

**HISTORY OF HENDERSON**

HENDERSON INDUSTRIAL DAYS  
*The Western Way*  
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APRIL 16-25, 1971



**DONATES LAND** – T. Alonzo Wells, center, is shown delivering the deed to Wells Park on Walnut Street to Rae Von Dornum, President of the Pittman Women's Club, during groundbreaking ceremonies for the Pittman Community Center, March 7, 1953. Shown from left, are Billie Somerville, Ned Marriott, Barbara Ebert, Madge Dickover, Mrs. Von Dornum, Wells, Maude Wells, Orrel Lindsey, Margaret Vroman, Ruth Hoffman, and seated on the tractor, Margarette Dearth and Gloria Brown.

**DOCUMENTATION** – Minutes of the meetings and other records of the Pittman Town Board and the Henderson Home News.

**COVER PICTURE** – James Francis "Jim" Thorpe was the most famous person ever to live in Pittman. He opened Jim Thorpe's All-American Supper Club in the remodeled premises of the former Hut Club on his 64th birthday, May 28, 1952 and the whole town turned out to help sing "Happy Birthday" to their famous neighbor. Thorpe was born in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and his original name was Wa-Tho-Huck which, in Indian, means "Bright Path." In the 1912 Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium, Thorpe became the only man ever to win both the decathlon and the pentathlon. He also excelled in track, baseball, lacrosse, basketball, hockey, swimming, boxing, tennis and archery and made the All-American Team in football. He was selected by nearly 400 American sports writers and broadcasters as the greatest all-around athlete and football player of the first half of the 20th century and in addition he was one of the friendliest of persons ever to call the Nevada Desert home.

*Photographs Courtesy of  
Acme Newspictures and International News Photo*

Industrial Days Program Committee  
 Chairman: Dan Taylor  
 Pictures: Woodruff Basic Photo  
 Staff: Ellen Shirley, Executive Director  
 Gara Merrill, Editor  
 Pittman Edition  
 of the  
 History of Henderson  
 Author  
 Rachel M. (Rae) Von Dornum  
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 Henderson Chamber of Commerce  
 Henderson, Nevada

Maryellen Valtin Sadovsk

# 1971 INDUSTRIAL DAYS DEDICATION

Welcome to Henderson's Twentieth Annual Industrial Days as we hail "Fabulous Nevada."

During this annual celebration, Henderson salutes the state that has met all challenges from early discovery to present day space exploration, and we rightfully take pride in our contribution to Fabulous Nevada. Henderson and Nevada were both Battle Born. Fabulous Nevada was born during the Civil War when its metallic riches were sought by both factions, and Henderson was Battle Born during World War II when her industrial plants furnished essential metallic magnesium to the war effort.

From earliest times, Nevada has been fabulous with its contrasts of desert sands and lush, green northern mountains, with its oases in barren deserts; also its rugged individualists who have made Nevada ever more fabulous, from the Indian tribesman to the frontier soldier, from the undaunted miner to the developers of the fabulous Las Vegas Strip.

Henderson, an infant by comparison, has made and will continue to make its contribution to Fabulous Nevada with its dedication to the space program. Bet on it!

We cordially invite you to join us in ten days of celebrating honoring Fabulous Nevada. Enjoy the entertainment beginning April 16 with the annual talent show, followed by the horse show, the beauty contest, the many displays during Industrial Days, the fabulous parade, and the colorful rodeo April 25.

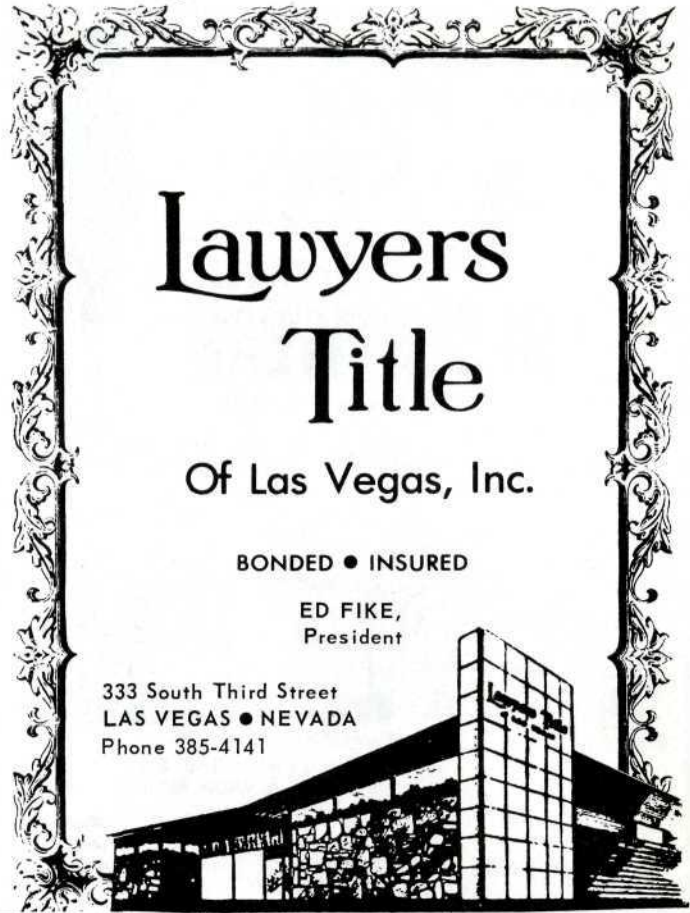
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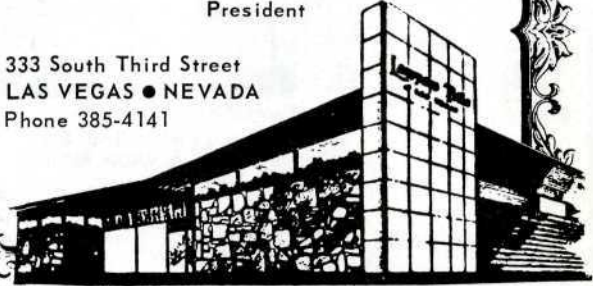


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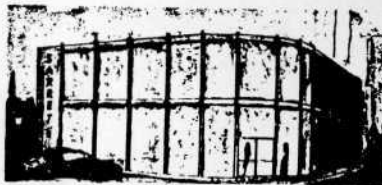


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JOE AND MARTHA SCHLAGER — Pioneer residents of this area, made their home for many years on a small ranch located at what is now known as the BMI gravel pit. The well at the old Schlager place was discussed as a possible source of water for Pittman before the town received water from the BMI pipeline. Joe is believed to have been the first tile setting contractor in the Las Vegas area.



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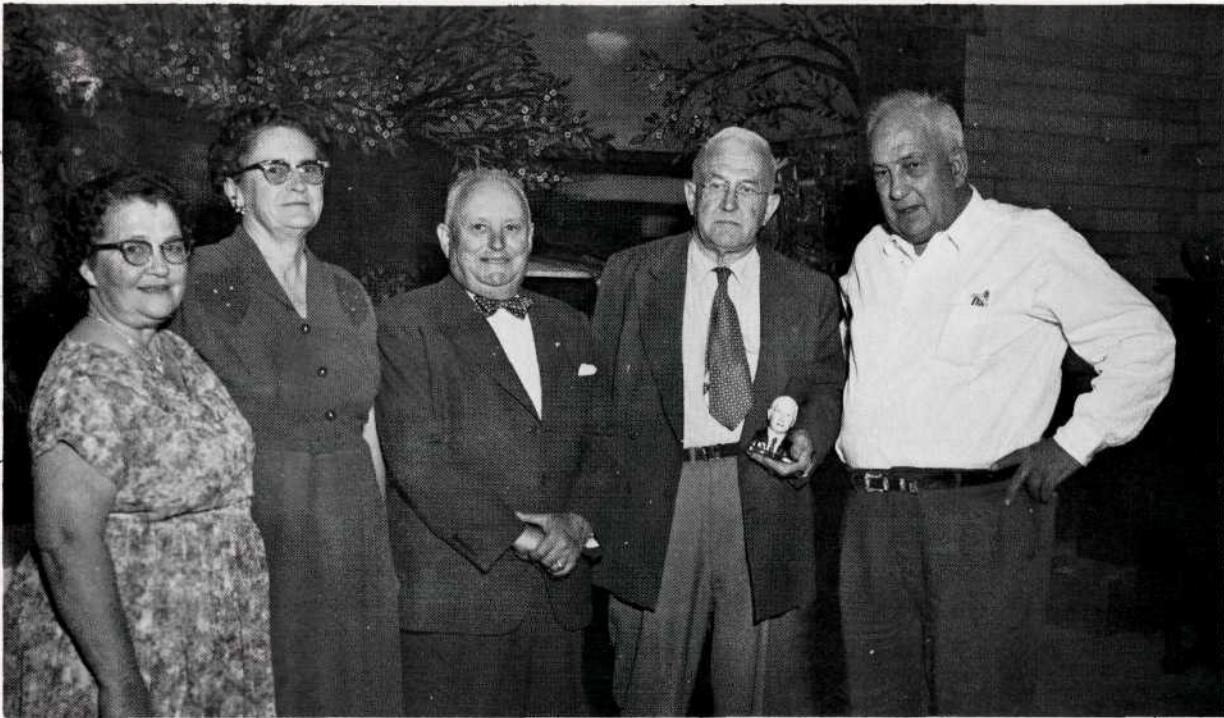
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TESTIMONIAL — M. E. Gene Ward, second from right, is shown at a testimonial meeting held in his honor by his friends and neighbors in Pittman. He is holding a small bust of himself, created by local artist and sculptor Josephine Bearden and presented as a gift of the Pittman Women's Club. From left are, Hazel Elmer of the Pittman Women's Club, Mrs. Ward, Frank Price who made the presentation of the bust, and Dr. Joseph Coogan, President of the Ward Five Improvement Association.



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# HISTORY OF HENDERSON PITTMAN

By Rachel M. (Rae) Von Dornum

After the creation of the Town of Pittman and the Pittman Water Improvement District, in 1947, two years of work were required for the installation of pipelines to bring water to the community.

In 1949, a five-inch pipeline was installed from the Basic Magnesium Project, down the Boulder Highway right-of-way to the town of Pittman. Used pipe was purchased because of the limited funds and the unavailability of new pipe. The project was financed through the accumulation of the Town's funds over a number of years.

Pipe for the distribution system came from the ghost town of Rio Tinto, formerly the site of a copper mine operation of Anaconda Copper Company. The town had been sold out after the mining was discontinued.

Arrangements for the purchase of the Rio Tinto water lines, which were still in the ground, were made by John Corn, who had operated a store in Rio Tinto before moving to Pittman. Corn and Bob Zuber went to the ghost town, some 80 miles north of Elko, Nevada, dug up the pipe and brought it back for transplanting in Pittman.

Financing for this distribution system was a very simple matter. Each business and home owner paid for the cost of pipe and installation required to put water on his own property.

Several large property owners loaned and donated

money to help defray the cost of fire plugs, expansion joints, valves and other miscellaneous items necessary to complete the installation. This indebtedness was repaid from Town funds which came from slot machines, gaming tables, business licenses and Ad valorem taxes.

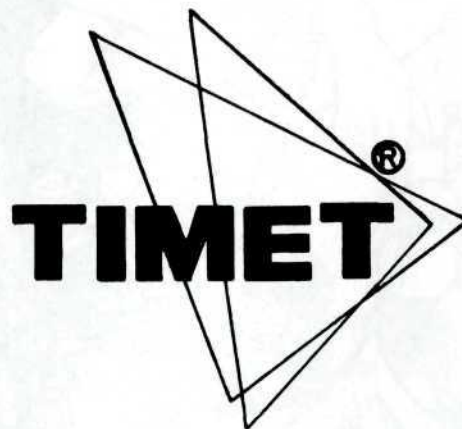
Underground water continued to plague the people of Pittman and undoubtedly contributed to the rusting out of the used pipe which carried water from the BMI plant. By July of 1952, the pipeline was so full of holes that it would no longer carry enough water for household needs and the operation of coolers was almost impossible.

The Clark County Commissioners, who held the purse strings of the town, refused to allow the use of money from Pittman's general fund for a new pipeline.

The drouth-stricken Pittmanites, who barely had enough water for cooking and keeping clean, became more than a little upset about this situation. Action was required! Someone had to back up the Town Board and the people decided it was up to them to do it.

A mass meeting was called on July 29, in the old Midway Casino. Invited to attend were Chairman Harley Harmon and members of the Board of Clark County Commissioners; members of the County

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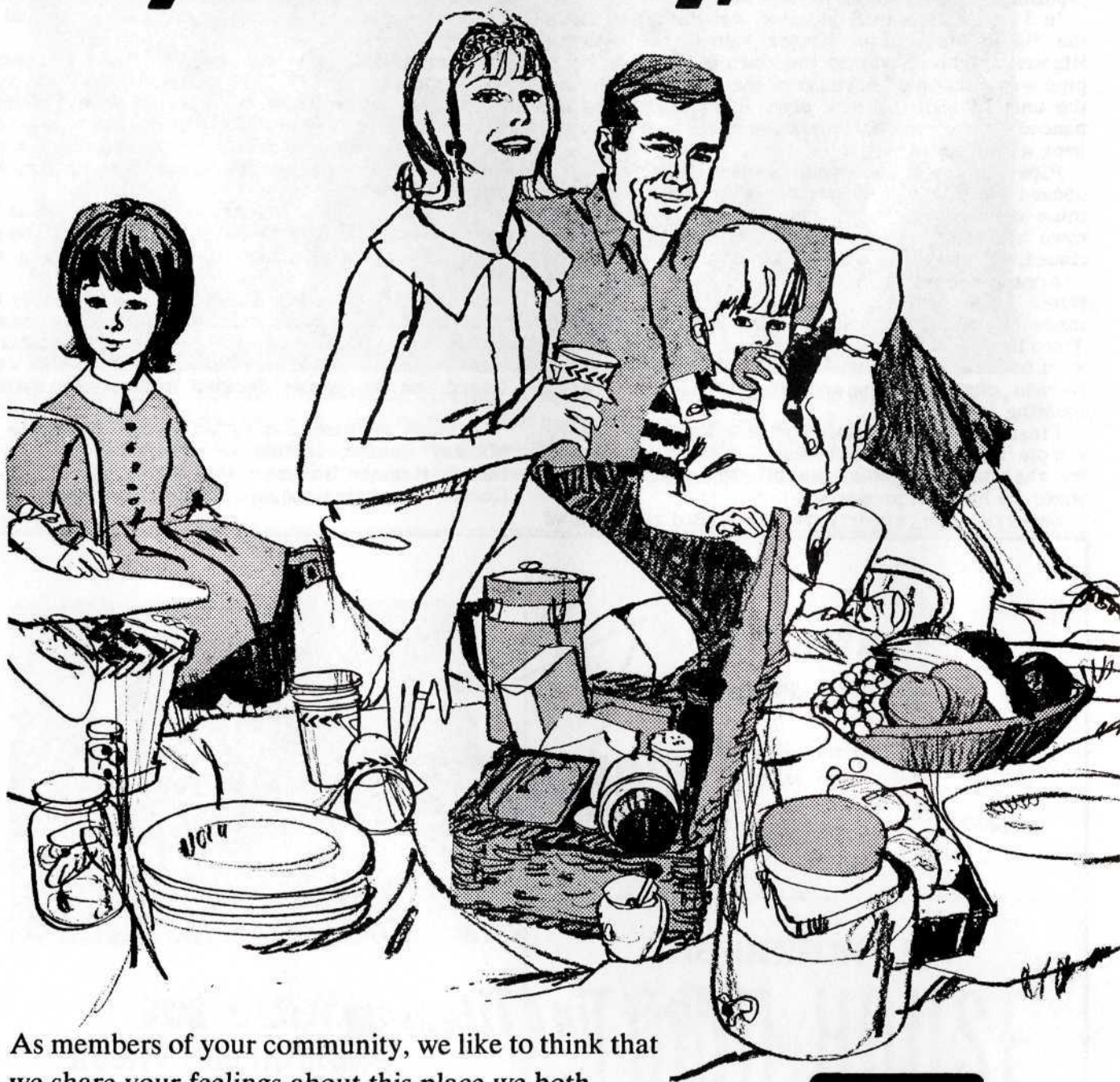


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BEAUTIFICATION — Gene Ward is shown with some of his grandchildren, working on the fish pond on the grounds of the Ward residence, 1813 Merze Street. The house, shown with trailer across the street, was a temporary structure which was later moved away.

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## HISTORY OF HENDERSON

*Continued from Page 5*

Health Department; the District Attorney and members of the Las Vegas Valley Water District.

Also invited were Chairman Frank Price and members, Bob Pfluger, Bob Fields, Peter Finch and Paul Dickover of the Pittman Town Board; and candidates for the County Commission, Hershel Trumbo and Lou F. La Porta; and Bill Byrne, candidate for the State Assembly.

The invitations carried a threat to "march on the court house" unless something was done immediately to alleviate the water shortage.

Ned Marriott served as chairman of the mass meeting with Jo Anne Schwartz as secretary. The huge attendance proved the invitations were not ignored and within a very short time the County Commissioners found a way to install a new six-inch transite pipeline down both sides of the Boulder Highway right-of-way to create a circulating system and stabilize the water pressure.

Edward C. Weese was appointed the first Pittman Water Master. Weese was well fitted for the position and in addition, the application which he submitted to the County Commissioners was endorsed by: A. D. Aikin, Hilda Close, C. M. Johnson, C. I. Westfall, Edith Westfall, Mary Aikin, Levi Burns, Nancy Watson, Mary Schultz, Nellie M. Summers, Roy Summers, Agnes L. Clark, Theodore King, Bertha Jones, Mary Foster, L. McMurray, H. S. Ludford, E. G. Kelly, Eugene Johnson, Dorothy Burke, John Gleckner, Ethel Martin, George Martin, Emile Belin, M. E. "Gene" Ward, Mrs. Bassett Snyder, Andrew T. Pearson, T. D. Laswell, June Laswell, James E. Monyhan, Nicholas Psenka, James M. Rowan, Nina Cassidy and Jewel Gannon.

Pittman was doing very well in 1952 when Chuck Woods opened his 7th one, a night club and casino featuring nightly floor shows, in Tommy Thebo's former recreation hall on Boulder Highway; Matt and Evelyn Matonovich opened the Dust Jug; Rolly and Ella Cook introduced their famous ham and Dixie Maid sandwiches at the Dixie Bar; and Jim Thorpe, internationally famous American athlete, held the grand opening of Jim Thorpe's All-American Supper Club here on May 28, in celebration of his 64th birthday. Everyone in town was present to join in singing "Happy Birthday Jim Thorpe."

It was also in 1952 that Frank Price built his Sportsmen's Bar, now the VFW Post 3848 Clubhouse; and the Pittman Women's Club was organized and started plans for a community center building.

Pittman experienced one bit of what might be termed bad luck in 1952. After the elections were over in November, County Commission Chairman Harley Harmon, who was apparently somewhat upset by some of the actions of the town board, announced that meetings of the board would be discontinued. There has been some conjecture that history might have been changed had the town board been allowed to continue serving the town in its usual manner.

On the sunnier side, the town had accumulated sufficient cash to install mercury vapor lights on the built up section of Boulder Highway where numerous pedestrians had been killed or injured while crossing the road.

*Continued on Page 11*

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DONNEL V. STARK — Chairman of the first unofficial Pittman Advisory Board, is shown with his wife, Dorothy, at their home on Margarita Ave. in 1944. At right, are Donnie and Loretta Stark standing under the first elm planted in Pittman, in front of the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. David Green.

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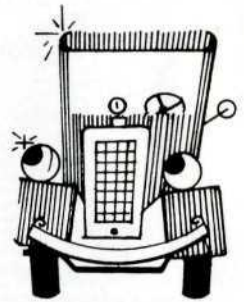
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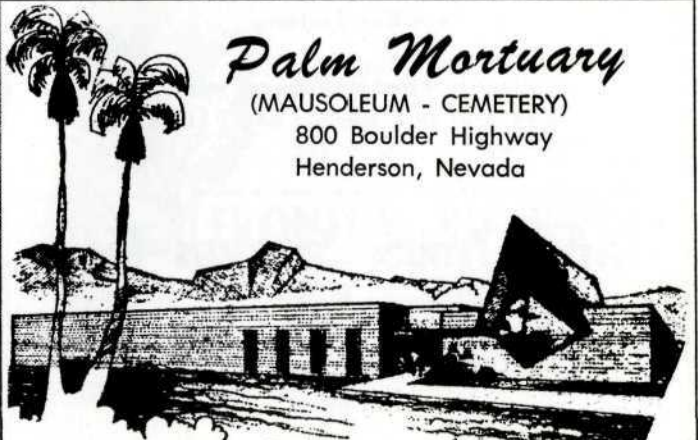
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## HISTORY OF HENDERSON

*Continued from Page 8*

In March, 1953, a drive to incorporate the City of Henderson and include Pittman within the corporate limits of the city, was started by the Henderson Chamber of Commerce. A number of round table discussions were held at the Swanky Club. Representing Pittman at these meetings were, Fred and Margarette Dearth, Paul Dickover, Everett Krause, Chuck Woods, Frank T. Price, Bob Pfluger and John and Rae Von Dornum. Speaking for the Chamber of Commerce were, Hershel Trumbo, Lou La Porta, Harold Baldwin, Jo McBeath and Lyal Burkholder.

A portion of a report in the Henderson Home News on the final meeting, prior to a mass meeting with the entire joint community invited, read in part:

"Why is it so important that Pittman become a part of the City of Henderson?"

"Here are some of the questions.

"How would it affect us if we decide not to go into Henderson? Answer: we would lose our present police and fire protection. The fire department will be given to Henderson by the plant but the city could not afford to give the town of Pittman fire protection.

"The city would also maintain its own police force and Pittman is not of sufficient size to be furnished a sub-station by the Sheriff.

"Would we have a voice in the city's government? Ans. Do we now have any voice under county control? The County questions whether or not we could even have a town board without fighting, therefore we have no town board and are plainly told that they will do

*Continued on Page 12*

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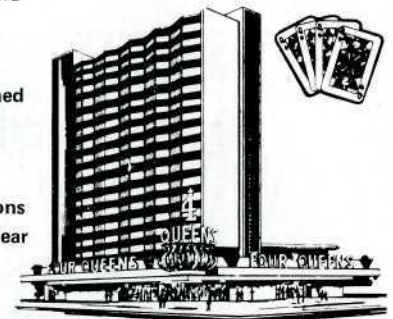
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## HISTORY OF HENDERSON

Continued from Page 11

as they wish even if half the people in the town sign petitions contrary to what they propose. That is a quote.

"Why is Henderson anxious to have Pittman incorporate with them? Ans. Every industry in the plant is planning expansion but it has been proven in the past that regulatory control of city government hampers big industry. If Henderson incorporates alone, Pittman could incorporate and include the plant. It is therefore necessary that Pittman join in this incorporation to protect the plant from such city control, one of our big companies will immediately start a large project in another state."

"Most of us went to this meeting with a firm NO in our minds. We asked more questions than a quiz master and even went so far as to startle these Henderson people by telling them that we didn't want to become the slum area of their city. We had felt we would be Henderson's back yard, we came away knowing we would be their front door." HHN, March 30, 1953.

We learned later that the inclusion of Pittman was necessary to the incorporation because without Pittman they would not have a solitary property owner within the city limits and would not be able to incorporate. Pittman has twice tried to secede from the City and has fought to overcome such proposals as 30-foot building setbacks on Boulder Highway and a fenced freeway on this highway, all of which were proposed during the early years of incorporation.

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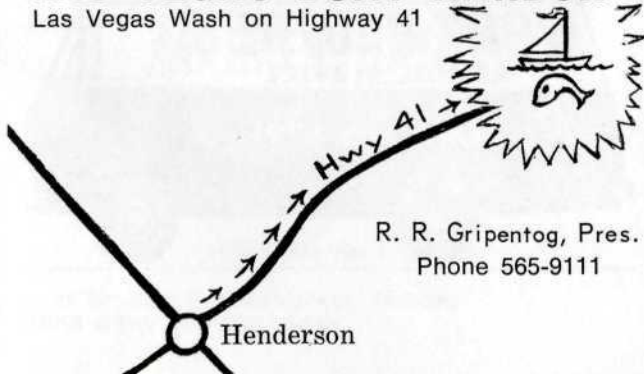
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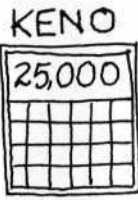
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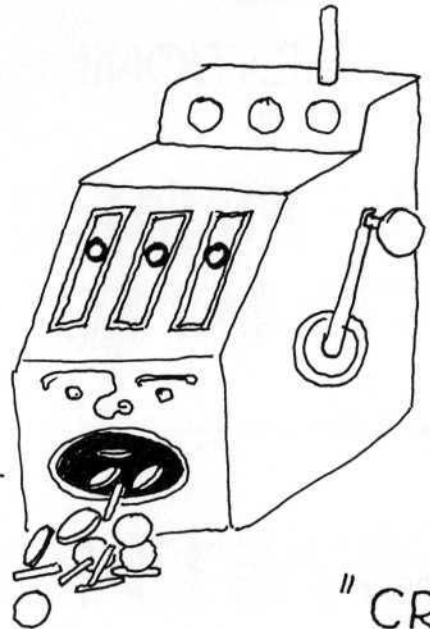
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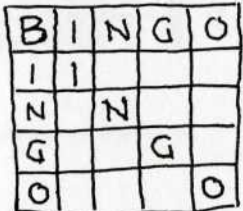
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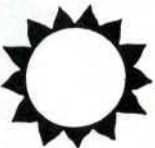
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