Vegas. The Progressive Association claimed that while the City of Henderson received substantial sums of money in licensing fees from Pittman businesses, the conditions of their neighborhood, "are worse now than before annexation about thirty months ago."¹⁶⁹ Not all Pittman residents agreed with the Progressive Association, and this became clear once a majority of the property owners in Pittman had signed anti-secession petitions. On December 5, 1955, the Henderson City Council, by a vote of five to zero, voted against removing Pittman from the Henderson city limits.¹⁷⁰

The problems for Henderson's elected officials did not end with Pittman's secession petitions. In January 1956, Henderson's treasurer reported that the City's 1955 calendar year operating costs totaled close to five hundred thousand dollars. While the majority of the City's operating expenses were allocated for public works, a portion of the 1955 budget, in sums ranging from approximately two hundred to nine hundred dollars, had been paid to the five Council Members and the City Council to cover expenses incurred by the elected officials as they conducted official business.¹⁷¹ This minor scandal coincided with an attempt by the Council and the Mayor to establish salaries for their respective positions, as well as for that of the Municipal Judge, City Attorney, and City Clerk. When the elected officials consulted Harry Claiborne, Henderson City Attorney, he informed them that while state

laws allowed elected officials to establish a salary or change an existing salary, changes made with regard to salary would not take effect until after the next election.¹⁷² Eventually, the Council voted for salaries of fifteen hundred dollars per Council member per year, and three thousand dollars for the Mayor. The salaries were not scheduled to commence until the next municipal election in 1957.¹⁷³ Ultimately, Henderson's first elected officials received no pay for their services to the community, with the exception of their expense accounts, and hints of impropriety by elected officials were never substantiated.

Henderson continued to grow substantially throughout 1956 and 1957. In March 1956, the City Council voted to allow the licensing of slot machines in the Townsite commercial district.¹⁷⁴ Although BMI fell within the county's boundary, the industrial plant continued to be the catalyst for Henderson's growth. It provided thousands of jobs, and most employees lived nearby in the new city. The Titanium Metals Corporation of America, a partnership between the National Lead Company and Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, announced a fifteen million dollar expansion at the BMI facility in August 1956.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the Nevada Department of Highways opened the cutoff to Henderson from Highway 91 in February 1957, allowing travelers from California to bypass Las Vegas on their way to Henderson and Lake Mead. In May, the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency Community Facilities Administration loaned the City five hundred and fifty thousand dollars to construct a new waste disposal plant.¹⁷⁶ In short, Henderson experienced significant expansion throughout the 1950s thanks in part to the infusion of capital from outside investors.



The Wheel Casino, shown here on Water and Atomic Streets; the casino later relocated to the current site of the Skyline Casino on Boulder Highway, circa 1956



The Royal Casino (current site of the Eldorado Club) on Market Street, circa 1950



*William "Bill" Byrne,
Henderson's second Mayor,
May 1957-1965*

The young town of Henderson was not without its political controversies. In the municipal elections in May 1957, Bill Byrne, founding president of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce, was elected as City Council in a race that pitted him against Dave Jamison. The race was close, and Byrne won by a margin of nine votes.¹⁷⁷ Otto Littler, a Henderson voter, contested the election through petitions filed at the Clark

County District Court by Attorneys John Lee and Al Wartman. Lee claimed that some of the absentee ballots filed in the mayoral election had been completed in pencil, not ink, as required by statute. Lee argued that these ballots should have been thrown out. District Court Judge Frank McNamee ordered Henderson's City Clerk, Harry Parsons, to deliver the questionable ballots to the court. On May 28, Judge McNamee reviewed each ballot, individually. The entire process took over six hours. McNamee ruled that Byrne had won Henderson's mayoral contest over Jamison by eight votes. The final tally showed Byrne received 1057 votes to Jamison's 1049 votes.¹⁷⁸



*Local voter with children on
election day, circa 1950's*



Henderson Police Officers, 1957

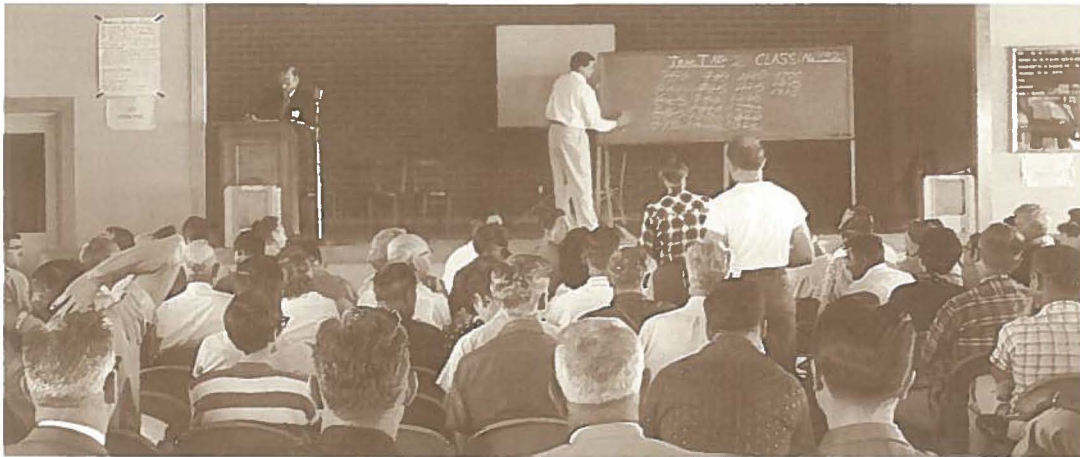
County District Court by Attorneys John Lee and Al Wartman. Lee claimed that some of the absentee ballots filed in the mayoral election had been completed in pencil, not ink, as required by statute. Lee argued that these ballots should have been thrown out. District Court Judge Frank McNamee ordered Henderson's City Clerk, Harry Parsons, to deliver the questionable ballots to the court. On May 28, Judge McNamee reviewed each ballot, individually. The entire process took over six hours. McNamee ruled that Byrne had won Henderson's mayoral contest over Jamison by eight votes. The final tally showed Byrne received 1057 votes to Jamison's 1049 votes.¹⁷⁸



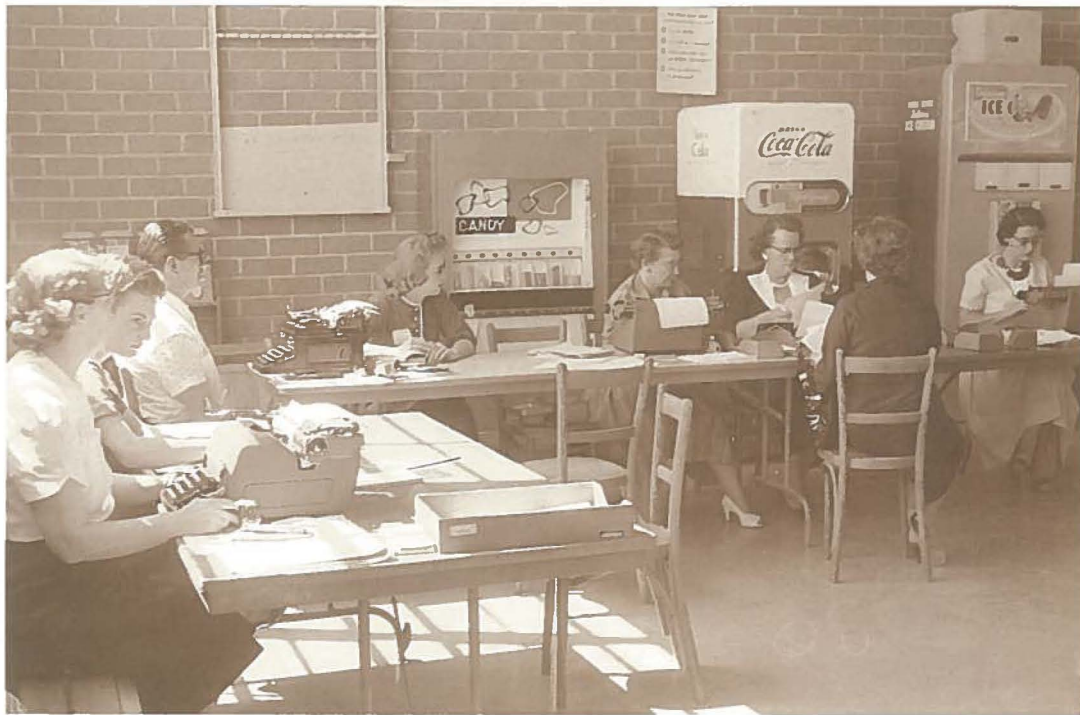
*Henderson Firemen at the City's first fire station, located
at the corner of Panama and Atlantic Streets, circa 1950*

County District Court by Attorneys John Lee and Al Wartman. Lee claimed that some of the absentee ballots filed in the mayoral election had been completed in pencil, not ink, as required by statute. Lee argued that these ballots should have been thrown out. District Court Judge Frank McNamee ordered Henderson's City Clerk, Harry Parsons, to deliver the questionable ballots to the court. On May 28, Judge McNamee reviewed each ballot, individually. The entire process took over six hours. McNamee ruled that Byrne had won Henderson's mayoral contest over Jamison by eight votes. The final tally showed Byrne received 1057 votes to Jamison's 1049 votes.¹⁷⁸

The growing city government not only improved the administration of city affairs but also sought to secure more land for city expansion. In May 1957, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) agreed to sell the City of Henderson seven thousand acres of land for six hundred thousand dollars.¹⁸¹ Anticipating a sale price of approximately seven dollars per acre, the City balked at the BLM price, which amounted to almost one hundred dollars per acre.¹⁸² Senator Alan Bible sought approval of a bill from Congress for the transfer of almost seven thousand acres of land. Bible's bill would allow the City to purchase land as needed, without losing the option to buy more in the future. The BLM also considered reducing the price of land purchased by the City for the construction of public works projects.¹⁸³

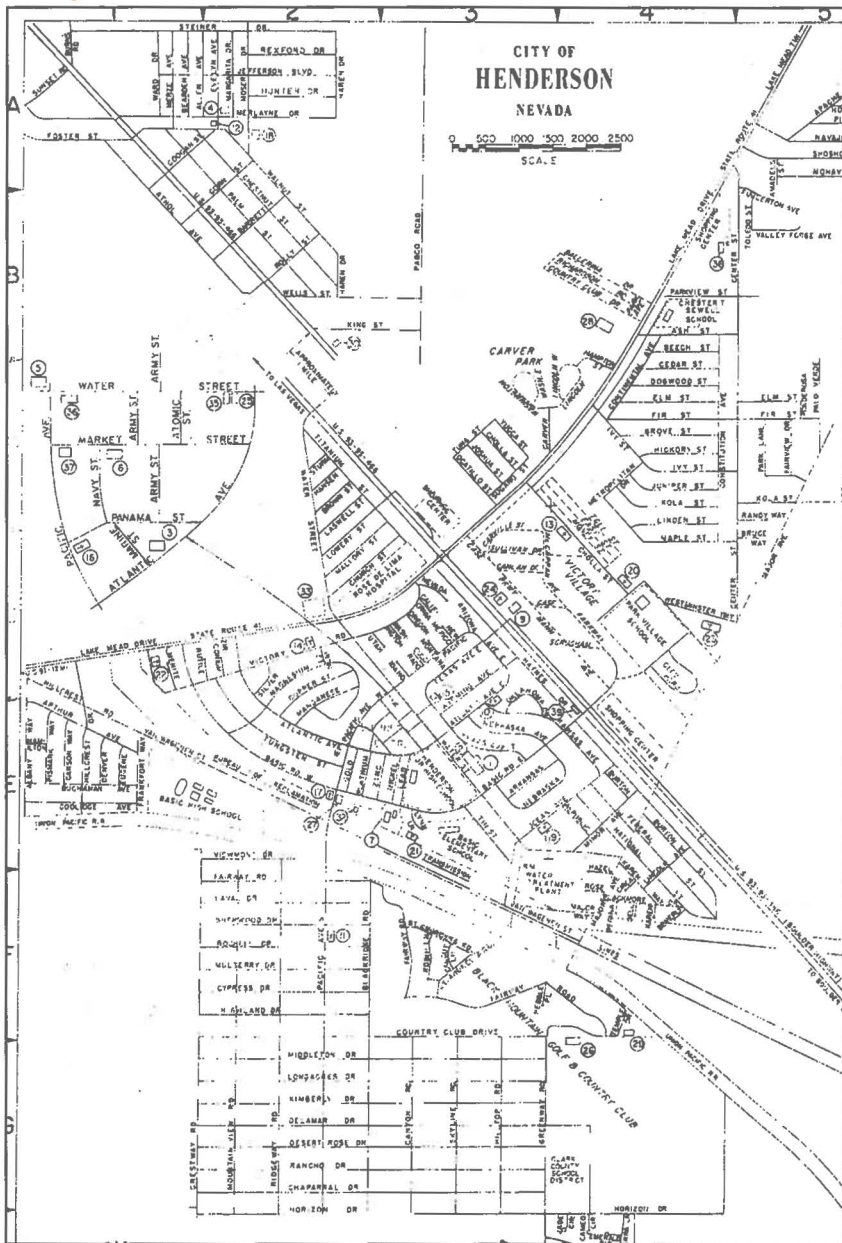


Prospective purchasers at the 1959 land sale



The City's 1959 land sale was so successful that the City was soon hard at work lobbying for additional acreage

In August 1959, the U.S. Congress approved Bible's proposal, and the City Planning Department devised a master plan for the seven thousand acres.¹⁸⁴ Ultimately, the government reduced the price on nearly five thousand acres to \$355,195, or approximately seventy dollars per acre.¹⁸⁵ In February of 1959, the City Council approved the appraisal of the five thousand acres at the reduced rate. By March, the City accepted applications from prospective purchasers of the federal land and sold the first parcel of twenty acres for twelve hundred dollars.¹⁸⁶ The City sold all of the land to private interests for a profit and then drafted a new proposal to acquire three thousand additional acres from the BLM.¹⁸⁷



Henderson Boundary Map, circa 1960

The sale of federal lands continued well into the 1960s, expanding Henderson's physical boundaries and providing much needed revenue for the City's coffers. The BMI facility, despite periodic economic downturns, continued to attract new firms and enterprises. Due partly to the continuing Cold War with the Soviet Union and its allies, many of the existing plants at BMI expanded operations. With the evolution of technology, the plants frequently entered into new ventures. The incredible expansion further taxed the ability of the local government to provide city services and strained an infrastructure already stretched thin. Despite the profits from land sales, city leaders struggled to generate enough revenue to fund government operations. Throughout the 1960s, financial troubles and budget shortfalls plagued the City. Although there was a balanced budget in 1962, by 1963 the City's spending required the approval of a one-cent increase in the State's sales tax. Without it, the City would have been forced to slash seventy thousand dollars from its budget.¹⁸⁸ After another economic slump in 1964, the City terminated some employees and borrowed one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars from the land fund to finance general operating expenses.¹⁸⁹



Installation of water lines to the residential area, circa 1950's

The City's financial woes were exacerbated by the perpetual shortage of water, and despite the various bond issues, federal funds, and federal loans, the City still seemed on the edge of a crisis.¹⁹⁰ In July 1960, BMI and the Las Vegas Valley Water District considered an agreement in which BMI would sell surplus water to the Water District. Henderson's Mayor Byrne, facing an acute summertime shortage, successfully obtained from BMI the right to purchase surplus water before any other agency in Southern Nevada.¹⁹¹ BMI offered the City two million gallons of excess water in the summer of 1961.¹⁹² Although the City agreed to accept BMI's offer, it eventually constructed a reservoir with a one-half million gallon capacity at the foot of Black Mountain. The new reservoir and arrangements with BMI alleviated many of the City's water issues. Ultimately, the rationing of water was unnecessary in the summer of 1961, although the increasing demand for water by Henderson residents continued to approach the limits of the available water supply, much like Las Vegas and its strip suburbs.¹⁹³



New water storage tanks located at the foot of Black Mountain, circa 1950's

While housing developments had been proposed, approved and constructed in the decade following incorporation, the City was faced with a shortage of low-income and apartment housing. By 1961, the average wait time for housing in one of the eight hundred and forty-two apartments at Carver Park and Victory Village ranged from two to six months. Servicemen, federal employees, veterans, and plant workers constituted the majority of the residents in the two low-income housing projects. In 1961, Sierra Vista, Incorporated, began developing low-priced homes in the Pittman area and made plans for the construction of several apartment complexes in the Henderson area.¹⁹⁴ At the same time, the shortage of low-income housing continued, and in November 1962, the Clark County Housing Authority, facing criticism for its lenient rental criteria, served eviction notices on fifty Victory Village residents. The fifty residents were evicted based on income and family size.¹⁹⁵

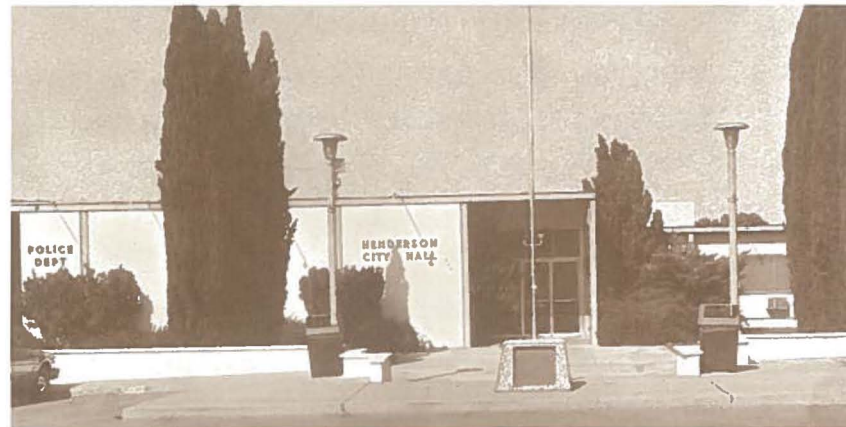
The City faced other issues. By summer 1961, the BMI plants had become the cause of a significant smog problem in Henderson and Southern Nevada. This was indicative of the much larger ecological impact that the BMI facility had on the Las Vegas Valley. BMI Manager Julian Moore claimed that the high cost of environmental controls for the plant, particularly in arresting smoke emissions, had led at least one operator at the facility, Pioche Manganese, to leave.¹⁹⁶ Here was a classic dilemma of the 1960s: the plants supplied an incredible number of jobs, but the industrial economy had consequences for the City surrounding it. Nevertheless, Henderson's residents welcomed the news in 1961 that Pacific Engineering and Production Company (PEPCON)

planned to expand its operation at BMI. The PEPCON operation, which had produced rocket and aviation fuels for military contracts, announced that it would expand capability to produce sodium chlorate for use in agricultural applications as well as the manufacture of paper.¹⁹⁷ The expansion mandated the construction of twelve new buildings on the BMI property, which meant more jobs for Henderson and more spending in its commercial district.¹⁹⁸



The temporary City Hall was located on VanWagenen Street, circa 1950's

In May of 1961, Mayor Byrne was reelected, and he made his first priority the construction of a City Hall. The importance of the City's work required a permanent facility. Anticipating a cost of one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, the City Council solicited bids for construction. One hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars was available for the project from a 1955 bond initiative.¹⁹⁹ Initially, five sites were proposed as possible locations for the new City Hall, and the City Council eventually decided upon a location within the Townsite neighborhood at 245 Water Street.²⁰⁰ Council members planned to house



The new City Hall was located at 245 Water Street, circa 1963

city administrative offices, justice facilities, and a police station in the new building. In January 1963, the City Council conducted groundbreaking ceremonies for the project.²⁰¹ The project was completed in May 1963 at a cost of three hundred thousand dollars, just in time for the swearing in of the newly elected City Council Members. Among these members was Ida Belle Riggins, the first woman elected to an



Henderson Home News headlines dedication of the new City Hall in 1963

official position in Henderson. The official dedication of the facility by Henderson's first City Council, and Mayor James French, took place on Friday, September 18, 1963, and included state dignitaries.²⁰² The City Hall was just one example of Henderson's growing urban maturity.

In 1961, the City Council began work on a city charter.²⁰³ Henderson's State Assemblyman, James I. Gibson, recommended that the City Council study the Boulder City charter as a model. In his view, the Boulder City charter allowed for, "a truly home rule."²⁰⁴ Indeed, as former Boulder City Mayor Bob Broadbent indicated, under the provisions of the Boulder City charter, the charter itself "can only be changed by a vote of the people," an attribute that Gibson and others admired.²⁰⁵ By



James I. Gibson, Nevada State
Assemblyman, 1959-1966

February of 1963, a petition to establish a charter government was circulating the City.²⁰⁶ The list of twelve hundred and eight signatures in favor of a city charter was presented to the City Council in March. By April of 1963, the City Clerk was busy comparing names on the petition with the registered voters on file with Clark County.²⁰⁷ However, two members of the City Council, Wilbur Hardy and Pete Mendive, halted the charter government petition. Claiming that the charter petition was merely a tactic to recall Mayor William Byrne, Hardy led the vote against the petition and, at least temporarily, ended hopes for a charter government.²⁰⁸

In 1963, the City Council expanded Henderson's boundaries twenty-five hundred acres when its members unanimously voted to annex property owned by Mesa Development Company to the north and east of the City. Mesa Development Company was owned and operated by Barbara and Hank Greenspun, owners of the *Las Vegas Sun*.²⁰⁹ Senators Alan Bible and Howard Cannon cosponsored a bill in July of 1962 calling for the sale of sixty-two hundred additional acres of federal land to the City of Henderson.²¹⁰ In January 1963, the City Council passed a resolution seeking fifteen thousand more acres of BLM land.²¹¹

Mayor Byrne sought to further expand the City's physical boundaries and tax revenues in February 1963 when he attempted to negotiate an arrangement with the plants at BMI. He proposed that the City either annex the BMI facility or require that the plants pay the City one hundred thousand dollars annually. If the plants were annexed to the City, each plant would have been taxed approximately hundred thousand dollars. BMI leaders declined to enter into such an agreement, reasoning that they already had their own police, fire, and sewer services along with a lower county tax rate.²¹²

In July of 1963, Congress passed the Henderson Land Bill, effectively doubling the size of the City of Henderson by fifteen thousand acres. The land was located between the City and what is presently known as Interstate 15, along Lake Mead Drive/State Route 146. Like previous sales of land to the City of Henderson, the BLM guaranteed the availability of land for five years and sold the land to the City on an as needed basis.²¹³



Ida Belle Riggins, Henderson's first Councilwoman, 1963-1967

Although the initial efforts of Henderson's residents to create a city charter were unsuccessful, Frank Morrell, a former Henderson City Council member, organized a new petition drive for a charter government. By September 1963, Morrell claimed that a requisite 603 voters from the last election had signed the petition, including three of Henderson's City Council members,

Dr. Paul T. Marshall, Dale Roberts, and Ida Belle Riggins. After City Clerk, Genevieve Harper, certified each petitioner's eligibility as a registered voter, the petition was forwarded to the City Council for consideration in November 1963. The City Council appointed a variety of prominent Henderson residents to a charter committee, including: Selma Bartlett, Manager of the Bank of Nevada's Henderson branch; John



Selma Bartlett, shown at left, Bank of Nevada Branch Manager and City Charter Committee Member

Ivory, a founding City Council member; James I. Gibson, State Assembly Representative for Henderson; Floyd Osborn, the Assistant Chief of Police; and Jack Stevens, a former City Councilman who questioned the need for a charter government.²¹⁴ Eventually, the charter committee held its first meeting in October 1964.

Once formed, the committee moved quickly and had completed work on an initial draft of the city charter in February 1965. The City Council approved this rough draft of the city charter at a meeting on March 6. At a hearing sponsored by the State Assembly, the State, County and City Affairs Committee recommended passage of the measure, Assembly Bill 574, authorizing the formation of the charter government. Henderson's five Councilmen unanimously recommended passage of the bill, despite Mayor Byrne's opposition. Although not required by law, Byrne felt that the measure should have been put to a vote of the people.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, the bill unanimously passed both the assembly and senate, and Governor Grant Sawyer signed it on Thursday, March 30.²¹⁶

Although the charter took effect upon Governor Sawyer's signature, the months leading up to June's municipal elections were a time of great uncertainty. Several candidates, including incumbent Mayor William Byrne, filed for office under provisions of the general law, which were in effect prior to ratification of Assembly Bill AB 574. Unlike many of



Bob Hampton, Henderson's third Mayor, 1965-1969

those running for office in the municipal election, Byrne, who openly opposed the formation of a charter government, refused to re-file for office under the provisions of the

new charter. He also threatened a legal challenge to the newly enacted charter government.²¹⁷ Ultimately, Bob Hampton defeated Byrne in the election and became the new Mayor of Henderson.²¹⁸ Following a swearing in ceremony on June 21, 1965, Mayor Hampton assumed control of the newly chartered Henderson government.

The most pressing concern facing Mayor Hampton and the City Council was not unique to their administration. The growing community's insatiable thirst for water had been a concern since the City's birth. City leaders had contracted with BMI for seven million gallons of water per day, but during periods of high demand, usage often exceeded ten million gallons.²¹⁹ The other lingering problem was the City's chronic revenue shortfall. The City's general fund, which provided financing for day-to-day government operations, again ran a deficit in



Henderson Fire Department youth program participants atop Fire Engine 2, circa 1950's



Henderson Police Officers with youth explorer program participants, circa 1960's

summer 1965. The previous administration, according to City Auditor Jim Johnson, overspent its revenues by \$294,170.07 in 1964.²²⁰ In order to reduce expenditures, the City Council voted to place city employees on a thirty-two hour workweek as of October 1, 1965. Further, the Council also voted to terminate the employment of twenty-five employees in the City's Engineering, Fire, and Police Departments. Mayor Hampton requested that the Council approve a motion halting salaries for the City Council and City Council members until the City became more financially secure.²²¹ Although they were still required to work forty hours or more per week, the wages for department managers and the chiefs of both the Fire Department and Police Department were cut by ten percent.²²² The City Council also raised utility rates by one dollar to cover one-half of the one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in debt owed to Henderson's land fund. The

land fund, which received the proceeds from the sale of land, was used to pay off debts acquired in the purchase of land from the federal government.²²³

Another familiar problem for the residents of Henderson was the frequent pollution caused by emissions from some of the plants at BMI. In May 1966, trees began losing their leaves sporadically throughout the Townsite neighborhood. Officials from the Clark County Health District, BMI, the City of Henderson, and several private organizations met to determine the cause of this unusual event. Officials from TIMET revealed that they had mistakenly released a large volume of chlorine gas into the air. Apparently, the leak went undetected for several hours. The Clark County Health District eventually determined that chloride had caused the leaves to fall from the trees, but was unable to determine which of the plants was responsible. In response to this revelation, angry residents circulated petitions calling for more stringent emissions controls at the BMI facility.²²⁴ They were unsuccessful in their attempt.

The 1960s were marked by a series of chronic problems that plagued city officials. The City's nagging monetary issues were exacerbated by fluctuations in the economy and the occasional fiscal miscalculation. Yet, Henderson's dramatic physical expansion established the need for expanded municipal services, including police and fire protection, a City Hall, and other facilities comprising the City's physical infrastructure. City founders possessed the foresight and determination to incorporate the City in 1953. Yet, the City was ill equipped and unprepared to cope

with the demands of a population that was growing so quickly. The desire to secure Henderson's future through the constant, chaotic acquisition of land also served to challenge the City's physical infrastructure. Without adequate revenue, the City's resources were simply incapable of adequately addressing the needs of Henderson's residents. The frenzied attempts to expand the City's boundaries stretched the City's financial resources to the point of collapse. The election of Mayor Hampton marked a period in which the City's leadership, empowered by the city charter and a new sense of purpose, embarked on a course towards fiscal responsibility and more controlled expansion.



1967 Henderson City Council
Pratt Prince, Giles Franklin, Mayor Bob Hampton, Paul Marshall, Barney Cannon
(from left to right)

January 1954, the City of Henderson initiated a campaign to raise a minimum of \$60,000 to build a youth center.

Basic Management, Inc. (BMI) donated nearly four acres of land for the project located at Basic Road and Lead Street.

Donations ranged from \$1.95 raised by four little girls who hosted a backyard "carnival" to \$35,000 by BMI for construction and equipment for the adjacent pool, known today as the BMI pool.

On June 15, 1954, a fundraiser, The Victory Show, was held, featuring performances by Hollywood celebrities - Frank Sinatra, Sophie Tucker, Dorothy Lamour, Dennis Day and the Ink Spots.



A regular at the Sands Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Frank Sinatra performed.



Entertainers Bobby Sargent, Dennis Day, and Norman Brooks (left to right)



Sophie Tucker, known as the "grandest lady of show business," donated \$100 the day of the event, plus \$100 monthly until the project was completed.



Tickets for the Victory Show ranged from \$1 for general admission to \$5 for reserved seats, raising over \$11,000.

Additional fundraising efforts continued with residents donating time, money, and materials to the cause.

A building block program was established. Henderson's first Mayor, James B. French, was the first resident to purchase a "block" that would be installed around the pool.

On September 20, the grand opening of the new municipal pool was held.

On June 30, 1956, a pre-dedication dance marked the official opening of the Henderson Youth Center. Funds raised at the dance were to be spent on furnishings and building materials for the center. The actual dedication was planned for August 11, exactly two years after the groundbreaking of the Youth Center.



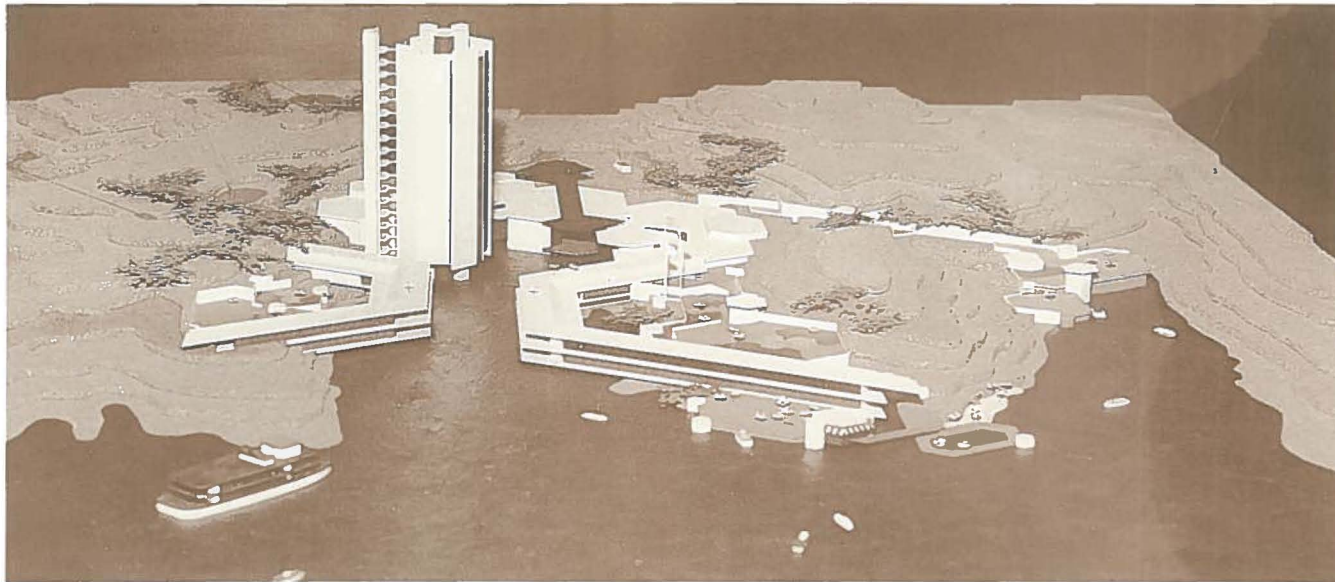
Local businesses and schools raised funds for the Youth Center, some taking voluntary payroll deductions and pledges from their employees as well as countless in-kind donations.



A FOCUS IS
Realized

CHAPTER 5

Although the industrial plants still supplied plenty of jobs for Henderson's residents, the City's economy began a subtle shift away from the industrial plants that had sustained the City. In 1967, Henderson negotiated one of the biggest land development deals in its history. This deal was indicative of a trend that would continue into Henderson's future. The project, known as "Lake Adair," was named after J. Carlton Adair, a former casino owner and the de facto leader of a consortium of investors known as the Port Holiday Group. The proposed Lake Adair envisioned a three hundred and twenty million dollar master planned community consisting of more than two thousand acres, eleven miles of shoreline and ample recreation features for its residents. The City anticipated that tax revenue from the construction of the project would amount to ten million dollars. The proposed Lake Adair site was located between the Lake



An early artist's rendering of Lake Adair, circa 1967. Although it never left the conceptual phase, the project inspired the development of Lake Las Vegas.

Mead National Recreation Area and the City of Henderson, and designed for approximately eighteen thousand residents. When news of the development was announced to the public, the Colorado River Commission (CRC) had already allocated ten thousand acre-feet of

water from Lake Mead for Lake Adair.²²⁵ Adair insisted that in order to annex the project, the City would have to change its name from Henderson to the City of Lake Adair. In exchange, the City would receive a new City Hall on the lake, and millions of dollars in licensing fees for allowing developers to use the City's name.²²⁶

The City Council studied the annexation of Lake Adair and determined that initial capital expenditures would total approximately fifty million dollars, including an estimated five million dollar cost for the construction of a dam.²²⁷ It was rumored, and later confirmed, that the Utah Construction Company, one of six contractors employed in the construction of Hoover Dam, would be responsible for the construction of the dam and the excavation of the reservoir.²²⁸ In

exchange, the Utah Construction Company was to receive acreage in the project and a percentage of the investment group's profits. In February of 1967, the Port Holiday Group announced its intention of funding the construction of the dam and the reservoir so building could

to continue the project despite the great likelihood that the City of Henderson would not be involved. Without the City, Carlton Adair continued without success to pursue development of the project throughout the 1970s. In the end, the City of Henderson ultimately retained its name. The dream of a lake for the City of Henderson did not die with the Lake Adair project. Indeed, the unprecedented scope and scale of the project offered a glimpse into Henderson's future.

Smaller projects, such as the construction of the Nevada National Guard Armory, also brought distinction to the City. In December 1967, the City announced that it was considering a donation request by the Nevada National Guard. In exchange for the donated land, the Guard proposed to build an armory at an estimated cost of four hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars.²³⁸ A twenty-acre armory site allowed ample space for military maneuvers. Once the project was completed, approximately two hundred and fifty guardsmen would use the facility for maneuvers. The City Council approved an initial study of the proposal and determined that the facility would require a full time staff of five and provided an annual payroll of approximately forty thousand dollars.²³⁹ The City Council formally approved the donation of at least twenty acres of land near the Black Mountain Golf Course to the Nevada National Guard in January 1968.²⁴⁰ Although plans for the proposed National Guard Armory were put on hold for almost one year, the Governor's 1969 budget included six hundred and fifty thousand dollars in funding for the construction of the Armory.²⁴¹ In April 1971, construction of the armory and the maintenance shop was completed at a cost of \$455,642 and \$67,354, respectively.²⁴²



*Mike O'Callaghan,
teacher, public administrator,
then Nevada Governor
1971-1978*

Governor Mike O'Callaghan dedicated the Armory on October 18, 1971.²⁴³

Recognizing the potential for future city growth, officials undertook the development of a master plan. This plan was finalized in the final months of 1969 and the City hired a planning consultant, Franklin Bills. City planners sought to "define ... what type of community we are planning for in the next five, ten, or twenty years."²⁴⁴ The plan examined different types of land use, including residential, commercial, and industrial. Planners estimated that the City had approximately forty-eight hundred housing units, almost nine hundred of which were low-income housing in Victory Village and Carver Park. Because low-income housing units provided little in the way of tax return to the City, planners encouraged the growth and availability of middle-income housing. Although cognizant of the fact that many Henderson residents shopped in Las Vegas, the plan supported the need for an economically viable commercial district that was appropriate for a city of its size. Long-time Henderson resident and community activist Father Caesar Caviglia confirmed, "... we had to go shopping in Las Vegas if we wanted anything."²⁴⁵ Finally, the master plan called for the integration of the BMI industrial facility as a "full partner" with the City. Planners acknowledged how important the BMI facility was to the City, and stressed that because the plants were unincorporated, Henderson was missing out on a great source of tax revenue.²⁴⁶



Hank Greenspun, real estate developer and newspaper publisher, circa 1970's

The foundation for Henderson's dramatic expansion after 1980 was laid in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although it seemed relatively insignificant at the time, Hank Greenspun's

application for the purchase of thirty-two hundred acres was a pivotal moment

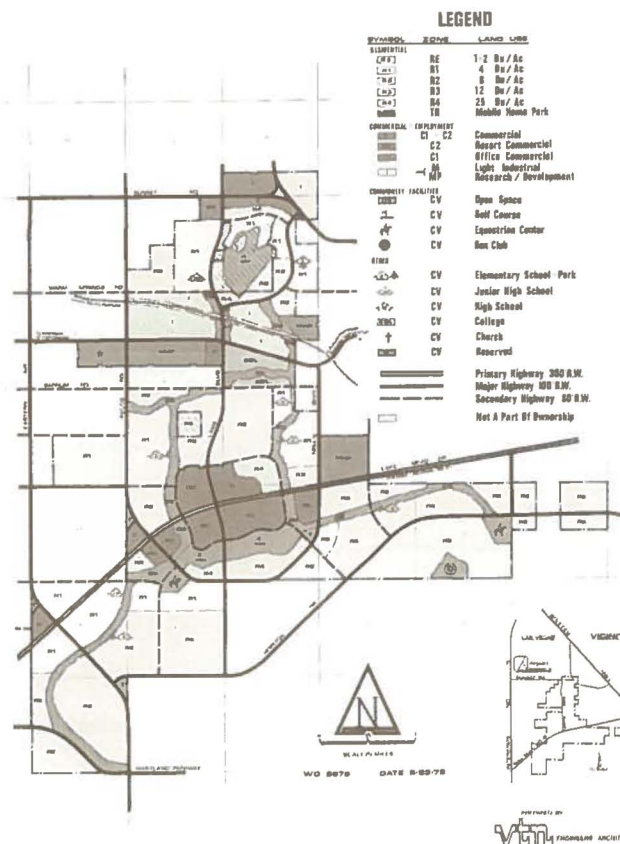
for the City. Greenspun, a real estate developer and newspaper publisher, applied to purchase acreage from the City of Henderson in October 1969.²⁴⁷ Greenspun offered to donate approximately fourteen hundred acres of land adjacent to the Paradise Valley Country Club (later renamed the Wildhorse Golf Club) to the City. However, his application for the thirty-two hundred acres of land was denied by the City Council in February 1970.²⁴⁸ Undeterred, Greenspun vowed to prepare a more enticing proposal for the City of Henderson.²⁴⁹ City Attorney Shauna Hughes recalls, "The amount of land in question was a very large amount of acreage and it was clear to elected officials that it was going to change the character of Henderson."²⁵⁰ She remembers, "There was a recognition that we were on the brink of potentially making some major changes to the community, and the

City planners wanted to be very careful and thoughtful that those changes were positive."²⁵¹ At a City Council meeting on March 13, Greenspun offered to purchase a smaller one thousand nine hundred and twenty acres of land around Paradise Valley Country Club. Greenspun promised to provide the City Council with a comprehensive master plan, drafted by the Macco Corporation within ninety days.

The Macco Corporation was a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, and had partnered with Greenspun to develop the acreage described in the proposed sale. Greenspun further promised that three hundred homes would be constructed within three years of the land sale. Greenspun again indicated his willingness to annex fourteen hundred acres of land adjacent to the Paradise Valley Country Club to the City. Finally, Greenspun offered to pay eight hundred thousand dollars for the acreage, almost twice its value.²⁵² Ultimately, the City chose not to accept Greenspun's second offer because Council Members were concerned that water and sewer infrastructure could not be adequately extended to the proposed annexation area.

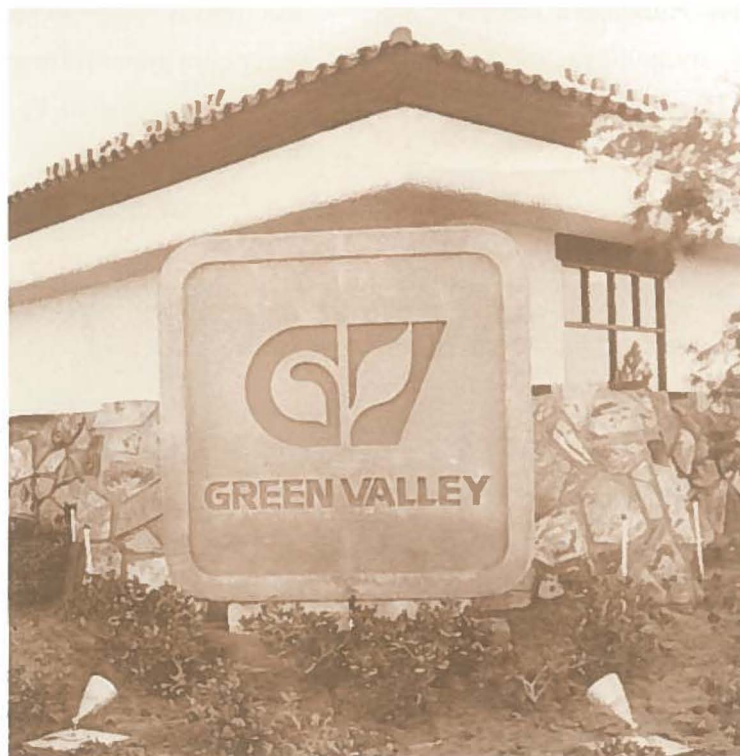
GREEN VALLEY MASTER PLAN

AMERICAN NEVADA PROPERTIES INC.
Henderson, Nevada



Map of proposed Green Valley Master Plan Development, circa 1972

Determined, in September 1971, Greenspun applied for four thousand two hundred and seventy acres of land, offering the City the appraised value of the acreage, plus fifty percent. Additionally, Greenspun identified one thousand one hundred and twenty-eight acres of land that he would offer for annexation to the City once a sales agreement was reached. The application for the four thousand two hundred and seventy acres included a master plan, which called for more than seven million dollars in development, and was comprised primarily of residential homes.²⁵³ The City approved Greenspun's request and began negotiations for the sale of four thousand seven hundred and twenty acres. Greenspun assured the City that he would try and incorporate those developing properties adjacent to Greenspun's master plan.²⁵⁴ The Council also agreed to act as an intermediary between Greenspun and the other developers during the process to consolidate the developments under one master plan. As the negotiations between Greenspun and the City reached a climax, both parties agreed on a total purchase price of \$1,321,890. Former Councilman Jack Jeffrey recalls, "We knew when we sold the property that became Green Valley, it was going to change the face of the City if it was successful."²⁵⁵ Greenspun agreed to provide the City with a master plan within sixty days of contracting for the sale of the acreage. He further promised to



Entrance sign to Green Valley neighborhood

petition the City for annexation of the one thousand one hundred and twenty-eight acres adjacent to the Paradise Hills Country Club within ninety days of a sales agreement.²⁵⁶ The City reached an agreement with Greenspun for the sale of four thousand seven hundred and twenty acres on November 15, 1971.²⁵⁷

In January 1972, Hank Greenspun presented the master plan for the acreage to the City Council.²⁵⁸ The plan accounted for more than eight thousand acres of land and was given provisional accreditation by the City's Planning Commission.²⁵⁹ The master-planned community was labeled "Green Valley," and encompassed approximately eighty thousand building sites that would eventually host a population of more than one hundred thousand residents.²⁶⁰ In May 1973, the Panda Development Company made preparations for the development of

one hundred and eighty-seven acres known as Mission Valley.²⁶¹ Meanwhile, the City Council considered the formation of a Public Trust in order to fund the development of vital infrastructure to the community, and subsequently within the community once various sections of the master plan were developed.²⁶² Under the provisions of the State's Public Trust Law, the City issued a Declaration of Trust for the City's Public Improvement Trust.²⁶³ In March 1974, the Internal

Revenue Service approved the sale of three million dollars in tax-exempt bonds for infrastructure improvements, primarily the installation of water and sewer lines associated with the Green Valley development.²⁶⁴ Greenspun made his final payment of \$202,004.12 to the City in February 1976.²⁶⁵

Although the numerous land deals negotiated by the City brought in millions of dollars in revenue, BMI remained a major component of Henderson's economy. Despite several years of economic hardship and tumultuous labor relations, most of the plants at the BMI complex were consistently profitable. In March 1972, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) awarded production contracts to two of the firms located at the industrial facility, PEPCON and Kerr-McGee. The two contracts totaled more than twenty-five million dollars in new construction and provided approximately four hundred new jobs at the BMI facility. NASA required between one and two billion pounds of ammonium perchlorate, a key component in the production of solid fuel for the space shuttle program. Henderson was the only location in the United States where ammonium perchlorate was mass-produced.²⁶⁶ In August 1975, Stauffer announced a project to renovate the existing chlorine and caustic soda facilities at the BMI industrial complex.²⁶⁷ The project was completed in November 1976 and modernized facilities that had, for the most part, remained untouched since construction in 1942.²⁶⁸ Kerr-McGee, the only producer of boron trichloride, announced in November 1978, the expansion of its production capacity to eight hundred thousand pounds per year due to increased demands from both the United States Air Force and NASA.²⁶⁹

As the State's third largest city, Henderson's leaders also sought an educational infrastructure that reflected this status and met the needs of the City's growing population. The Clark County Community College had been conducting classes in Henderson since 1972. Classes on a range of topics were conducted in a variety of locations throughout the City. Approximately eighty students participated in the initial course offerings in 1972. By 1976, enrollment topped seven hundred students.²⁷⁰ In 1975, the Community College coordinator, Betty Scott, announced that in light of Henderson's rapid growth, the college was considering building a permanent campus in Henderson.²⁷¹ The State Board of Regents solicited recommendations for the site of the proposed Henderson campus of the Clark County Community College.²⁷² In January 1976, a group of Henderson citizens, led by Father Caesar Caviglia, presented a petition to the Board containing more than two thousand names in favor of establishing a community college campus in Henderson.²⁷³ By February, an advisory board to the Clark County



Father Caesar Caviglia,
circa 1980's

Community College suggested the development of a small community college campus in Henderson.²⁷⁴ In May, the Henderson City Council approved the sale of forty-three acres of land near Horizon Drive to the State Board of Regents for ninety dollars an acre.²⁷⁵ Finally, in November 1976, the University of Nevada Board of Regents approved a recommendation for a Clark County Community College campus in Henderson.²⁷⁶

Although consideration of the college at the state level had been delayed for some years as a result of budget concerns, Assemblyman James I. Gibson of Henderson introduced a motion for the construction of a community college campus.²⁷⁷ In May 1979, both the State Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee approved the construction of the facility. Newly elected Governor Robert List signed the bill that appropriated \$1.9 million for the campus' initial construction costs.²⁷⁸ Groundbreaking ceremonies were scheduled for the twenty-three thousand square-foot first phase of construction on June 30, 1980.²⁷⁹ Once the project was underway, more than two thousand students were enrolled in the various community college offerings in Henderson. By July 1981, the first phase of construction was ahead of schedule.²⁸⁰



Levi Strauss & Company formerly located off Boulder Highway and Conestoga Way, circa 1977

As Henderson's population continued to grow, so too did its commercial community. In May 1977, Levi Strauss and Company announced plans for building a distribution center in Henderson.²⁸¹ Company officials anticipated the construction of an automated two hundred and twenty-five thousand square-foot distribution center.²⁸² By February

1978, the company had begun to fill its estimated three hundred positions at the factory.²⁸³ Construction of the distribution center was completed in June 1978.²⁸⁴ It was anticipated that the center, located near Boulder Highway and Wagon Wheel Drive, would be staffed by the end of 1978, enabling the shipment of approximately fifty million units to retailers throughout the western United States.²⁸⁵

While Henderson's industrial sector powered its early economy, real estate drove it in the 1980s, 1990s, and the early 21st Century. Even though Carlton Adair had failed to make Lake Adair a reality, his vision inspired other developers to pursue similar projects. In July 1983, the City of Henderson approved a proposed project by Pacific Malibu Development Company on land formerly owned by Adair. The proposal, named "The Lake at Las Vegas," called for the construction of a man-made lake, golf courses, hotels and a convention center in the vicinity of the Las Vegas Wash. Pacific Malibu sought approval for a dam that rose one hundred and ten feet high and spanned approximately four thousand feet. In July 1984, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a public hearing on the proposal.²⁸⁶ After three years of uncertainty, the City granted permits for dam construction. Like the Lake Adair project, progress was slow for the Lake at Las Vegas.

As Henderson grew with the acquisition of land, the City worked feverishly throughout the 1980s to ensure that its infrastructure kept pace with the incredible growth. In 1981, the City Council approved the purchase of a Green Valley residence for use as a temporary fire house. The City paid seventy-five thousand dollars and temporarily

alleviated the need for a fire station to service the more than eight thousand neighborhood residents.²⁸⁷ The Henderson Convention Center was dedicated in June of 1982. Construction of the facility cost more than one million dollars and had a capacity of up to one thousand persons.²⁸⁸ By October of the following year, the Convention Center was operating at a profit.²⁸⁹ In October 1982, the City broke ground on a \$4.6 million wastewater treatment plant in the Pittman neighborhood. The new facility was expected to replace both of the City's antiquated treatment plants.²⁹⁰ Municipal leaders took a proactive approach to the challenges presented by the City's rapid expansion in the early 1980s.

Many were caught off guard when the prosperity created by growth also created tension among the City's residents. Henderson's population was roughly fifty-five thousand residents in July 1988. If growth continued as it had throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the population was expected to triple by 1995.²⁹¹ By 1988, it was evident that most of the City's growth was occurring in the Green Valley neighborhood and other housing developments on Henderson's western edge. Many residents of these newer neighbor-



*Henderson Convention Center, located at
Water and Atlantic Streets, circa 1982*

hoods overlooked the older portions of Henderson that existed to the east. Indeed, US 95 provided a physical barrier between older and newer sections of Henderson, and development in the City's geographic center remained virtually nonexistent.

The prosperity that became synonymous with Henderson's newer neighborhoods in the 1980s was markedly absent from older neighborhoods to the east. City Attorney Shauna Hughes recalls, "Not too much had been built in the older part of town for a number of years ... I believe there might have been some early resentment."²⁹² Green Valley, with its planned uniformity, flowing green spaces, and suburban atmosphere seemed like a world away from downtown Henderson. Even the name of the new development was appealing.

Downtown Henderson, in the shadow of the monstrous industrial facility, was characterized by an aging Townsite neighborhood and a limited commercial district. Henderson Mayor James Gibson recalls, "Henderson was still an industrial town."²⁹³ Green Valley was, in many ways, closer in proximity to Las Vegas. The idea of spending money in Las Vegas, rather than Henderson, was never the issue for residents in the new development as it had been for longtime residents.

The differences between the older and newer portions of Henderson were temporarily erased when, on May 4, 1988, a series of explosions tore through the PEPCON plant at the BMI facility. Homes in both neighborhoods were damaged by the concussion from the explosions at the PEPCON facility.²⁹⁴ The cause was a fire that quickly spread to a chemical storage area, setting off a series of four powerful explosions. Amazingly, all but two of the one hundred and eight PEPCON employees on duty at the time escaped the facility before the explosions. The Kidd Marshmallow Plant, located next to the PEPCON operation, was also engulfed in flames and subsequently burned to the ground. Two PEPCON employees died in the conflagration.



PEPCON explosion, May 4, 1988

The explosions at the plant were felt as far away as Boulder City and North Las Vegas, as well as on the Las Vegas Strip. The blasts knocked out power sporadically throughout the City. A thick black cloud of smoke lingered over the area for hours, and city officials warned residents to stay indoors. Emergency crews from all over the metropolitan

area responded to the scene of the accident, and injured persons were transported to St. Rose Hospital.²⁹⁵ The Hillcrest neighborhood, closest to the blast, and portions of Green Valley, were evacuated for fear of chemical contamination. Scores of homes and businesses within several miles of the blast sight were heavily damaged. Governor Richard Bryan declared a state of emergency in Henderson, and the Nevada National Guard imposed an 8 p.m. curfew to discourage looting.²⁹⁶

In the weeks following the blast, city officials organized a cleanup. City officials estimated the damage citywide at eighty one million dollars. The City waived fees for building permits required to repair the extensive structural damage to homes throughout the City.²⁹⁷ Former police officer and current Police Chief Mike Mayberry remembers, “The tragedy actually brought the community together.”²⁹⁸ PEPCON attorneys indicated that the company had plans to rebuild its factory, but that construction would take place in an undetermined location outside of the City.²⁹⁹ Only one week after the blast, Kerr-McGee announced that it would resume the production of ammonium perchlorate at the BMI facility.³⁰⁰ City leaders were frustrated by their inability to exercise control over the industrial plant that, after thirty years, still remained outside of the City’s jurisdiction.³⁰¹ Angry newspaper editorials simultaneously argued for the immediate annexation of the BMI facility, and the expulsion of the industrial plants from the Las Vegas Valley.³⁰² Henderson’s City Council was inundated with calls for more stringent regulation of the industrial facility while others demanded that the City emphasize the newer, more residential side of Henderson

and abolish the industrial plants altogether.³⁰³ Despite the widespread uncertainty regarding the future of the BMI project, Kerr-McGee returned to the production of ammonium perchlorate on June 11, 1988.³⁰⁴ One month later, it was announced that PEPCON had chosen a site near Cedar City, Utah, to relocate its ammonium perchlorate production facility.³⁰⁵

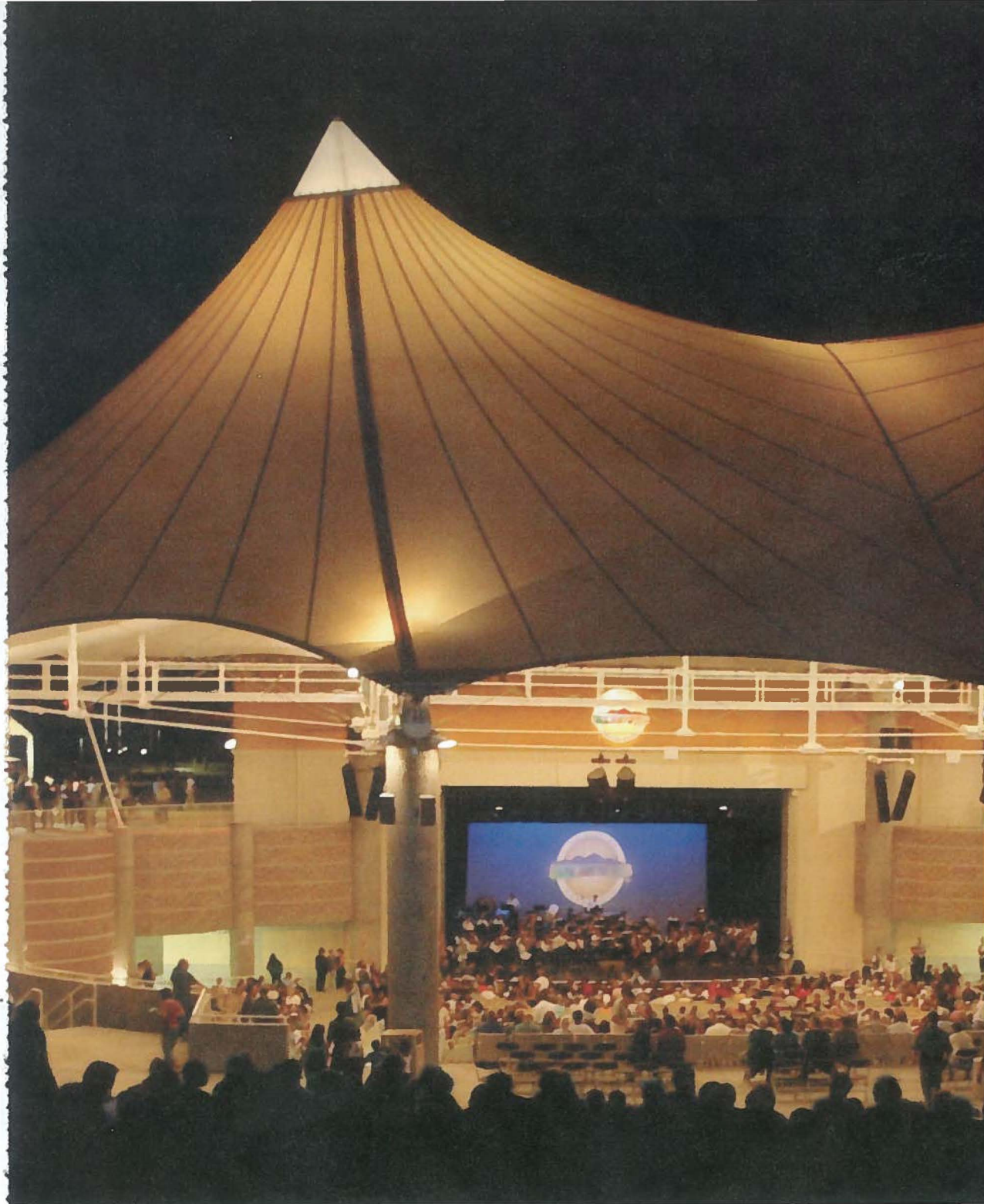
The explosion also stirred sectional passion within the City's limits. Many Green Valley residents who, prior to the blast, had been largely unaware of Henderson's industrial nature were now opposed to the existence of the industrial facility for fear that the tragedy could be repeated. They sought to distance themselves from the City's industrial character. Green Valley residents began to take notice of the streams of tanker cars moving through Green Valley on their way from the BMI facility. With little to lose, residents of the older portions of Henderson sought to defend the industrial facilities with which the City had long been associated. Undoubtedly, the City owed its very existence to the industrial facility. There would have been no Henderson had the plants not been constructed in the barren desert between Boulder City and Las Vegas. Indeed, Henderson made its name in Southern Nevada as an industrial center and that status allowed for the City's continued growth. The diversification of the City's economy, which gradually reduced its heavy dependence upon industry, was made possible by the very existence and viability of the BMI facilities. Despite these realities, the explosion of the PEPCON plant marked a conscious and permanent decision by the City's leaders to shift Henderson's identity from that of Southern Nevada's industrial center.



*Jack Jeffrey, Henderson Councilman, 1971-1974
and State Assemblyman, 1975-1990*

A series of minor industrial accidents at the BMI facility in 1988 and 1989 only contributed to the controversy. A small fire erupted at the TIMET Plant in September 1988, but was quickly contained. Residents were also startled when a sodium chlorate tank exploded at the Kerr-McGee plant in January 1989.³⁰⁶ Henderson's State Assembly representative, Jack Jeffrey, introduced Assembly Bill 63 requiring the

State's Department of Industrial Relations to investigate worker complaints of hazardous conditions at industrial facilities. The bill further required that the State list companies that handled hazardous materials.³⁰⁷ In March, Nevada's Congressional representatives, Jim Bilbray and Barbara Vucanovich, reintroduced a bill that had expired in the previous Congress, calling for the sale of seventeen thousand acres of federal land near Apex, north of Las Vegas, to Clark County. By May, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted for the passage of the bill.³⁰⁸ The land became an industrial facility, eliminating the need for an industrial site in Henderson but keeping the plants, and the jobs it provided to Nevada's residents, in the State. While the BMI facility has yet to signal its intention to extricate itself from the City and its environs, many Henderson residents view the facility as a symbol of the City's past.



A PLACE TO
CALL
Home

CHAPTER 6

By the early 1980's, suburban residential development had replaced heavy industry as the key to Henderson's prosperity. The growth and development of the City's ever-changing periphery was typified by the construction of Lake Las Vegas. The man-made lake, just four miles from Lake Mead, was in the planning stages since 1983; however, construction of the three and a half million dollar lake did not begin until 1989. The proposed lake was situated on land that had once belonged to Carlton Adair, the developer behind the never-realized Lake Adair.³⁰⁹ Planners sought to combine over two thousand two hundred acres of Mediterranean-themed housing, resort hotels, and



Lake Las Vegas, circa 1990's

golf courses on the ten miles of shoreline that surrounded a three hundred and twenty acre lake.³¹⁰ Initial construction involved the installation of two pipelines, both eighty-four inches in diameter, which diverted water from the Las Vegas Wash and carried it for two miles under the proposed Lake Las Vegas, eventually depositing into Lake Mead.³¹¹ Construction of the diversionary pipes was completed in February 1990, and water was successfully diverted from the wash and into Lake Mead.³¹² The Washington Construction Company completed work on the earthen dam in January 1991, which spanned four thousand

two hundred feet and rose to over two hundred feet.³¹³ The reservoir, covering three hundred and twenty acres, was filled by October 1992.³¹⁴

As development progressed, Lake Las Vegas was divided into two developments, NorthShore and SouthShore, which amounted to an additional four billion dollar investment on the part of developers. The five hundred and three acre, guard-gated SouthShore represented the initial residential and resort evolution at the lake project, offering roughly four hundred and fifty home sites, in addition to a corresponding number of townhomes, condominiums, and golf villas.³¹⁵ The lots alone sold from three hundred and fifty thousand to more than two million dollars. Developers contracted with veteran golfer and course designer Jack Nicklaus for the signature SouthShore Golf Club, which opened in 1995.³¹⁶ In 1998, the NorthShore received its own Nicklaus signature course, Reflection Bay and the premium, one hundred fifty million dollar Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas Resort, complete with beach and marina.³¹⁷ Development at the lake continued with the addition of the Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas, a luxury hotel and spa. By 2003, the developers were in negotiations for The Falls Golf Club, designed by the legendary golfer Tom Weiskopf.



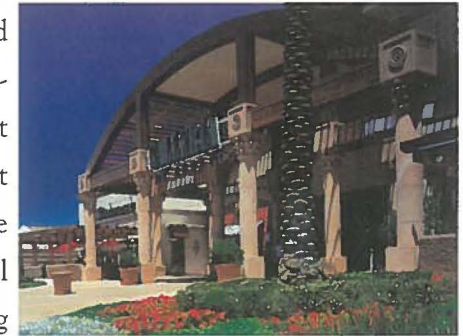
An aerial photograph of the undeveloped area of Sunset, Stephanie and Warm Springs Roads in May 1994.



In 2003, the same site boasts the largest retail corridor in the City with over two million square feet of retail space.



Although the City has continued to benefit from the influx of tax revenue and prestige that accompanied the rise of Lake Las Vegas as a major, exclusive master-planned community, the City has also experienced profound development in the City's geographic center. This area previously occupied the barren landscape that divided the City's downtown and the Green Valley development to its west. City officials were supportive when the Forrest City Rental Properties Corporation announced the construction of The Galleria at Sunset in May 1990. The site of the proposed construction was located north-west of the intersection at Stephanie Street and Sunset Road. Plans called for the construction of a two-level shopping facility encompassing more than 1.1 million square



Galleria at Sunset located at the corner of Stephanie and Sunset Roads

feet, with an estimated price tag of one hundred and five million dollars. The demand for a strong retail center, such as a mall, had been identified as far back as 1969 when the City hired a management consultant firm to formulate the City's master plan.³¹⁸ More than a convenience to the Henderson community, the proposed mall, with more than two hundred stores, ensured millions of dollars in annual tax revenue for the City and provided its residents with approximately one thousand jobs.³¹⁹ Although ground was broken for the mall in 1994, construction on the project did not actually begin until February 1995. The project's developers guaranteed that the mall would open on February 28, 1996, and they kept their promise.³²⁰ City Attorney

Shauna Hughes remembers, “One of the greatest commercial evolutions was the mall ... we no longer had to leave Henderson for anything, really.”³²¹



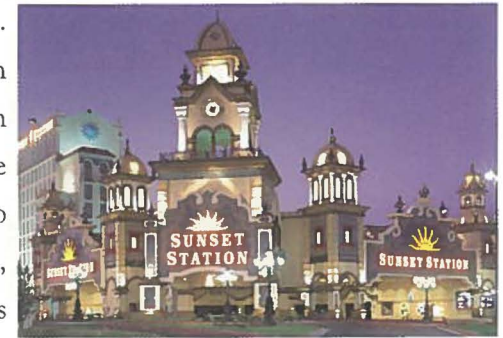
Valley Auto Mall, the 'world's largest auto mall'

The development of additional retail space in Henderson's central region progressed to the south and east as the eighty-acre Valley Auto Mall was constructed. The Valley Auto Mall initially housed fifteen auto dealerships and cost approximately seventy-five million dollars.³²² Developers estimated that the Valley Auto Mall would

eventually provide the City with more than two thousand jobs, in addition to tax receipts generated by the anticipated one billion dollars in revenue. More importantly, the Auto Mall's developers, at the request of the Henderson City Council, scrapped their plans to name their venture the Las Vegas Auto Mall and ultimately, chose to name it Valley Auto Mall.³²³

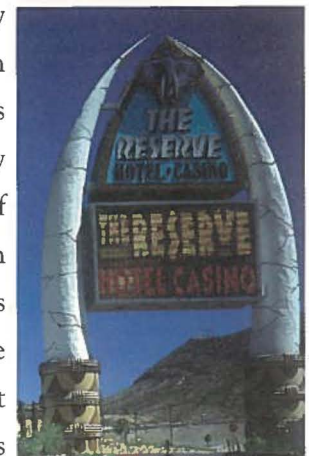
The development of a thriving retail space ushered in an intensive period of commercial and residential development within the City's geographic center and further diversified Henderson's economy. In 1994, the Henderson City Council approved construction of the Sunset

Station Hotel and Casino. Plans called for a seventeen story, fifteen-hundred-room hotel, casino, and movie theatre on land adjacent to the Galleria at Sunset, bordering Sunset Road's southern expanse.³²⁴ Just as



Sunset Station, circa 1997

Sunset Station opened in June 1997 to a very enthusiastic welcome, construction began on another major resort and hotel in the City's core area. Plans for The Reserve, a sixty million dollar safari-themed gaming resort of two hundred rooms, was announced in October 1995. The resort opened to visitors in February 1998.³²⁵ Development of the Green Valley Ranch Station Casino, located at the I-215 and Green Valley Parkway, was announced in December 1995. The upscale,



The Reserve, circa 1998

three hundred million dollar resort, like the Sunset Station property that had preceded it, included a hotel of eight hundred rooms and a movie theater, in addition to a luxury spa and gourmet restaurants. Despite the



Green Valley Ranch, circa 2001

close proximity of the entertainment center to a large residential population, and the resistance of many in the community, the Green Valley Ranch Station Casino opened in December 2001, providing the community with another eleven hundred jobs.³²⁶

Even with this pace of development, Henderson's population was still divided geographically, largely due to the lack of a common transportation infrastructure. Prior to the establishment of the I-215 beltway, Henderson's eastern residents relied on US 95 (which divided east and west). Yet, for those on the City's western periphery, besides the surface streets, the Las Vegas Strip and Fremont area were simply more accessible via Lake Mead Boulevard and SR 146, which intersected US I-15. With the advent of the two hundred million dollar I-215 beltway, Henderson's western neighborhoods were gradually connected together via a meandering route that circumscribed

the City's southern boundary. Initially, the I-215 only went as far west as Warm Springs Road and connected residents to the US I-15 and the McCarran International Airport, via Warm Springs Road. Construction of this initial stretch of the I-215 began in 1992, and was completed by March of 1995.³²⁷ The I-215 was extended as far as Windmill Lane, and the beltway inched closer to Henderson by October 1995.³²⁸ Construction on the next segment of the beltway lasted almost two



System to System interchange connecting I-215 to I-515/US 93- US 95, completing the southern beltway to full freeway standards

years, and by February of 1997, the Clark County Public Works Department opened a significant portion of the beltway that extended to Eastern Avenue and bisected Henderson's western perimeter.³²⁹ The beltway continued to expand throughout the remainder of the 1990s: from Eastern Avenue to Pecos Road in August 1997; from Pecos Road to Green Valley Parkway by July of 1999; and finally, to Gibson Road by

April 2000. In 2003, the Nevada Department of Transportation began construction on an extension of the Beltway that, via an interchange, will eventually connect the I-215 beltway to US 95.³³⁰ Ultimately, the completion of the I-215 beltway through Henderson's western expanses and the development in the City's geographic center and on its peripheral boundaries, strengthened Henderson's connection with the greater Las Vegas Valley and forged Henderson's unique identity.

The most astounding and, undoubtedly, the most important aspect of Henderson's recent history was the exponential growth in population throughout the 1990s. Although the City had annually experienced a steady rise in the number of residents, the City experienced a noticeable growth in population that coincided with the development of the Green Valley master-planned community in the 1980s.³³¹ In fact, the City's population had almost tripled, growing from just over twenty-three thousand residents in 1980 to more than sixty-four thousand residents in 1990.³³²

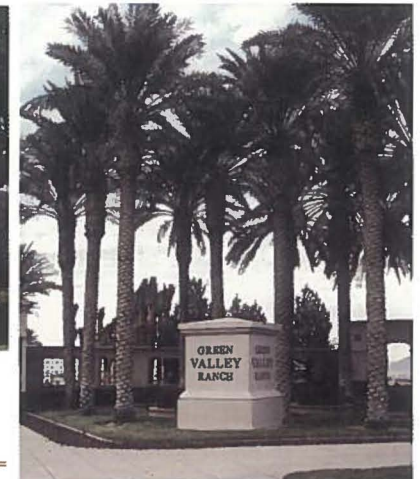
Home

Amazingly, by 1993, census officials estimated Henderson's population had increased to ninety thousand. The City's demographer estimated that Henderson's 1994 population had eclipsed the one hundred thousand mark.³³³ Then, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that in 1995 Henderson was the fastest-growing city in the United States, increasing in population size by more than fifty-seven percent between 1990 and 1994.³³⁴ The phenomenal growth continued, and by July 1996, the City's demographer estimated the population to be more than one hundred twenty-eight thousand residents.³³⁵ Eventually, the City of Henderson surpassed Reno, known as the "Biggest Little City in the World," as the second largest city in the State with 177,030 residents. Henderson surpassed Reno by an initial margin of only one hundred and twenty residents.³³⁶ Nevertheless, Henderson's growth throughout the 1990's, a decade during which the City was the fastest growing city in the nation, was nothing short of phenomenal.

In 2003, the 89052 zip-code area, which lies to the south and east of St. Rose Parkway in western Henderson, accounted for the largest population increase of any zip-code area in the City. Created in the year 2000, the 89052 area encompassed one of Henderson's largest master-planned communities, Del-Webb's Anthem, and grew by almost six thousand new residents between 2002 and 2003. Anthem and its surroundings accounted for over one-half of the City's total estimated population growth of ten thousand new residents.³³⁷ Local officials estimate that within the next twenty years, the City's population will climb close to four hundred thousand residents, based upon the number of vacant residential parcels as of 2003.³³⁸



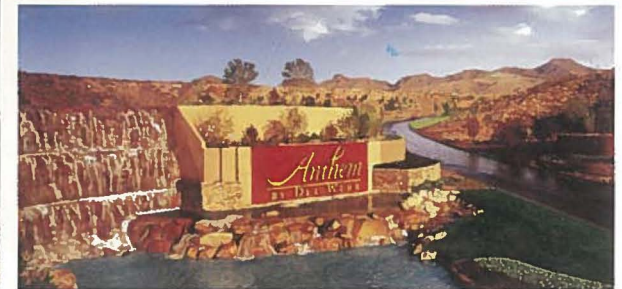
*Entrance to
Seven Hills
Community on
St. Rose Parkway*



Entrance to Green Valley Ranch Community



*MacDonald Ranch off Horizon Ridge
Drive and Valley Verde Drive*



*Entrance to Anthem Community located
on South Eastern and Anthem Parkway*

With this great influx of people to the City of Henderson throughout the 1990s, a greater percentage of Henderson's population has attained more college degrees and graduate degrees per capita than the Clark County average, according to the Nevada Development Authority.³³⁹

Coincidentally, Henderson has the highest median household income in the Las Vegas Valley, and exceeds the County average by more than fifteen thousand dollars.³⁴⁰ Much of these encouraging statistics can be

attributed to the influx of a more diverse, and in some cases, more educated population. Yet, Father Caesar Caviglia, who in the 1970s and 80s had aggressively advocated for the establishment of a community college campus in Henderson assuredly deserves a share of the credit. He was honored for his contributions to the educational development of the community when the University and Community College System of Nevada announced plans for the Caesar J. Caviglia Academic Computing Building in January of 2000. The seventeen million dollar building is located at the Community College's Henderson Campus and serves students at the community college and from the adjacent Foothill High School.³⁴¹ Officials had long sought to lure a state college to the City. Most notably, Mayor French was unsuccessful in his 1957 attempt to bring an extension campus from the University of Nevada to the dormitories at Victory Village. Despite his ongoing success of the community college's Henderson campus, Henderson's officials continued to advocate for the establishment of a state college within the City's limits.



*Community College of Southern Nevada
Henderson campus located at US-95 and College Drive*



Nevada State College located at US 95 and Nevada State Drive

Thus, in 1999, Henderson's Nevada State College began with Assembly Bill 220, which set an aggressive deadline for the development and implementation of a state college in Henderson and a three-tier system among the State's institutions of higher learning.³⁴² Under the proposed three-tier system, a state college would create a new level of higher education in Nevada, assuming a role between the various community colleges and the University of Nevada system. The Bill called for a three-person panel of state and local educators who, under the supervision of the Board of Regents, sought to increase the number of Nevada high school seniors that moved onto college within one year of graduation.³⁴³ The panel determined that Nevada's colleges would serve an additional seventy thousand by 2010, and that over ninety percent of the anticipated student increase would originate from Southern Nevada. Furthermore, the panel concluded that without a third state university, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) would be unable to meet this demand.³⁴⁴ Regent Mark Alden claimed that by establishing a state college in Henderson, which was expected to grant only bachelor's degrees, the

Home

regents would alleviate the strain on UNLV and allow the University to move towards a stronger identification as a research university.³⁴⁵ Thus, in December 1999, the Board of Regents unanimously approved a proposal calling for the establishment of a four-year college in Henderson.³⁴⁶ Thereafter, the regents chose Richard Moore, former president of the Community College of Southern Nevada, as the president of the new state college in Henderson.³⁴⁷

With a mandate from the Board of Regents and a new president in place, plans for the state college began to take shape. Regents sought input from students in the State's university and high school systems, and endeavored to involve Henderson's residents in the design and development of Nevada's newest college. The City Council contracted with the regents to provide land for the state college, and both ensured that the development of the college was to be a statewide affair.³⁴⁸

Throughout February 2000, the State conducted a series of town hall meetings regarding the proposed state college, most of which focused upon various issues such as the name of the university, funding, location, and curriculum.³⁴⁹ By April 2000, the regents settled on a permanent name for the new college and approved a site for the future construction of the Nevada State College at Henderson (NSC).³⁵⁰

Black & Gold
A PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS OF NEVADA STATE COLLEGE
FALL 2000 VOL. 1 NO. 1

New Building Taking Shape
Liberal Arts Building set for August 2006 opening

Gearing Up for Graduation
Notes from Nevada State College's first graduating class

First Edition of the Nevada State College Newsletter, "Black and Gold"

Regents estimated that the costs for classrooms and administration would amount to nearly twenty-six million dollars, and a new library was anticipated to cost almost seventeen million dollars.³⁵¹ Unfortunately, the previous budget commitments prohibited the State from funding much of the new college's proposed expenditures, and the regents approved an initial operating budget of \$549,512.³⁵² Following Richard Moore's resignation in February 2002, former president of the Utah Valley State College, Kerry Romesburg, was chosen by a panel to serve as the president of the NSC during the summer of 2002.³⁵³ College officials had hoped to open the school year with at least five hundred students. Yet, classes began on September 3, 2002, at a temporary facility in Henderson's Mission Hills neighborhood, with only one hundred and eighty full-time and part-time students.³⁵⁴ As the college prepared for its second year in operation, efforts to meet the goal of five hundred registered students continued to challenge administrators. By July of 2003, the Nevada State College at Henderson cited the enrollment of approximately five hundred students for the fall semester, 2003.³⁵⁵



"Living the American Dream" 50th Anniversary Celebration from Liberty Pointe



50th Anniversary Celebration Parade Float
City Officials, from left to right, Councilmen Andy Hafen and Jack Clark,
Mayor James Gibson, Councilmen Amanda Cyphers and Steve Kirk

April 2003 marked the City's 50th anniversary as an incorporated city. Henderson's 50th anniversary was a time for reflection upon its past and a celebration of the City's history. Looking back over Henderson's past fifty years, much has changed. The City has grown in both acreage and population. The industrial plant still occupies a large piece of property in the center of the City. Yet, this facility has never been incorporated into Henderson's boundaries. The fate of the industrial facility is not so closely intertwined with the fortunes of Henderson's many and various residents as it once was. Henderson's economy has diversified, along with its population. Residents no longer have to leave the City to shop, dine at a restaurant (five star or otherwise), visit a museum, attend a gallery opening, stroll through a park, see a movie or concert, attend a class, or participate in one of any number of activities that were, previously, unavailable within the City's limits. In 2003, to leave Henderson is largely a matter of personal choice. Driving this freedom of choice has been the incredible growth. The availability of relatively inexpensive and plentiful federal land has spurred this growth. Many national, state, and local officials recognized from a very early stage in the City's

development that land and a diversified economy were the vehicles for Henderson's forceful ascension to prominence among Nevada's leading cities. Henderson is no longer an island unto itself. Rather, the City is an integral part of the Las Vegas Valley, Southern Nevada, and the State at large.



Henderson
Bird Preserve



From humble beginnings, Henderson today is the second largest city in



Nevada and is nationally known for its premiere parks, master planned residential communities, and quality of life.



For thousands of new residents each year, Henderson is truly "living the American Dream."

50th Anniversary Time Capsule



In January of 2003, a special citizen committee was appointed to organize the collection of contributions for the City's 50th Anniversary Time Capsule.

Various items were submitted from nearly 100 contributors, including citizens, local schools, businesses, community organizations, government representatives, and the City

Archives. Each item was carefully selected to represent life in Henderson and was submitted in the form of historical photographs, articles, school memorabilia, mementos, and various items representing the community's heritage.



Time Capsule Dedication Ceremony
Saturday, June 7
9:00 am - 11:00 am
11:00 am - 1:00 pm
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
City Hall Main Entrance
340 Water Street, Henderson, NV 89015
Please join us for an ice cream social and a 50th-style Sock Hop celebration immediately following the ceremony.
For additional information, please call 562-4961.



- ~ Time Capsule Contributors June 7, 2003 ~**
- Educational Institutions**
Aggie Roberts Elementary
C.T. Sewell Elementary
David Cox Elementary
Edna Thomas Elementary
Ellis L. Wolf Elementary
Eves McDowell Elementary
Frank Longing Elementary
Gibson Elementary
Glen Taylor Elementary
Gordon McCrea Elementary
Harriet Troon Elementary
J. Marlee Walker International
Jan Thayer Elementary
John A. Donley Elementary
John C. Windbergh Elementary
Larisa Katterman Elementary
Miss Mack Elementary
Robert Taylor Elementary
Selma F. Bartlett Elementary
Sun H. Heavens Elementary
Ulla Newton Elementary
W. Mahlon Brown Junior High
Rob Miller Middle School
Crescenton Junior High
Lyle W. Burkholder Junior High
Thurman White Middle School
Baker High
Franklin High
Silverado High
CCSN
- Community Organizations**
ARMA-Danett Dawn Chapter
American War Mothers
Chico Brown Italia WWII Veterans Association
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Black Mountain Stake
Clark County Museum Guild
Daughters of Utah Pioneers
Henderson Branch Association
Henderson Boys and Girls Club
Henderson Chamber of Commerce
Henderson District Public Libraries
Henderson Flag Football
Henderson Senior Center
Kwanza Club of Greater Henderson
Marine Corps League - Black Mountain Detachment
National Charity League
Order of the Eastern Star
Rotary International
SAFE House
St. Peter the Apostle Church
USSA Baseball of Henderson
- Citizens**
Wanda Bachman
Susan Barlett
Betsy Beaman
Toni Carter
Rhea Johnson
Dorinda Jones
Diane Lambach
Karen Marconi
Joyce Nea
Tina Smith
Lori Taylor
- Henderson Businesses**
Business Developer Services
Downtown Henderson Business Association
Edmonds Casino
Henderson Home News
Hynes Registry Lake Las Vegas Resort
Kerr-McCree Chemical LLC
Lake Las Vegas
The Law Firm Company
LaPorta Insurance Agency
Railroad Pass Hair and Salon
Ranchers Club Casino
The Rac-Carbon Lake Las Vegas
St. Rose Dominican Hospital
TYMEX
- Living the American Dream - Photo, Essay & Art Student Contributors**
Diana Hunt
Stephanie Tate
Ashley Carr
Cody Labadie
Ashley Kerwin
Janice Winters



Proclamation

- Whereas, on April 16, 1953, the City of Henderson was officially incorporated with 7,410 citizens covering approximately 14 square miles; and
- Whereas, for 50 years Henderson has been an ideal place for people to experience the American dream, raise families, live, work, and retire; and
- Whereas, the City of Henderson has become the second largest city in Nevada and one of the fastest growing cities in America with more than 220,000 people and encompassing more than 94 square miles; and
- Whereas, Henderson is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a yearlong celebration to help residents and others learn about and appreciate our City's heritage; and
- Whereas, this Time Capsule Ceremony is part of the 50th anniversary celebration, to help us all reflect on the things that have made our city great and to look forward to a bright and promising future; and
- Whereas, the Time Capsule contains a myriad of items donated from the City Archives, local schools, Henderson businesses, community organizations, government representatives, and our citizens; and
- Whereas, these items have been carefully selected to represent life in Henderson and to embody the spirit of our great city for our citizens to open and share on June 7, 2053; and
- Whereas, this event will help memorialize our 50th anniversary celebration and span the bridge of time touching our past, present, and future;

NOW, THEREFORE, WE DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the 7th Day of June, 2003, as a day in honor of the City of Henderson's 50th Anniversary Time Capsule Ceremony, and do hereby dedicate and seal this Time Capsule to be opened by the citizens of Henderson in 50 years as they commemorate a century of Living the American Dream in Henderson, A Place to Call Home.

Mayor & City Council

James B. Gibson
James B. Gibson, Mayor

Jack E. Clark
Jack E. Clark, Councilman

Amanda M. Cyphers
Amanda M. Cyphers, Councilman

Arthur W. Hafen
Arthur W. Hafen, Councilman

Steven D. Kirk
Steven D. Kirk, Councilman

Time Capsule Committee

Colleen Bell
Colleen Bell

Cybil Caldwell
Cybil Caldwell

Carol Corbett
Carol Corbett

Leonard Hagar
Leonard Hagar

Dawn Jolliff
Dawn Jolliff

Joan Kerschner
Joan Kerschner

Pat Kovarik
Pat Kovarik

Christie Lewitt
Christie Lewitt

Karen Marconi
Karen Marconi

Kathy Romberg
Kathy Romberg

Hal Rothman
Hal Rothman

John Sanderson
John Sanderson

John Smith
John Smith

Dan Stewart
Dan Stewart

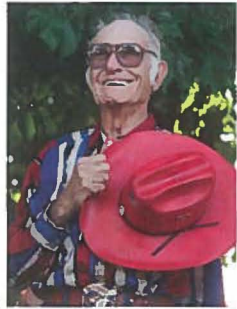
Lyle Taylor
Lyle Taylor

Est Thompson
Est Thompson

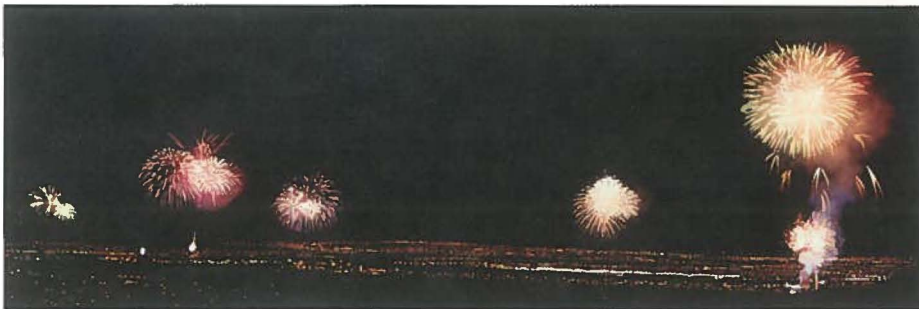
The City of Henderson is proud to dedicate this time capsule honoring our City's heritage and the incorporation of our city.

On June 7, 2003, the Henderson community joined together for the dedication of the City's Time

Capsule on the steps of City Hall. The dedication event was a special part of a yearlong celebration commemorating the City's 50 years as an incorporated city. The program included a display of the time capsule items, the Pledge of Allegiance led by Gordon McCaw Elementary School students, Mayor and Council remarks, McCaw Elementary students' rendition of "God Bless the USA," and the official Time Capsule Sealing. The ceremony was followed by an old fashioned ice cream social and sock hop sponsored by the Downtown Henderson Business Association.



The time capsule was encased in the first floor lobby of the new City Hall located at 240 Water Street and is marked by a bronze plaque commemorating the ceremony with the dedication sealing date and the unsealing date. The capsule is scheduled to be opened June 7, 2053, by the citizens of Henderson as they commemorate a century of Living the American Dream in Henderson.



LAS VEGAS SUN

Henderson preserves its past with capsule

By Don Koffle
LAS VEGAS SUN

Dozens of old photos and official documents, a baby boot and a Merrill Gene youth — all linked to Henderson's past and present — will spend the next 50 years inside a titanium box that best represents a piece of Henderson today.

The titanium time capsule, built by Henderson company Timet, will be sealed during a 7 a.m. ceremony at City Hall and won't be opened until 2053. It will be entombed inside a vault of the new City Hall addition within the next 50 to 60 days. To make sure the time capsule isn't lost, a commissioner said, it will be put on the wall to mark the capsule's location.

City Commissioner Andy Hobbs said the time capsule will give history residents an interesting window on the city from 2003 to 2053. Pictures of places and people taken over the last 50 years are among the items.

At 11:30 a.m., the capsule will be sealed. The 185 items going into the capsule will be taken to the city hall at 9 a.m. on June 7.

City Council members will be present at 9 a.m. to witness the sealing. The capsule will be sealed at 11:30 a.m. on June 7.

City Council members will be present at 9 a.m. to witness the sealing. The capsule will be sealed at 11:30 a.m. on June 7.

City Council members will be present at 9 a.m. to witness the sealing. The capsule will be sealed at 11:30 a.m. on June 7.

City Council members will be present at 9 a.m. to witness the sealing. The capsule will be sealed at 11:30 a.m. on June 7.



A titanium time capsule will be sealed during a 7 a.m. ceremony at City Hall and won't be opened until 2053. It will be entombed inside a vault of the new City Hall addition within the next 50 to 60 days.

To make sure the time capsule isn't lost, a commissioner said, it will be put on the wall to mark the capsule's location.

City Commissioner Andy Hobbs said the time capsule will give history residents an interesting window on the city from 2003 to 2053.

Pictures of places and people taken over the last 50 years are among the items.

At 11:30 a.m., the capsule will be sealed. The 185 items going into the capsule will be taken to the city hall at 9 a.m. on June 7.

City Council members will be present at 9 a.m. to witness the sealing. The capsule will be sealed at 11:30 a.m. on June 7.

Titanium Metals Corporation constructed and donated the custom-made four-foot tall, 120-pound capsule from titanium metal, representing the City's industrial heritage. The following TIMET workers were recognized at the dedication ceremony for their volunteer efforts in the creation of the capsule:

Bennie Pipes • Raymond Martinez • Michael Gallagher • Allen Craft

TIME CAPSULE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Andina Cox • Colleen Bell
- Clyde Caldwell • Carol Corbett
- Leonard Hagar • Dawna Joliff
- Joan Kerschner • Pat Kovarik
- Christie P. Leavitt •
- Karen Marconi • Hal Rothman
- John Sanderson • Tina Smith
- Dan Stewart • Lois Taylor
- Eva Thompson •





CITY OF HENDERSON
CITY HALL
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CENTER

AFTERWORD

We hope you've enjoyed sharing in this historic journey of the City of Henderson.

Our story truly is a tale of the American Dream. Created to help build and defend our nation, we've come a long way since those first dusty days, scratching out an existence as a tent city between Las Vegas and the Colorado River. Today Henderson is ranked among the leading residential communities in the United States with a strong economy and growing economic base.

We have developed a national reputation for planning our communities. Despite being consistently ranked as one of the fastest growing cities in the nation for more than 10 years, Henderson has been able to create a truly master-planned and community-oriented city for its residents. Our government is strong and stable, with long tenure among our elected Mayor and Council and among our senior management. We attract and retain highly qualified and professional employees. Our city organization is lean, efficient, and highly capable.

We have developed the largest retail corridor in the State of Nevada. We are the home of, and continue to attract, international business and commerce. We draw world-class resorts and hotels to our city. We are invested heavily in higher education and will soon have one of the most successful four-year institutions for higher education located in Henderson, with the expansion of the Nevada State College.

In short, Henderson has a great future and a remarkable past. For those of you not yet a part of this great American Dream, we invite you to join us and be a part of our next fifty years. Thank you for sharing in our memories.

Philip D. Speight
CITY MANAGER

SOCIAL HISTORY

Stories from our early pioneers

"They came of age during the Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America. Men and women whose everyday lives of duty, honor, achievement, and courage gave us the world we have today."

- Tom Brokaw, "The Greatest Generation"

This quote signifies what the early pioneers of Henderson were part of in this community's development. From the engineers and workers that were instrumental in creating the magnesium plant and the old Townsite, to our present day pioneers and their contributions, we all have had a part in making Henderson great.

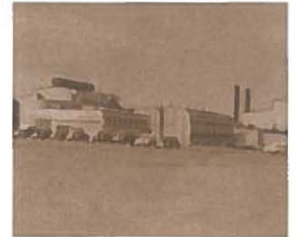
- Duane Laubach

SANDRA SMITH FRASER - 1942

Growing up in Henderson during the 1940's and early 1950's was a good experience. Coming together as we did from so many different place to build something new gave us a sense of community from the first. I remember walking alongside my mother who was pushing a baby carriage as we went about to meet the new neighbors... which included just about everyone in town.

ALICE JEFFREY PURVIS - 1942

When people ask me what it was like growing up in Henderson, I tell them... truthfully, it was wonderful. People were friendly and caring, and it was a safe environment. Our family of eight came to Henderson in early 1942 when our father obtained a job at Basic Magnesium, Inc. At that time there were no schools, no libraries, no television, no shopping or other entertainment. It wasn't unusual to see young and old alike hitchhiking to Las Vegas to see a movie or shop. A fence enclosed the Townsite, and we had to leave and return through a guard gate. Our parents would drive to the Safeway store in Las Vegas, spend about \$50, and that would fill the back seat of our car with groceries for the week. They complained how expensive it was to feed us. In October of 1942, our school was completed and consisted of a gym and about 8 classrooms. High school sports were big community events; in 1946 my sister and I were cheerleaders for the high school. I graduated in 1947, and there were 33 students in my class. After high school, I worked at Stauffer Chemical Company until I married Estes McDaniel.



SHARON BERRY - 1942

My family first came to Henderson in March 1942. There were no schools, stores, churches, or hospitals. There were a few houses and the plant. The first post office opened in January 1943, and the following fall, September 1943, our first school was built. It was built where the Henderson Convention Center now stands. To the best of my memory, the first building was the hospital, then came the gas





station on the corner of Boulder Highway and Lake Mead (then called BMI Road). We lived on California Way. There were wire fences all around us as the rest of the town was being built. We had two churches, St. Peter's Catholic



Church and the Community Church. I remember the Victory Theatre. Children could go to the theatre for a dime. Popcorn and a drink cost 15 cents. Our high school was called Victory High School, and the first graduating class in 1943 had about 16 graduates. I remember Dr. Starzinski would make house calls on foot carrying his black bag, and Boy Scouts would come around each Saturday to collect paper for the war effort. Everyone was very patriotic. We needed coupons issued by the government to buy shoes, food, gas, and just about everything, but I never heard anyone complain. It seemed that everyone had a family member fighting in the war. I was a member of the first graduating class from the new high school in 1954.

JACK JEFFREY - 1942

My father came here in 1942 for the construction of the plants. We came at the tail end of the Depression. Probably without the Depression there wouldn't be a lot of the old timers around here. People were really looking for work. Henderson provided a lot of employment opportunities, both for the construction of the plant and operation once the plants were built. Henderson was basically a blue-collar town. When my dad first came here there was a woman called Ma Wilson. She ran the cafeteria at Anderson Camp where they used meal tickets. She bought my father his first meal ticket and helped him pay his back union dues so he could go to work. That's the kind of people who were here. I don't think she ever lost a dime. I've often wondered where we would be if he hadn't run into someone like that when he first came to town.



DAYTON BARNEY - 1942

My father, Walter Barney, worked at BMI as a security guard. He lived in Anderson's Camp, which was housing provided for single men working at the plant. When the rest of the family arrived housing was very hard to find, so we had to move to North Las Vegas until there was space available at the government trailer park. I remember the two big snows in the winter of 1947 when the flattop houses gave way to nature.

JESSIE CHAFFIN JORGENSEN - 1942

My father moved here between 1940 and 1941 and lived in "tent city" until my mother, brother and I joined him in 1942. We lived in the first completed three-bedroom house at 227 Nebraska. The houses, built on curved streets, matched the contour of the mountain. My mother told me it was so the houses and streets could not be easily seen from the air. Our school was located where the Henderson Convention Center is now. We used to be taken out on the hill to watch the mushroom clouds from the Test Site. "Watching history being made," we were told.

MRS. JIM ANDERSON - 1942

Well, it was a dream of Hershel Trumbo's to have a golf course (Black Mountain Golf Course). He and others were able to get the property through Julian Moore at BMI. We remember that Hersh told my husband, "The dues will be \$15 a month, and they'll never be more." We all bought stock for around \$400, and we all picked rocks to help clear the course. It was quite a family affair.



ARTHUR AND ALICE ESPINOZA

(submitted by daughter Patty)

My father built and owned the City's first casino, the Royal Casino, located where the Eldorado Club is today. My parents later opened Ideal Appliance, a small store located on Army Street, and then Nevada Hardware. My father was also a former assemblyman in the Nevada Legislature. According to my uncle, Bill Peisker, my mother helped keep dad on an even keel in



Social History

all of his businesses. She was kind of a guiding light. We were fortunate that my parents were able to establish these businesses in Henderson in the early years.

MADALYN WATSON - 1946

Labor Day 1946, was a lucky day for the Watson family. Homeless and three children under 5, we arrived in Las Vegas and were able to stay at a motel where the Stratosphere now stands. Two days later my husband, Floyd, went to work at the Boulder Club for \$6 a day. On October 17, 1946, we finally came to Henderson. There was a population of about 3,000, and it was a wonderful, small town. I became active in my church, and I was a charter member in the St. Rose Dominican Auxiliary, as well as moderator of the young girls' auxiliary. In 1952, we bought our home on Victory Road. I think we are the only original owners in the three blocks between Water and Atlantic Streets.



JODY GALLOWAY HALL - 1943

The Galloways drove over Boulder Dam in their 1935 Chevy with a military escort! The car windows were rolled within an inch from the top, and no hands were allowed out of the car. Chuck thought it was the greatest fun ever, but the rest of us were nervous. Fay had a job at the Basic Magnesium Plant. We lived in Army trailers until a Townsite home was available. We had no phone in our home until late 1947 or '48. I recall Basic High School won the State basketball tournament in 1947, and many families drove out to the Tonopah Highway and honked horns all the way home! It's been a wonderful ride for 60 years.

DUANE LAUBACH - 1942

My family moved here from Okeene, Oklahoma via California. My father had read in an Oklahoma City newspaper that they were hiring people to work in various defense plants on the west coast. He was told if he came to California there would be a full-time job for him. Upon arriving in Los Angeles my father secured his paperwork, and he was told we were going

to a place called Las Vegas, Nevada where they were constructing a magnesium plant just outside of town. When we arrived in Las Vegas our first concern was where we were going to stay. We found lodging in a motel located on Fifth Street owned by a Las Vegas police officer. My father secured a job as a carpenter at the magnesium plant, and my mother worked as a bank teller at First National Bank of Nevada located on South Third Street. I was sent back to Oklahoma to finish the fifth grade and returned to Nevada in August of 1942. By then, 1000 Townsite homes had been built and were fully occupied. A grocery store, drug store, bowling alley, and pool hall had also been completed. The school was completed in late 1942. On Friday nights the gymnasium was used for a theater until late 1943 when the new Victory Theatre was completed.

DON BREICHEISEN - 1943

Our family moved from Welda, Kansas to Henderson in September of 1943. The town was formed around BMI (Basic Magnesium, Inc.).

The Victory Theatre was one of our favorite places.

Everyone could get out of the heat and enjoy themselves. The admission fee for Saturday afternoon was 9 cents for kids, 25 cents for students, and 40 cents for adults. The little kids sat in the front rows, and when the villain would come on they would throw the penny change they had received at the screen. I worked at the theatre with other students from Basic High School. I remember the grade school had just opened when we arrived. The high school didn't have an adequate number of desks, so we would go out to lunch and steal Joe Brower's apple boxes from Schulman's Store and take them to class to use as chairs. Joe caught us and wanted to know what we were doing with them. Joe came to school to see and said that he would take care of this. Soon afterward, we started receiving school desks.



DONNA HANSEN NEWTON - 1942

My first impression of Basic Townsite was awesome. I was eleven years old in 1942 when my family moved here from Chloride, Arizona. My family traveled across Boulder Dam as it was called in those days, to a brand new

home with indoor plumbing at 251 Kansas Avenue. My dad, Winnie "Pop" Hansen, worked as a guard at the plant from 1942 to 1949. Every Saturday night there were dances held in the cafeteria at the plant and whole families attended. I graduated in 1948 from Basic High School. In 1949, my dad joined the Clark County Sheriff's Department as deputy sheriff for Henderson. Hansen Street is named for my dad who was killed in the line of duty while working for the Sheriff's office.



LLOYD LEANY - 1945

We moved back to Henderson in the fall of 1945. We first lived in Carver Park. I was elected president of the teenage club, and one of my duties was to buy records for the dances held in the club. In October of that year, we were able to rent a home in the Townsite area. My mother was a cook working at and eventually becoming a partner in the Swanky Club. This was a supper club located on the right as one left Henderson toward Vegas. Her employers, and later partners, were Jack and Doris Mallory. I played football in my junior year at Basic High School. Las Vegas had the best football team around, and we were pretty nervous to play them. I remember taking a shop class. We had the best equipment a high school shop could have, including industrial equipment consisting of metal and wood lathes, precision grinders, and other high tech equipment. I graduated from Basic High School in 1947.



CAROL A. (DAVIDSON) BORN - 1942

When I was eight years old, my mother and I came to this area from Illinois so she could marry Roy H. Davidson. We arrived by train at the Union Railroad Station on Main and Fremont Streets. We began our journey to see our new home by way of the two-lane Boulder Highway. We drove up in front of a plain, gray government mobile home. It had a kitchen sink with running water but no toilet. Our residence changed sometime in 1943 to one of the Townsite houses located at 7 Arkansas Avenue. Television and

the atomic bomb were the significant happenings at the end of the 1940's and early 1950's. At Basic High School, students were ushered to the football field bleachers where we watched the atomic bombs detonated at the Nevada Test Site.



EDNA (LONGABAUGH) LEWIS - 1942

My family arrived in Henderson the summer of 1942. My father, Ed, was a guard at the plant and my mother, Marie, worked in the meat department of the only grocery store in town. I was a senior in the first graduating class at the high school. After high school, I went to work as a keypunch operator at the BMI plant and was later transferred to the Identification Department as a clerk-typist. There was gas rationing at the time, so getting to borrow the car from your parents was a big deal. For recreation we would go to Lake Mead, bowl at the local bowling alley, or go to the movies at the local theater. Our world changed with World War II. Living during that period was a meaningful experience.



JOHN AND HARRIET CLEMENTS - 1942

(submitted by son William)

My family moved to Henderson in 1942 and lived at 85 Texas Street. Dad was a steel worker at the BMI plant. Later he was the head maintenance man for the local high school. After his death in 1949 my mother returned to teaching. In those days parents lined up outside the classroom to register their child with the teacher of their choice. It seemed that the line to my mom's classroom formed first and was always the longest. After mom retired the Clark County School District named a school after her, namely, Harriet (Clements) Treem Elementary. She passed away in 1997.

JENNILEE GIBSON THAYER - 1941

My father, Fred D. Gibson, was one of the engineers sent to London, England to learn the production process of magnesium. On December 6, 1941, he and 15 other engineers left Las Vegas to points east and eventually London, England. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the

Social History

United States was at war. We were terrified. My mother was expecting her seventh child and doubted that she would ever see my father again. My dad did return to the U.S. safely and headed the start up of the BMI plant. My dad was eligible to rent a house in Henderson Townsite, and we moved to 330 Kansas. A big shock to me was that most people in Henderson did not have a phone. I started high school at Basic not knowing a soul. Ruth Ball, the school secretary, introduced me to Bobbie Jean Cummins and Armeda Apodaca. Another new friend was Venitia Odell. I was used to a student body between 700-800 students. Basic had a total of approximately 125 students. In 1945, when we played Las Vegas in football, Basic was the only team that season that scored against Las Vegas. Although the final score of the game was Las Vegas-56 and Basic-6, it still seemed like a victory. My younger brother and sister attended second and third grade at the Administration Building at Victory Village. There was a tunnel passageway under Boulder Highway which helped kids get back and forth safely. The Victory Theatre was our main entertainment. Since Lake Mead was so close, we spent a lot of time there during the warmer weather.



When the decision to liquidate BMI and sell the Townsite homes, many people were given the chance to own their own home. My husband and I paid \$3500 for our home at 146 Manganese with no down payment. Our monthly payment was \$35. My dad started a new company in Henderson called WEECO (Western Electrochemical Company). This company brought new life to Henderson and was the start of a varied chemical interest for the Southern Nevada economy.

WINNIE PRINCE - 1942

My husband, Pratt Prince, moved to Henderson after the Depression and started working at BMI as a guard. He lived in "tent city" until October 17, 1942, when I joined him. We lived at 43 Pacific Avenue. All grades K-12 attended school where City Hall and the Henderson Convention Center now

stand, and the gym was used for town dances. The Foodland grocery store, Marion and Van Valey's shoe



store, and Desert Wear were some of the stores along Market Street. Jean Burton had a beauty shop, and my husband had the barbershop. Jim Cornell owned the shoe repair business. Gas,



sugar, flour, and meat were all rationed. One privilege was that we didn't have to pay for water, so we always had a vegetable garden.

EDWARD RUTHERFORD - 1942

My father came to Basic Townsite in 1942 and lived at Anderson Camp until the rest of our family moved here to join him. We lived at 10 Basic Road. The school finally opened in October, and I was a freshman at that time. I recall our superintendent, Roy Petrie, told us at an assembly, "We don't have many things that we need, but by God we've got magnesium!" The Townsite area had about 1,000 homes, schools, and the plant. No weekend was complete without a dance at the high school gym. It was the Big Band era. My favorite jitterbugging partner was Connie Burkholder. I graduated from Basic High School in 1946.



KAY CRAWFORD DWYER - 1942

The summer of 1942...we arrived at our new home on the night of June 12, 1942. We had planned to arrive sometime after dark because of the blistering heat during the daylight hours. My father had taken a job at BMI as an accountant. That evening as we brought our furniture into our house, I remember laying down on paper runners that had been placed for protection on the new wooden floors. My dad turned on the swamp cooler, and when the pads were soaked with water we were able to go to bed and sleep in comfort. We lived at 3 Magnesium Street. There were no stores nor restaurants. The only public building was the post office located across from

where Wells Fargo Bank stands today. The Townsite area was built so that enemy aircraft could not spot it from the air. The houses were painted in desert colors, and the streets were designed so that they did not run perpendicular to each other. For security reasons there were no phones in individual homes. The only phones available were on poles throughout the town and were used for emergencies only. The entire Townsite complex was surrounded by a fence, and the only access was through gates that were secured by guards. The plant was the common tie for people. Eventually, with the opening of several churches and the school, people came together and friendships began that endure today. Many housewives began to enter the work force since the men were engaged in the war effort. My mother worked at Basic Magnesium along with other women who's job was to "bake bricks" that were used in the process of making magnesium metal.



DR. GEORGE LINDESMITH - 1942

When classes began at Basic High School in 1942 there were no inter-scholastic sports. In 1943, the school hired Estes McDoniel. He was an All-Conference halfback from the University of Arkansas and Basic's first football coach. Our field was not sodded, so parts of the field were like gravel. Coach McDoniel was a task master, but he molded a bunch of kids into a team that could play football. Our first season's schedule consisted of 6 games; we played three teams twice. Vegas was the strongest team in the State, but during our second game with them we played to a tie. This was the closest Basic came to a victory in the first three years. Frank Smoke was awarded First All Conference, Lindesmith Second Team All Conference, and



Tom Jekyl received Honorable Mention.

Our new coach for the second season was Gene Gfell. Gene had a remarkable football career. He played for Bowling Green University and then for the Cleveland Rams (before they moved to L.A.). He taught the linemen some of the tricks professional linemen used.

Our second season ended without a victory or a tie; however, team members Hanson, Ward, Coroneos, Rutherford, Aiken and Lindesmith all received mention on All Conference and All State teams.

MARGIE MARTINEZ - 1949

Moving to Henderson was exciting for our family. My husband, Gilbert, came to Henderson first via Muncie, Indiana, and my father later drove me here to meet up with him. We were encouraged to come to Henderson by my brother-in-law, Reynaldo Martinez, Sr., because of the job opportunities at the plant. We resided with my husband's family on Montana Way our first three weeks in Henderson. Ray came to Henderson earlier and previously resided in "tent city" on Boulder Highway. They both worked at the plants for so many years. I remember walking my three year old son to the drug store for ice cream in the early days. We also used to walk to church at St. Peter's on Boulder Highway. While my husband was working, I remember looking for a home in the Townsite. I remember picking up keys above Bill Byrne's store for three different homes. To be eligible for a Townsite home you were supposed to be working at the plant for at least three months. I recall walking with my son in his carriage to the different homes and finally chose our home on Washington Way. We moved in with just a crib and cedar chest. Our furnishings were sparse, but we were so happy to own our first home, a 2-bedroom Townsite. Each of our four children grew up on Washington Way, and I am still happy to be residing there today. Life has changed so much in Henderson, but I am surrounded by many of the same friends and neighbors I've had over the past 55 years.



NADINE (SIMMONS) TOBIN - 1943

In 1943 my family moved to Henderson. Some of my happiest memories included the theatre. I felt like it was my second home, especially on Saturdays when they had serials such as the Green Hornet or Charlie Chan. We lived on California Way, right across the street from St. Rose Hospital. Most of



Social History

the roads were dirt, and even though all the houses on our street were usually occupied, there weren't that many people in town. My father, Bruce



Harbert, was a guard at BMI. The BMI guards were considered the community's police department at that time. They patrolled the town and the Pittman area, named after Governor Pittman. I used to enjoy riding with my father to Manganese Ore in his squad car to check with the other guards who were on duty there. In the

summertime I recall a lot of the kids would hike up to Black Mountain. It seemed so far away.

EMMA GUTIERREZ CALL - 1941

It was 1941, and I was eleven years old when my family moved to Henderson. My father was employed at the BMI plant in Henderson. When we arrived here, it was like another world. There were no trees, streams or rivers, no green at all. It was flat, dry desert, and it was very hot. We lived in a tent located along Boulder Highway. Shortly afterwards we moved into a cabin located in Pittman. When the homes on Basic were finally finished, my family moved into one. I attended school at Basic School and recall when we used one building for all grades. I hardly recognize the city when I pass through the new areas. It is truly amazing how much Henderson has grown.



DORENE (TAFFY) RAUCH-MACKIE - 1943

My family arrived in Henderson in 1943 from Allentown, Pennsylvania. My father was employed by the Housing Authority as a groundskeeper. Originally, we lived in Victory Village, but then moved into a Townsite house at 318 Water Street. On the roof there was a strange device known as a swamp cooler. It was used to keep us cool in the summer. Early on, Henderson seemed so bleak and barren with naked mountains surrounding the city with no green fields, trees, orchards, or snow in the winter. The hot summers seemed intolerable. There was no home mail delivery, but everyone had P.O. boxes. I remember "Bank Night" at the movie theatre was held every Saturday night. I met my husband Robert W. Mackie at Basic High

School. We lived at 3 Colorado Way for 23 years. I cherish the memories and lasting friendships from those days.



BRENT HICKMAN - 1943

My family moved from Overton, Nevada in January 1942. I was 12 years old. The government had started a magnesium plant in a town named Basic near Las Vegas. Traveling from Las Vegas to Basic there were big tent camps that provided temporary housing for the workers of the plants. We lived at 151 Copper Street and later moved to 154 Manganese Street. Ralph and James Anderson were the first friends I made. Our schools were small and overcrowded and for a year or two we had half-day sessions.

Eventually, everyone got to know each other, and a feeling of closeness seemed to prevail. Growth soon came to the area which meant, for one thing, you didn't have to travel to Las Vegas for groceries. Soon we had a post office, pharmacy, theatre, and bowling alley (the pins were set up by hand – no automation at that time). I recall we used to buy 10 cent and 25 cent saving bond stamps that were later redeemed by the government. We raised a lot of money for the war effort, and everyone contributed whatever they could.

Old Town Reunion

We wanted to do something to recognize people in the community who were here in the 1940's for their foresight, so we decided to hold an "old town reunion" at the Paseo Verde Library.



Old Town Reunion

Duane Laubach contacted us to say he would like to see this group keep in touch and perhaps meet once a year or so to share stories of the early days of Henderson. The Old Town Reunion was the beginning of mailing list that has grown to nearly 300 names.



In September 2003, this group was invited to a dinner at the Clark County Museum and asked to share their memories of how it was to live here in the early days. The result has been



stories that provide insight only those who lived it could bring.

-Joan Kerschner



Long time residents and their families share memories and stories of the early days on Heritage Street. Clark County Museum in Henderson



CHAPTER ONE: DEFENSIVE MEASURES

- 1 Nash, Gerald D., World War II & The West Reshaping the Economy. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), Introduction, 3.
- 2 Moehring, Eugene P., Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1967. (Reno: University of Nevada Press), 13-14.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 123.
- 5 Nash, Gerald D., The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 23.
- 6 Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium, Incorporated and the Industrialization of Southern Nevada during World War II," (master's thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1971), 2. This thesis is available from the UNLV Library; R.H. Ramsey, "The Why and How of Basic Magnesium," Engineering and Mining Journal, (New York: 1943), 61. This article is on file at the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections. Henceforth, the acronym BRI shall refer to Basic Refractories, Incorporated.
- 7 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 2.
- 8 Danner, Ruth Fenstermaker, Gabbs Valley Nevada: Its History and Legend, (Gabbs, NV: Ruth Danner, 1992), 217.
- 9 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 2.
- 10 Magnesium, an element, appears on the Periodic Table of Elements and is known by the Atomic Symbol "Mg".
- 11 Nash, 122.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 122; See also Danner, Ruth Fenstermaker, Gabbs Valley Nevada: Its History and Legend, (Gabbs, NV: Ruth Danner, 1992).
- 13 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 3.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 15 Ramsey, 61; Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 6. Although President Hoover created the RFC in 1932 to bail out American industry during the Great Depression, it has often been incorrectly labeled as the first of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The Defense Plant Corporation, a subsidiary to the RFC, was created in 1938. The creation of the DPC was a precautionary measure aimed at expanding American industrial production in preparation for possible American involvement in world conflict. Henceforth, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation shall be referred to by the acronym RFC. Henceforth, the Defense Plant Corporation shall be referred to by the acronym DPC.
- 16 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," Nevada Highways and Parks, Volume XI, Number 1, (Carson City, Nevada, 1951), 30. A copy of this article is available from the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- 17 Henceforth, Basic Magnesium, Incorporated, shall be referred to by the acronym BMI.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 19 Phillip I. Earl, "Where Henderson Got Its Name," Nevada Appeal, October 24, 1982, 21; Ramsey, 61; "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 15; Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 10.
- 20 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 7.
- 21 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 6; Ramsey, 11.
- 22 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 6.
- 23 Ramsey, 61; Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 13.
- 24 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 23.
- 25 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 13; Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 23.
- 26 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 13.

- 27 Ramsey, 61; Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 12.
- 28 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 23.
- 29 Jeffrey, Jack, interview by Henderson (Nevada) Mayor James Gibson, Henderson, Nevada, 1 February 2003, 8.
- 30 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 18.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 23, 24.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 25, 26.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 35 Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, "History of Henderson, Nevada, Part II," Henderson Industrial Days, (Henderson, Nevada: Henderson Chamber of Commerce, 1965), 6. This document is available at the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- 36 Sadovich, "History of Henderson, Nevada, Part II," 6.
- 37 The Basic Bombardier, December 17, 1942, 26.
- 38 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 15.
- 39 Anderson, Betty Lou, interview by Henderson (Nevada) Mayor James Gibson, Henderson, Nevada, 1 February 2003, 5.
- 40 Sadovich, "History of Henderson, Nevada, Part II," 30.
- 41 Sadovich, 32.
- 42 Sadovich, 33.
- 43 Sadovich, 26.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 45 Anderson, Betty Lou, interview, 4.

CHAPTER TWO: BUILDING A FUTURE

- 46 "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 6.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- 48 Robert L. Taylor, "The Origin and Development of the Educational System of Henderson, Nevada," (master's thesis, Utah State Agricultural College, Logan, Utah, 1957), 10. This thesis is available from the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- 49 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 36; Taylor, "The Origin," 13.
- 50 Taylor, "The Origin," 13-14.
- 51 Henceforth, the acronym WECCO shall refer to the Western Electrochemical Company.
- 52 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 35-36.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- 55 Byrne was appointed President as of the September 21, 1945, meeting of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce.
- 56 Dennis Havens, "The Henderson Chamber of Commerce: A History," Henderson Industrial Days, (Henderson, Nevada: Henderson Chamber of Commerce, 1976), 3. This document is available from the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- 57 Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, "History of Henderson Nevada Part III," Henderson Industrial Days, (Henderson, Nevada: Henderson Chamber of Commerce, 1966), 15. This document is available from the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- 58 Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 39.
- 59 The Las Vegas Army Air Field was renamed as Nellis Air Force Base on April 30, 1950 after William Harrell Nellis, a former resident of Searchlight, and Las Vegas, Nevada. Nellis, an Army Air Force Officer, was killed in battle over Luxembourg on December 27, 1944 and the Las Vegas Army Air Field was renamed in honor of his bravery and outstanding performance in WWII.

For more information on the Nellis Air Force Base, please refer to the following website <http://www.nellis.af.mil/history2.html>.

- ⁶⁰ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 42; Sadovich, "History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 15.
- ⁶¹ Hogan, Michael J., *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954*. (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161.
- ⁶² Henceforth, the War Assets Administration shall be referred to as the WAA.
- ⁶³ Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 19.
- ⁶⁴ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 40-41; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 20-21.
- ⁶⁵ War Assets Administration, "Housing Known as Townsite, Plancor 201-H Located at Henderson Nevada and Adjacent to Metals Plant" (Washington, D.C.: 1946). "Plancor 201-H" was a code name given to the Basic Magnesium project by the federal government. This document is available from the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections.
- ⁶⁶ LaPorta, Lou, interview by Henderson (Nevada) Mayor James Gibson, Henderson, Nevada, 1 February 2003, 4.
- ⁶⁷ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 42; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 19.
- ⁶⁸ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 42; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 19.
- ⁶⁹ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 42.
- ⁷⁰ "St. Rose Dominican Hospital, Celebrating a Healthy History," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, 7-8.
- ⁷¹ Anderson, Betty Lou, interview, 6.
- ⁷² Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 43; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 21.
- ⁷³ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 43; "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 15.
- ⁷⁴ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 44; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 24.
- ⁷⁵ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 44; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 24.
- ⁷⁶ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 44; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 24.
- ⁷⁷ Eric Moody, *Southern Gentleman of Nevada Politics: Vail M. Pittman*, vol. 13 of Nevada Studies in History and Political Science (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), 69.
- ⁷⁸ Henceforth, the initials BMI, the former abbreviation for Basic Magnesium, Incorporated, will represent Basic Management, Incorporated.
- ⁷⁹ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 46; Sadovich, "The History of Henderson, Nevada, Part III," 27.
- ⁸⁰ Moody, *Southern Gentleman*, 71.
- ⁸¹ Sadovich, "Basic Magnesium," 46; "Henderson—From Desolate Desert to a City of Destiny," 15.
- ⁸² Havens, 11.
- ⁸³ Havens, 11.
- ⁸⁴ Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, "History of Henderson, Nevada, Part IV," *Henderson Industrial Days*, (Henderson, Nevada: Henderson Chamber of Commerce, 1967), 10. Available at the UNLV Library Department of Special Collections; For more information on the Lanham Act and public housing, please refer to "Public Housing In the United States." Available online at <http://crm.cr.nps.gov/archive/25-01/25-01-16.pdf>.

CHAPTER THREE: AND A CITY EMERGES

- ⁸⁵ LaPorta, Lou, interview, 5.
- ⁸⁶ *Henderson 2003: Economic and Demographic Overview*, (Henderson: The City of Henderson, 2003), Volume 6, 2; "It's Official! The Population of Henderson is 5324," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, June 8, 1950, 1.
- ⁸⁷ "BMI Firms to Get Housing," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, February 3, 1950, 1. Editorial, *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, August 17, 1950.
- ⁸⁸ "Rental Freeze on Here—Houses for Plant Workers," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, October 5, 1950, 1.
- ⁸⁹ "Devlin Group Forms, Seeks Post Office Block for Civic Center," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, November 16, 1950, 1; Morry Zenoff, "Morry's Story," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, November 16, 1950, 1; "Letter to Stub Dubravac From Betterment Group," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, November 16, 1950, 1.
- ⁹⁰ Henceforth, the General Services Administration shall be denoted by the acronym "GSA."
- ⁹¹ "All Hands Agree on BMI," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, February 10, 1950, 1; "2 Contracts Signed; Harvey Fails to Get Aid," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, April 28, 1950, 1.
- ⁹² "Seek More Power For Plant in Order to Satisfy Would Be Contractors," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, Friday, April 7, 1950, 1.
- ⁹³ "2 Contracts Signed; Harvey Fails to Get Aid," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, April 28, 1950, 1.
- ⁹⁴ For more information on the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, please refer to their website <http://www.cfaluminum.com/docs/isgn0010.html>.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁹⁶ "Gov. Pittman Reveals a Possible WECCO 5 Million Expansion Here," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, July 5, 1950.
- ⁹⁷ The Munitions Board, created by Congress in 1947, served to streamline the numerous means of supply for the nation's armed forces. The Munitions Board was replaced in 1952 by the Defense Supply Management Agency. For more information on the Munitions Board, please visit the following web address: <http://www.dla.mil/history/history.html>.
- ⁹⁸ "WECCO Goes to Work! Expands to Answer Army Needs," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, March 15, 1951, 1.
- ⁹⁹ "National Lead Moves In as Henderson's Life Gets Busier," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, May 31, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ "Petition Here Seeks Better Housing Maintenance," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, January 25, 1951.
- ¹⁰¹ "Ben Church, Superintendent of Schools, Commends Parents," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, January 25, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰² Robert Taylor, "The Origin and Development of the Educational System of Henderson, Nevada," 41.
- ¹⁰³ "School Needs Will be Looked Into By CRC; May ask Legislature to Help," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, February 8, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰⁴ "Gov. Russell Hints Lessee Firms Will Buy Plant," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, February 15, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Governor Russell Refuses to Accept Pittman Appointees; Makes Own to CRC," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, February 8, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Franklin Says Henderson Homes Can Be Bought Now," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, May 26, 1950, 1.
- ¹⁰⁷ "Harmon Recommends Incorporated City for Henderson," *Henderson (Nevada) Home News*, March 23, 1951.

- ¹⁰⁸ "This May Be The Answer," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 29, 1951, 1; "Henderson Tenants Council Proposal Presented to CRC," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 5, 1951, 1; "Legion Here Asks CRC for Veterans Chance to Buy Homes; Asks That Present Tenant be 1st Consideration," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 26, 1951, 1; "Business Lessees Get First Chance to Buy; Homes Up in Air," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 3, 1951, 1.
- ¹⁰⁹ Morry Zenoff, "Morry's Story," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 31, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹⁰ Anderson, Betty Lou, interview, 9.
- ¹¹¹ Smith, Hal, interview by Henderson (Nevada) Mayor James Gibson, Henderson, Nevada, 1 February 2003, 4.
- ¹¹² "New Buildings Planned for Downtown," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 6, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹³ "Tenants Council Meeting Surveys Housing Situation," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 17, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹⁴ Morry Zenoff, "Morry's Story," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 20, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹⁵ Smith, Hal, interview, 14.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ¹¹⁷ "Lessees Meet With CRC on Housing Shortage Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 7, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹⁸ "Economic Blood Transfusion Now Under Way as Construction Starts," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 14, 1951, 1.
- ¹¹⁹ "CRC Works on Housing as Tenants, Lessees Seek Action," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 28, 1951, 1.
- ¹²⁰ Morry Zenoff, "Commission in Tough Spot As Housing Needs Multiply Fast," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 28, 1951, 1.
- ¹²¹ "Tenants Council Holds Mass Meeting To Set Policy On Evictions," Henderson (Home) Home News, August 9, 1951, 1.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 1.
- ¹²³ "Sale of New Homes Here Opens 9 A.M. Saturday, Federal Homes Co. to Welcome Public at 147 Water Street," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 16, 1951, 1.
- ¹²⁴ "House Buying Nears 150 Mark as Our City 'Grows Up'," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 25, 1951, 1.
- ¹²⁵ "Only 88 Homesites Left in New 350 Home Project; \$250 Deposit Can Hold Application for (sic) from 30 to 60 Days," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 15, 1951, 1.
- ¹²⁶ "CRC Meeting This Week May Determine Who Runs Townsite," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 22, 1951, 1; "BMC is the Word as Henderson Moves Out of State Control," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 20, 1951, 1.
- ¹²⁷ "New Building Approved For School, Board Passes \$263,273 Budget," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Thursday, February 21, 1952, 1.
- ¹²⁸ "Official Okay Given \$404,918 Allocation for New High School," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 19, 1952, 1.
- ¹²⁹ Dennis Havens, 11-13; "Interest Mounts As Plans Take Shape for Celebration," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 27, 1952, 1.
- ¹³⁰ "New Citizens' Group Plans Forums On City Matters," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 8, 1952, 1.
- ¹³¹ "Townsite Nears Dawn of New Era As Special Committee Gets Set to Whip Final Plans Into Shape," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 8, 1952, 1.
- ¹³² Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 10, 1952, 1.
- ¹³³ "Sale To Lessees Due for Completion At CRC Meet Here May 23," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 18, 1952, 1.

- ¹³⁴ "History Made As Officials Sign Papers For Sale of Residuals; Effective Date Next Sunday, June 1," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Thursday, May 29, 1952.
- ¹³⁵ "BMI Says Townsite Houses May Be Offered For Sale In August," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 5, 1952, 1.
- ¹³⁶ "Initial Steps Being Taken In Local Survey," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 3, 1952, 1.
- ¹³⁷ "Title Recorded For Properties In Townsite," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 18, 1952, 1.
- ¹³⁸ "Uncertified Tenants Learn Fate, Get Solace Offered First Chance At "\$400 Down" Homes," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 2, 1952, 1.
- ¹³⁹ "Moore Counters Tenants Council's Charges of indefinite Position," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 18, 1952, 1.
- ¹⁴⁰ "Survey May Check Into Incorporation, C of C Proceeds with Investigation," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 22, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴¹ LaPorta, Lou, interview, 7.
- ¹⁴² "Incorporation of Henderson Now Under Way Petitions Seek Necessary Signatures," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 30, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴³ "Judge Henderson to Judge Henderson's Future {No Joking}," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 2, 1953, 1; "List of Incorporation Petitioners Soon in Judge's Hands," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 9, 1953, 1; Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 16, 1953, 1; "Candidates May Now File For 1st Election – May 23rd," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 23, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴⁴ "City Awaits Its First Election Saturday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 21, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴⁵ "French, Ivory, VanWagenen, LaPorta, Engel, Dickover Are Sworn In to Start City of Henderson On its Way," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 28, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴⁶ LaPorta, Lou, 11.
- ¹⁴⁷ "Citizens Cheer Mayor French, Council In First Town Meeting," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 25, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁴⁸ Harvey Dickerson would later serve three terms as Nevada's Attorney General. Dickerson's father, Denver S. Dickerson served as the Governor of Nevada from 1908 to 1910. For more information, refer to the Nevada State Library and archives, <http://dmla.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/nsla/archives/gov/govbib.html>.
- ¹⁴⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 10 June 1953*, (Henderson, 1953), 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 17 June 1953*, (Henderson, 1953), 1-2; "Council Names Parson Clerk, Dohrenwend Judge, Dickerson Attorney, Halley Treasurer, Dickover Fire and Police Commissioner," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 18, 1953.
- ¹⁵⁰ "City Will Take Applications Now For Clerk, Judge Attorney," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 4, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁵¹ "Citizens Cheer Mayor French, Council In First Town Meeting," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 25, 1953, 1.
- ¹⁵² "Pittman Ward May Secede From City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 10, 1953, 1.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPANSION BEGINS

- ¹⁵³ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Presentation of Mayor James B. French, 1 March 1954*, (Henderson, 1954), 1-6; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 1 March 1954*, (Henderson, 1954), 1; "Town Meeting Slated Discuss New Budget," Henderson (Nevada)

Home News, February 25, 1954, 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Presentation of Mayor James B. French*, 1.

¹⁵⁵ "Citizens to Decide on Changes Necessary to Meet City Budget," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 4, 1954, 1.

¹⁵⁶ "Lack of Cash Forces City to Cut Personnel," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March, 11, 1954, 1.

¹⁵⁷ "This Newspaper to Serve you twice Weekly Starting May 4," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 18, 1954, 1.

¹⁵⁸ "Governor to Initiate Dial Phone Switchover Tonight," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 1, 1954, 1.

¹⁵⁹ "Start...311 Homes," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 1, 1954, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 1 November 1954*, (Henderson, 1954), 1; "War Ends As City Buys Water-Sewer Systems for \$106,371," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 2, 1954, 1.

¹⁶¹ Don Ashbaugh, "Now ... I'll Tell One," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Jan 6, 1955, 1.

¹⁶² "War Ends as City Buys Water-Sewer Systems For \$106,371," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 2, 1954, 1.

¹⁶³ James Keller, "Open Letter to the Citizens of Henderson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 14, 1955, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Remarks of Alton H. Sorensen, Consulting Engineer, 19 May 1955*, (Henderson, 1955), 1-3; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Special Meeting 19 May 1955*, (November, 1955), 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 11 June 1955*, (Henderson, 1955), 1; "City Clerk Answers Questions On Million-and-a-Half Bond Issue," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 21, 1955, 1.

¹⁶⁵ James Keller, "Open Letter to the Citizens of Henderson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 14, 1955, 1.

¹⁶⁶ "Council Takes Initial Steps for \$1,500,000 Bond Issue," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 5, 1955, 1; "Bond Mass Meeting Set for Evening of May 19," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 12, 1955, 1.

¹⁶⁷ "Here's How Henderson Voted in Bond Election," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 1, 1955, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 12 September 1955*, (November, 1955), 2.

¹⁶⁸ "Secession Petitions Being Signed in Pittman," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 15, 1953, 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 5 December 1955*, 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 19 December 1955*, (Henderson, 1955) 1; "Pittman Secession Bid Loses Monday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 20, 1955, 1.

¹⁷¹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 February 1956*, (Henderson, 1956), 1-2; "Council and Mayor Involved in Money Rhubarb!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 31, 1956, 1.

¹⁷² "Council and Mayor May Go On Salary," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 27, 1955, 1; "No Pay for Council Or Mayor This Term," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 3, 1956, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 August 1956*, (Henderson, 1956), 3.

¹⁷³ "Mayor, Council to Receive Salaries Starting July 1," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 4, 1956, 1.

¹⁷⁴ "Legalize Slot Machines," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 20, 1956, 1.

¹⁷⁵ "Titanium to Spend \$15,000,000 Expanding Operations Here!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 16, 1956, 1.

¹⁷⁶ "U.S. Approves \$550,000 Loan for Sewers Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 30, 1957, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Special Meeting, 9 May 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Special Meeting, 10 May 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1-2; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Special Meeting, 11 May 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 2-4; "Byrne Election Contested, Mayor-Elect Deplores Action," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 14, 1957, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 20 May 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1.

¹⁷⁸ "Byrne Happy As Recount Favors Him—Court Disallows Absentee Ballots," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 30, 1957, 1.

¹⁷⁹ "New Mayor Outlines 'Streamlined' Government For the City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 13, 1957, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 19 August 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1.

¹⁸⁰ "Gag is Placed on Most City Departments," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 27, 1957, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 9 September 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 16 September 1957*, (Henderson, 1957), 1.

¹⁸¹ "Land to be Purchased by City From Government is Currently In Process of Being Appraised," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 10, 1956, 1; "U.S. Land Price Threat to City Expansion," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 1, 1957, 1; Henceforth, the acronym BLM shall refer to the Bureau of Land Management.

¹⁸² "Sen. Bible Meets with City Officials Today on 7,000 Acre Price," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 14, 1957, 1.

¹⁸³ "U.S. Land Official Discusses City's Piece of 7,000 Acres," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 3, 1958, 1.

¹⁸⁴ "Piece-By-Piece Land Purchase Bill Clears Senate Committee!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 3, 1958, 1; "Congress Clears Bill for City's Land Purchases," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 26, 1958.

¹⁸⁵ Morry Zenoff, "Council Agrees on General Policy For Selling 5,000 Acres!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 20, 1959, 1.

¹⁸⁶ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 12 January 1959*, (Henderson, 1959), 1-2; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 2 February 1959*, (Henderson, 1959) 1; "Sidewalks Hit Legal Snag; Council OKs Land Appraisal," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 3, 1959, 1; "Planning Board To Consider Sale of Six Parcels of Land Tonight," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 31, 1959, 1; "City Earns \$1,200 On First Land Sale," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 31, 1959, 1.

¹⁸⁷ "City to Ask Uncle Sam For Another 3,000 Acres For Public Use," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 19, 1959, 1.

¹⁸⁸ "City In Trouble Unless Sales Tax Issue Passes," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 11, 1963, 1.

¹⁸⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 10 December 1964*, (Henderson, 1964), 3; "Ax Falls At City Hall As Year's Losses Counted," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 15, 1964, 1. "Council Borrows \$85,000 On Emergency Resolution," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 29, 1964, 1.

¹⁹⁰ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 1 February 1960*, (Henderson, 1960), 1-2; "Dry-Hole Prompts OK of City Reservoir," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 2, 1960, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Special Meeting, 5 February 1960*, (Henderson, 1960), 1.

¹⁹¹ "Mayor Asks For City's Right of First Refusal For Any Salable BMI Water; Espinosa Calls Friday meeting With city, BMI, Water District," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 21, 1960, 1.

¹⁹² "BMI Offers Additional Water to City: Two Million Gallons," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 3, 1961, 1.

¹⁹³ Moehring, Eugene P, Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970, volume 29 of Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities, Wilbur S. Shepperson, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1995), 216.

¹⁹⁴ "Sierra Vista Homes In Pittman To Sell In Low Cost Range With FHA Financing," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 9, 1961, 1; "Lack of Rentals here Pointed Up By Long Waiting List at Carver Park, VV," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 9, 1961, 1.

¹⁹⁵ "50 Families Given Notice To Leave Victory Village," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 1, 1962, 1.

¹⁹⁶ "We're Doing All We Can to Eliminate Smog—Moore Says," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 25, 1961, 1.

¹⁹⁷ "PEPCON Announces Multi-Million Dollar Plant Expansion Program Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 15, 1961, 1.

¹⁹⁸ "Pacific-Engineering Production to Climb to 20,000,000 LBS.; 12 New Buildings Nearing Completion at the Plant Location," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 27, 1962, 1.

¹⁹⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 19 June 1961, (Henderson, 1961), 2; "Mayor Opens New Regime With Immediate Plan To Build City Hall," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 20, 1961, 1; "Proceedings Started For New City Hall; Several Resolutions Passed," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 18, 1961, 1.

²⁰⁰ "Drawing of Our New, Modern Looking City Hall; Water Street View," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 2, 1961, 1.

²⁰¹ "Break Ground here Today For New City Hall," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 10, 1963, 1.

²⁰² "Dedicate Our New City Hall Tomorrow 11 A.M. Civic Leaders Invited," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 17, 1963, 1; "First Mayor James French Dedicates New City Hall," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 19 1963, 1.

²⁰³ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 February 1961, (Henderson, 1961), 3; "Council Acts To Charter City; Votes For City-Wide Election of Councilmen," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 7, 1961, 1.

²⁰⁴ "Gibson Says Boulder Charter Good Model To Follow, Deserves Study," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 21, 1961, 1.

²⁰⁵ "Kesterson Gets Answer From Gibson On How City Can Acquire Home Rule," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 24, 1961, 1.

²⁰⁶ "Petition For City Charter Before Council Monday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 28, 1963, 1.

²⁰⁷ "City to Finish Checking Charter Names Today," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 4, 1963, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 15 April 1963, (Henderson, 1963), 6.

²⁰⁸ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 3 June 1963, (Henderson, 1963), 2; "Blame Charter Petition As Political 'Front'," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 4, 1963, 1.

²⁰⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 2 January 1962, (Henderson, 1962), 1; "City Boundaries Extended by 2500 Acre Annexation," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 4, 1962, 1; "Annexation Okayed," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 22, 1963, 1.

²¹⁰ "Bill in Congress Seeks 6000 Gov't Acres For City's Future," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 17, 1962, 1.

²¹¹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 7 January 1963, (Henderson, 1963), 3; "City to Seek 15,000 Acres From U.S.," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 8, 1963, 1.

²¹² "Byrne Asks Plants To Come Into City – Or Pay Approx. \$100,000 In Lieu of Taxes," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 12, 1963, 1.

²¹³ "City Area Doubled As President Signs Land Bill," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 25, 1963, 1.

²¹⁴ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 5 October 1964, (Henderson, 1964), 6; "14 Citizens Appointed To Help Write Charter," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 8, 1964, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 19 October 1964, (Henderson, 1964), 5; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 2 November 1964, (Henderson, 1964), 4.

²¹⁵ "Expect Charter To Reach Governor Sawyer's Desk this Week ...," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Tuesday, March 23, 1965.

²¹⁶ "Governor Signs Charter Bill!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 1, 1965, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 1 April 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 1.

²¹⁷ "City Election Proceeding Under Charter Provisions," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 8, 1965, 1.

²¹⁸ "Bob Hampton Elected Mayor; Franklin to Council," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 10, 1965, 1.

²¹⁹ "Water is City's Biggest Problem," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 22, 1965, 1.

²²⁰ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 15 November 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 6-8; "City Overspent Last Budget By \$294,170," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 16, 1965, 1.

²²¹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 23 September 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 4; "City Work-Week Cut To 32 Hours, Lay-Off To Include Fire, Policemen," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 28, 1965, 1.

²²² Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 4 October 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 5-6; "City heads take 10% Wage Slash," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 5, 1965, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 October 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 3; "Chop Salaries of Police, Fire Chiefs After Complaint," October 7, 1965, 1.

²²³ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 21 October 1965, (Henderson, 1965), 1-3; "\$150,000 City Debt Causes Utility Increase," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 26, 1965, 1.

²²⁴ Lorna Kesterson, "Expect Analysis of Air, Leaves, Report Here on Wed.," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 24, 1966, 1; "Chloride Caused Leaf Drop, Says Ravenholt," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 31, 1966, 1.

CHAPTER FIVE: A FOCUS IS REALIZED

²²⁵ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 11 January 1967, (Henderson, 1967), 1; "City seeks to annex \$320 Million Lake Project, Giant Firms, Strong Names Back new 'Community'," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 17, 1967, 1.

²²⁶ "City of Lake Adair – May Become This City's Name, Port Holiday Group Explains Plans To the Council," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 12, 1967, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, January 16, 1967, (Henderson, 1967), 2.

²²⁷ Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 12, 1967, 1.

²²⁸ "Utah Company Would Come Into Adair Project With Both Feet ..." Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 2, 1967, 1.

²²⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 February 1967,

(Henderson, 1967), 1-5; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 7 February 1967*, (Henderson, 1967), 1-5; "Private Money Ready To Build Lake Adair Now – City Bonds Would Repay Only When Finished – Council Meets Again Tonight To Make Decision," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 7, 1967, 1.

²³⁰ "Legislation Approved As First Step of Lake Adair," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 9, 1967, 1. Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 March 1967*, (Henderson, 1967), 8-9; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 11 March 1967*, (Henderson, 1967) 1.

²³¹ "City Bond Counsel OKs Adair Proposal; Seek Approval of State Legislature This Week!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 21, 1967, 1.

²³² Morry Zenoff, "The Day the Lake Is Filled Said Day of Name change; City Officials Now In Carson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 9, 1967, 1.

²³³ "Lake Adair Gets Financing; Crews to Be On Site In Next Few Days; Rice Engineer," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 6, 1967, 1.

²³⁴ "Boise-Cascade and Port Holiday Reveal Lake Plans: \$320 Million City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 21, 1968, 1.

²³⁵ "Adair Offices Moving to So. Nevada As Influx of Experts Starts May 1," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 16, 1968, 1.

²³⁶ "Water Inflow to Lake Adair Scheduled Feb. 1969," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 28, 1968, 1.

²³⁷ "Lake Adair to Proceed Without City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 2, 1969, 1.

²³⁸ "National Guard To Consider Local Site For \$455,000 Guard Center," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 14, 1967, 1.

²³⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 18 December 1967*, (Henderson, 1967), 2-4; "National Guard Armory Receives Tentative 'Nod' From Council," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 19, 1967, 1.

²⁴⁰ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 2 January, 1968*, (Henderson, 1968), 1-4; "National Guard Armory Gets Green Light From Council for Site Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 4, 1968, 1.

²⁴¹ "State Budget Includes \$650,000 National Guard Armory for Henderson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 30, 1969, 1.

²⁴² "Guard Officials Inspect National Guard Armory," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 13, 1971, 1.

²⁴³ "Dedicate new National Guard Armory here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 19, 1971, 1.

²⁴⁴ "City Master Plan Will Set Future Guidelines," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 19, 1968, 1.

²⁴⁵ Caviglia, Father Caesar, interview by Henderson (Nevada) Mayor James Gibson, Henderson, Nevada, 1 February 2003, 8-9.

²⁴⁶ "Master Plan Says Plants Should Be Inside the City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 26, 1968, 1.

²⁴⁷ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Recessed Meeting, 27 October 1969*, (Henderson, 1969), 2; "Land Rush Here Brings 91 Proposals From Buyers!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 28, 1969, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Study Meeting, 6 November 1969*, (Henderson, 1969), 1-3; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 17 November 1969*, (Henderson, 1969), 7-10; "Council Shifts thinking, gives 6 land buyers 2nd Chance," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 18, 1969, 1.

²⁴⁸ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Land Study Meeting, 5 February, 1970*, (Henderson, 1970), 1-7; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 16 February*

1970, (Henderson, 1970), 2-8 "Council Grand Slam Rejects Big Four Land Bids," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 17, 1970, 1.

²⁴⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Land Study Meeting, 5 March 1970*, (Henderson, 1970), 1-7; "Paradise Homes Sweetens Offer for 5,000 City Acres," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 10, 1970, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Land Study Meeting, 12 March 1970*, (Henderson, 1970), 1-5.

²⁵⁰ Hughes, City Attorney Shauna, interview by City of Henderson, Henderson, Nevada, 20 March 2003, 4.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² "Hank Offers City 300 New Homes in Five Years," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 17, 1970, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Land Study Meeting, 18 March 1970*, (Henderson, 1970), 1-6.

²⁵³ "Council Hears Greenspun, International Community Development Proposals," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 14, 1971, 1.

²⁵⁴ "Franklin, Olague, Jeffery Say Hank's Bid Best," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 21, 1971, 1.

²⁵⁵ Jeffrey, Jack, interview, 11.

²⁵⁶ "Greenspun, City Near Land Sale Agreements Here – Water Wonderland Signs to Join Project," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 28, 1971, 1.

²⁵⁷ "City, Hank Greenspun Arrive at Land Sale Agreement," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 16, 1971, 1.

²⁵⁸ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 17 January, 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 3-8; "Details of Master Land Plan Revealed," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 18, 1972, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 24 January 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 2-3.

²⁵⁹ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 7 February 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 6-7; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 10 February 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 3-7; "Hank to Add 1880 Acres To City; We Will Then Be 62 Square Miles Big!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 17, 1972, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 22 February 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 2-4; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 17 April 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 3.

²⁶⁰ "Development to Begin Soon on 'Greenspun Property'," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 8, 1973, 1.

²⁶¹ "Green Valley Springs To Life As Major Home Building Begins," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 26, 1973, 1.

²⁶² "Plan Public Trust Bonds As Aid To Green Valley Project," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 17, 1973, 1.

²⁶³ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Committee Meeting, 14 August 1972*, (Henderson, 1972), 1; "Council Recommends 'Do Pass' To Declaration of Trust," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 16, 1972, 1.

²⁶⁴ "IRS Ruling Favorable for Green Valley Development," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 2, 1974, 1.

²⁶⁵ "Greenspun Makes Final Payment on 4,720 Acres," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 10, 1977, 1.

²⁶⁶ "Solid Fuel Program May Cause Boom for Our City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 16, 1972, 1.

²⁶⁷ "Stauffer Launches Building Program," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 7, 1975, 1.

²⁶⁸ "Stauffer Dedicates New Facility," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 30, 1976, 1.

Endnotes

- ²⁶⁹ "Kerr-McGee Announces Expansion Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 2, 1978, 1.
- ²⁷⁰ "There's A College Campus In Our Future," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 14, 1975, 1.
- ²⁷¹ "Henderson May Have College Campus In 1978," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 22, 1976, 1.
- ²⁷² "Sites Picked For Community College," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 23, 1975, 1.
- ²⁷³ "This City To Ask Regents For College," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 8, 1976, 1.
- ²⁷⁴ "Advisory Board Suggests Small College," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 26, 1976, 1.
- ²⁷⁵ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 3 May 1976*, (Henderson, 1976), 9-10; "Land Set For Community College," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 6, 1976, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Recessed Meeting, 10 May, 1976*, (Henderson, 1976), 2.
- ²⁷⁶ "Regents ask that a Community College be Built Here," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, November 23, 1976, 1.
- ²⁷⁷ Lorna Kesterson, "\$2 Million College Here?," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Thursday, April 26, 1979, 1.
- ²⁷⁸ "Community College OK!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 24, 1979, 1.
- ²⁷⁹ "College Groundbreaking Set June 30!," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 19, 1980, 1.
- ²⁸⁰ "College Campus Ahead of Schedule," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 21, 1981, 1.
- ²⁸¹ "Levi Strauss Moves Plant To Henderson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 10, 1977, 1.
- ²⁸² "Levi Is Just the Start of Henderson's Growth," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 19, 1977, 1.
- ²⁸³ Lorna Kesterson, "Levi Strauss Begins Hiring Next Week Will Open Local Plant Early In March," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 2, 1978, 1.
- ²⁸⁴ "Levi Grand Opening Ceremonies Friday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 13, 1978, 1.
- ²⁸⁵ "Levi Officially Opens Henderson Plant," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 20, 1983, 1.
- ²⁸⁶ "Public Hearing Set for 'The Lake' Project," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 24, 1984, 1; Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 6 August 1984*, (Henderson, 1984), 20-21.
- ²⁸⁷ Henderson (Nevada) City Council, *Minutes of Regular Meeting, 7 April 1980*, (Henderson, 1980) 2-3; "Council Approves \$75,000 Purchase For Fire Station," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 10, 1980, 1.
- ²⁸⁸ "Convention Center Dedication Set Thursday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Tuesday, June 1, 1982, 1.
- ²⁸⁹ "Henderson Convention Center Operates In The Black," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 5, 1983, 1.
- ²⁹⁰ "City's \$4.6 Million Wastewater Plant Groundbreaking Today," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Tuesday, October 26, 1982, 1.
- ²⁹¹ "City to Triple by 1995," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 15, 1988, 1.
- ²⁹² Hughes, City Attorney Shauna, interview, 4.
- ²⁹³ Gibson, Mayor James, interview by the City of Henderson, Henderson, Nevada, 25 March 2003, 16.
- ²⁹⁴ "Blast Chronology Listed, Events Disputed," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 10, 1988, 8.
- ²⁹⁵ "Blast Flattens Pacific Engineering, Many Miraculously Escape," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 5, 1988, 1-2.
- ²⁹⁶ "Emergency Declared," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 5, 1988, 1-2; "Curfew Imposed," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 5, 1988, 1-2.
- ²⁹⁷ "Building Permits Needed, But No Fees to Be Charged," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 10, 1988, 6.
- ²⁹⁸ Mayberry, Mike, interview by the City of Henderson, Henderson, Nevada, 20 March 2003, 5.
- ²⁹⁹ "PEPCON Officials Deny Blast Blame," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 10, 1988, 1-2.
- ³⁰⁰ "Kerr McGee Resumes Operation," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 2, 1988, 1.
- ³⁰¹ "Local Officials Explode, Vent Anger At Industries, County," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 12, 1988, 1.
- ³⁰² "Annexation, Special Payments Only Sure Way to Live With Industries," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 12, 1988, 4; "Kerr McGee Must Go," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 12, 1988, 4.
- ³⁰³ "Citizens Split Over Fate of Local Industries," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 19, 1988, 1.
- ³⁰⁴ "Kerr-McGee Starts Amid Media Scrutiny, Unresolved Storage Debate," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 14, 1988, 1.
- ³⁰⁵ "PEPCON Will Move Near Cedar City," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 28, 1988, 1.
- ³⁰⁶ "Kerr-McGee Experts Ponder Cause of Tank Explosion," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 6, 1989, 1.
- ³⁰⁷ "Bill Introduced To Open Industrial Investigations," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 26, 1989, 1.
- ³⁰⁸ "Kerr-MCGEE Move Clear, Apex Bill Passes," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 0, 1989, 1.

CHAPTER SIX: A PLACE TO CALL HOME

³⁰⁹ Sam Walker, "Nevada Body of Water Set to Become a Bone of Contention: A Luxury Resort's Man-Made Lake Draws Attention to the Region's Strained Water Resources and Their Allocation," The Christian Science Monitor, June 6, 1997, 1. Accessed via the ProQuest Newspapers electronic database on 7/17/03; According to Sam Walker of the Christian Science Monitor, Carlton Adair exchanged property that he owned near Lake Mead with the federal government for the land that was to be Lake Adair, along with its water rights.

³¹⁰ "Lake Las Vegas," Nevada Business Journal, October (1995), 4.

³¹¹ Paul Szydelko, "City Officials Tour Lake Las Vegas Site," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 12, 1989, 1; "Lake Las Vegas," Nevada Business Journal, October (1995), 11.

³¹² "Las Vegas Wash Diverted Through Twin Pipes Friday," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 20, 1990, 1.

³¹³ "Lake Las Vegas," Nevada Business Journal, October (1995), 13.

³¹⁴ "City Officials Briefed On Lake Las Vegas," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 19, 1991, 1; Paul Szydelko, "Lake Las Vegas Almost Filled," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 6, 1992, 2.

³¹⁵ "Lake Las Vegas Construction Proceeds," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 6,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Henderson is indebted to each of the individuals and organizations that have supported this project. Their dedication, expertise, and generosity have captured our city's intriguing history from the 1930s, and builds upon the strong sense of community that exists today in Henderson.

Special recognition is extended to Matt Lay, UNLV graduate student and Henderson resident, for his commitment and meticulous research throughout this project. We value the partnership established between the City of Henderson and the faculty and staff of the Department of History at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

We are also grateful to the numerous contributors and editors who offered their time and talents to make the following chapters even better:

- Annie Boyd • Andrew Urban • Sabrina Mercadante • Paula Harris • Andina Cox •
- Stacey Brownfield • Barbara Czech • Jennifer King • Lou LaPorta • Rochelle Nguyen • Jimmy Martinez •
- Guy Rocha • Dr. Eugene Moehring • Jan Seagrave • Sam Bateman • Carol Corbett •

Appreciation is extended to the many organizations that provided research assistance and photographic resources for this publication:

- UNLV Library Department of Special Collections • Clark County Museum •
- Henderson District Public Library • Henderson Chamber of Commerce •
- Nevada State Library & Archives • On-Press Printing Services, Inc. • Staff of the City of Henderson •

Special thanks to Duane Laubach, Joan Kerschner and the 40's pioneers who graciously provided their personal stories. These memories truly symbolize Henderson's proud legacy.

To our Mayor and City Council, thank you. This narrative and pictorial history would not be possible without your vision and continued support.

Monica M. Simmons
CITY CLERK

From its meager beginnings, Henderson was always poised to become something new. It began as an industrial city, the only one in southern Nevada, and for almost four decades, industry remained a crucial feature of the community. In the past two decades, changing local, regional, and national economy and demography initiated a transformation. Henderson became physically larger, broader socially, demographically, and culturally.

The unbelievable growth has spawned opportunities and challenges, but underpinning it all is the strong sense of community that is Henderson's most salient feature. Henderson has always been a community of people, diverse in character and strong in their belief in their little and then not-so-little town. They built with fervor and hope; they faced challenges, the direst of which never daunted them. The story of the people that faced such challenges and found ways to overcome them is the true story of Henderson and its remarkable success.

HAL ROTHMAN

- 1992, 2.
- ³¹⁶ Roy Theiss, "Lake Las Vegas Begins To Blossom," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 18, 1993, 1.
- ³¹⁷ "Hyatt to build at Lake Las Vegas," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 20, 1996, 2; "\$300 Million Resort Plans Unveiled," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 17, 1996, 2; "Planners approve Hyatt at Lake LV," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 19, 1997, 2.
- ³¹⁸ EBS Management Consultants, Incorporated, General Master Plan of the City of Henderson, Nevada, (Henderson: City Planning Commission, 1969), 13.
- ³¹⁹ "Galleria Mall's Anchors Announced," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 2, 1980, 1-2; D.B. Marciniak, "Galleria Opening Events Announced," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 18, 1996, 1.
- ³²⁰ Kathy Streeter, "Coordination Keeps Galleria On Schedule," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 13, 1995, 1-2.
- ³²¹ Hughes, City Attorney Shauna, interview, 7.
- ³²² "Valley Auto Mall Celebrates Grand Opening," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 8, 1996, 1.
- ³²³ Roy Theiss, "Valley Auto Mall expects \$1 billion in gross revenue," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 17, 1995, 1, 3.
- ³²⁴ Kathy Streeter, "New casino-hotels coming to city," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 3, 1995, 1, 9; Elizabeth Rusiecki, "Sunset Station Approved Despite Concerns," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 10, 1994, 1-2; Roy Theiss, "17-Story Hotel Raises Fears," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 19, 1994, 1-2.
- ³²⁵ Kathy Streeter, "New casino-hotels coming to the city," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 3, 1995, 9; Roy Theiss, "Welcome To The Reserve: Thousands flock to opening," Henderson (Nevada) Home News,
- ³²⁶ Jeff Simpson, "Popularity of Green Valley Ranch has execs talking expansion," Las Vegas Review-Journal, Accessed via the Review Journal's online archives, on July 29, 2003, at: Jeff Simpson, "Station inaugurates Green Valley Ranch Station," Las Vegas Review-Journal, December 19, 2001. Accessed via the Review Journal's online archives, on July 29, 2003, at http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2001/Dec-19-Wed-2001/news/17703970.html.
- ³²⁷ Kathy Streeter, "Airport connector eases GV commute," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, March 2, 1995, 1, 3.
- ³²⁸ "The Year in Review: 1995," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 4, 1996, 1-2.
- ³²⁹ "Beltway extension to open next month," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Tuesday, January 7, 1997, 1, 4
- ³³⁰ For more information, refer to "Environmental Assessment: FHWA-NV-EA 03.01," (Las Vegas: Federal Highway Administration, and the Nevada Department of Transportation, 2003).
- ³³¹ "Preliminary Census Figures Disappointing," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, August 28, 1990, 1-2.
- ³³² 2003: Economic and Demographic Overview, (Henderson, Nevada: City of Henderson, 2003), Volume 6, 2.
- ³³³ Elizabeth Rusiecki, "100,000 We're Here: City Hits Milestone," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, May 12, 1994.
- ³³⁴ Thomas Lacy, "Henderson: Fastest-Growing City In The Nation," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 3, 1995, 1.
- ³³⁵ D.B. Marciniak, "City's Population Estimate: 128,500," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, July 9, 1996, 1.
- ³³⁶ D.J. Allen, "Henderson closes in on Reno," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 18, 1998, 1, 3; Michael Weissenstein, "Henderson passes Reno to be second-largest city," Las Vegas Review-Journal, December 1, 1999. Accessed via the Review Journal's online archives, on July 29, 2003, at http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/1999/Dec-01-Wed-1999/news/12462770.html.
- ³³⁷ 2003 Economic and Demographic Overview, (Henderson, Nevada: City of Henderson, 2003), Volume 6, 3.
- ³³⁸ 2003 Economic and Demographic Overview, (Henderson, Nevada: City of Henderson, 2003), Volume 6, 3.
- ³³⁹ 2003 Economic and Demographic Overview, (Henderson, Nevada: City of Henderson, 2003), Volume 6, 6; Those population centers with the greatest concentration of residents in possession of an advanced degree are the 89052 zip-code area (Anthem) and the 89011 zip-code area (Lake Las Vegas).
- ³⁴⁰ Ibid., 10.
- ³⁴¹ David Hare, "CCSN name building after Rev. Caviglia," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 13, 2000, 1, 18; David Hare, "Caviglia building at CCSN dedicated," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 18, 2000, 1, 6.
- ³⁴² Kevin Ferguson, "Panel Says put college study on fast-track," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 7, 1999, 1.
- ³⁴³ Kevin Ferguson, "Panel discusses state college system," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, Tuesday, October 5, 1999, 1, 4.
- ³⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.
- ³⁴⁵ David Hare, "Regents approve four-year college in Henderson," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 7, 1999, 1.
- ³⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.
- ³⁴⁷ David Hare, "Board of Regents elects Moore as college president," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, December 21, 1999, 1.
- ³⁴⁸ David Hare, "Panel to seek input in planning state college," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, January 6, 2000, 1.
- ³⁴⁹ David Hare, "Community meetings on new state college set for this week," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 1, 2000, 1-2; David Hare, "Regents to meet on name of state college, related issues," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 10, 2000, 2.
- ³⁵⁰ David Hare, "Regents approve name for new state college, Sisolak files charges with AG's office," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, February 15, 2000; David Hare, "State college site approved despite soil concerns," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, April 11, 2001, 1, 4; David Hare, "Regents move forward on state college," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, June 29, 2000, 1.
- ³⁵¹ David Hare, "Regents move forward on state college," 1.
- ³⁵² Stuart Osborn, "State College no on funding priorities," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, September 28, 2000, 1, 3; Lee Scrivner, "Nevada State College budget approved," Henderson (Nevada) Home News, October 31, 2000.
- ³⁵³ Natalie Patton, "Nevada State College at Henderson: Panel settles on candidate, College president selection awaits regents' approval," Las Vegas Review-Journal, July 31, 2002. Accessed via the Review Journal's online archives, on July 29, 2003, at http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2002/Jul-31-Wed-2002/news/19307984.html.
- ³⁵⁴ Natalie Patton, "Nevada State College at Henderson: Recruiting hurdles still hinder school, funding outstrips number of students," Las Vegas Review-Journal, November 29, 2002. Accessed via the Review Journal's online archives, on July 29, 2003, at http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2002/Nov-29-Fri-2002/news/20129408.html.
- ³⁵⁵ Romesburg, President Kerry, interview by Henderson (Nevada) City Clerk Monica Simmons, Henderson, Nevada, 2 February 2004, 1.



A Place To Call Home

ISBN 09759808-0-7

\$20.00



9 780975 980804