

# THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION



A newsletter of the city of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department.

The Historic Preservation Commission is dedicated to saving the city's legacy and heritage.

## Henderson House

A former residence in the Las Vegas High School Historic Neighborhood, the Henderson House 704 S. Ninth St., has been listed on the local historic register by the city of Las Vegas. The neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, the building is the law office of State Assemblyman Richard "Tic" Segerblom, who requested the designation.

The Spanish/Mission Revival style of the property was described by Cathie Kelly, Ph.D, as a "tiled roof, two-story house exceptionally complex in plan and elevation. A picturesque quality is produced through the contrast of high and low and projecting and receding elements of curved and rectilinear openings, and of roof types (gable, shed and hip.) The cantilevered balcony with bracket capitals is reminiscent of the Monterey style." The interior was restored in 1987 by then owners Susan and Michael Ostanik.

### Architecture

Nevada State Senator Albert Scott Henderson commissioned noted Las Vegas architect A. L. Worswick to design his family residence. C.A. Bryant built the house for \$10,000 in 1930. The Henderson House follows the Southern California (Monterey)



tradition with its sloping roof and balcony rather than the Southwestern flat roofed Puebloid tradition.

Worswick was a very important architect in early Las Vegas. He came to Las Vegas in 1929 from San Francisco, where he had been chief architect in that city's Planning Department. He designed many of Las Vegas' early residences and commercial buildings, including the Apache Hotel (now Binion's Gambling Hall & Hotel), the adobe Las Vegas Hospital at Eighth Street and Ogden Avenue (destroyed by fire), schools, a movie theater, a bank, a supermarket and many offices.

Mission Revival was Las Vegas' most popular architectural style in the 20th century's teens, twenties and early thirties. Arcade-fronted businesses

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Robert Stoldal is a true and dedicated Las Vegas. He came to Las Vegas in 1957 when his father began working for the Atomic Energy Commission. He attended Las Vegas High School and started his news career writing for the high school paper. He

aire industrialist and multiple casino hotel owner, Howard Hughes, owned the station in the late 60's through the late 70's.

Stoldal currently serves as chairman of the city's Historic Preservation Commission and chairman of the board of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society. He serves on the board of the State Commission on Cultural Affairs, the Great Basin National Park Foundation and the Las Vegas Springs Preserve Foundation. Stoldal also served on the Las Vegas Centennial Celebration Commission's Executive Board.

Stoldal, former U.S. Senator Richard Bryan, and other Nevadans launched Preserve Nevada in the spring of 2002. Stoldal serves as vice chairman of the organization whose goal is to preserve the history and historical structures of Nevada. Preserve Nevada is an affiliate of the National Historic Trust.

## Biography Corner: Robert Stoldal

was the editor of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas newspaper while attending college. His television news career began in 1967 at KLAS and he has been a television news director for 30 years. His tenure included the years when billion-

## Conference

### National Trust for Historic Preservation

Vice-Chairman Dorothy Wright attended the annual National Trust for Historic Preservation conference in late October, 2006, in Pittsburgh, Pa. Conference seminars focused on "green building" and the impact that energy conservation can have, not only on historic preservation, but on the community. Wright attended sessions on historic preservation and green buildings, preservation easements, guidelines for National Register nominations, and panel discussions on "Workable Strategies in Preservation."

"Pittsburgh's beautiful historic neighborhoods and monumental architecture made the conference all the more stimulating," Wright said. "Downtown Pittsburgh is a treasure house of 19th and early 20th century gems, and greater

Pittsburgh is incredibly beautiful with its three rivers spanned by hundreds of bridges."

Pittsburgh's reputation as a coal dust-covered industrial city has been hard to live down. Many are still unaware of the massive cleanup in the 1960's that has resulted in one of the most beautiful, European style cities in the country. Keynote speaker historian David McCullough, a Pittsburgh native, gave an evocative and heartfelt address about growing up in Pittsburgh and enjoying its free cultural amenities courtesy of the gilded-era philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie.

Historic Preservation Commission board members attend regional and national professional conferences when funding is available to learn the latest methods and gain new information in historic preservation.

## ACCLAIMED LOCAL HISTORIAN PASSES

Noted historian, Dr. Hal Rothman passed away on February 25, 2007. In his nearly 14 years at the History Department at UNLV, Rothman distinguished himself and the university through his teaching, research and service.

He served as the department chair from 2002-2005, published 15 books, numerous articles

and earned a national and international reputation in his field. Former UNLV President Carol Harter presented him with the UNLV Distinguished Professor Award in recognition of his many achievements at the May 2006, UNLV commencement. He will be remembered fondly.

# P Preservation Update



## La Concha Motel Lobby

The historic la Concha Motel Lobby was successfully moved to the Neon Boneyard, just south of Cashman Field, during the week of Dec. 18, 2006. A team of architects, engineers and construction specialists carried out the complex task of cutting the concrete building into eight pieces and trucking them down the Strip to the Boneyard.

The museum's board has raised most of the funding for its reassembly with donations from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the Las Vegas Centennial Commission, and the Nevada Cultural Affairs Commission, and matched by a number of private donors. The target date for reassembly is the end of 2007.

The museum is working closely with the city of Las Vegas to create a master plan that will include the Neon Museum and Boneyard and the city's planned Neon Park, just to the north, in one unified campus.

Funding is needed to build a small addition to the structure for offices and work space. The Neon Museum is continuing to apply for grants and seeking donations. For more information call the Neon Museum office at 387-NEON (6366) or log on to [www.neonmuseum.org](http://www.neonmuseum.org).

## Henderson House

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once lined Fremont Street. Many of the early public and commercial buildings employed Mission Revival style—the first high school, the Victory Hotel, the railroad depot, the Las Vegas Hospital, and the two-story Whitehead House on North Seventh Street.

### History

Born in a family of six children on Nov. 2, 1879 in Eureka, Nev., Henderson began his career as a rural school teacher, attended the University of Nevada for a time and then took a job as a law clerk for Judge Breen in Eureka. He was admitted to the Nevada State Bar in 1908 and also elected district attorney in Eureka in 1908. When the Eureka bank failed, taking with it his life savings, he and his wife came to Las Vegas in 1910. He found work as a school teacher and in 1914 be-

came the superintendent of schools for the fledgling Las Vegas School District.

His love of community service led him to seek public office. In the 1920's, he served in the Nevada Assembly for six years and was named Speaker of the Assembly. In the 1930's he was elected to the State Senate, where he served for four terms. Later in the decade he also became the city of Las Vegas city attorney, president of the school board, and was appointed rent director with the federal Office of Price Administration during World War II. In 1946 he was named district court judge, a position he retained until his death.

Henderson died in 1961 at the age of 82. At his death, Al Cahlan, editor of the Las Vegas Review-Journal said, "From his humble beginnings in Eureka, "Bert" Henderson, by dint of hard work and devotion to duty, built himself a heritage in southern Nevada which will not soon be forgotten."

## Preservation News

### Governor Gibbons Appoints Director of the State Department of Cultural Affairs

Michael Fischer of Gardnerville, Nev. was appointed the new director of the state's Department of Cultural Affairs this past January. The department includes the Division of Museums and History, the State Historic Preservation Office, the State Library and Archives and the Nevada Arts Council.

Dave Millman, curator of collections and history at the Nevada State Museum in Lorenzi Park was recently quoted in the Las Vegas Sun saying that Fischer "...has done a lot of historical research. It gives him a firsthand appreciation of what the department has and offers."

Two major legislative initiatives are on the front burner for the department; additional funding for the pro-

posed Nevada State Museum at the Springs Preserve and legislative funding for marketing of the state museums. The existing state museum at Lorenzi Park will become a branch office of the state's Cultural Affairs Department.

Fischer, 58, is a dentist by profession, former Douglas County commissioner, president of the Douglas County Historical Society and a member of the Western Folk Life Center and Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering. He received a Bachelor of Science in pre-dentistry from the University of Nevada, Reno and Doctor of Dental Surgery from University of Southern California.



## Upcoming Events

### May 2007

#### Nevada Archaeology Awareness Month

The theme is "Travel Nevada's Past" which celebrates transportation and its role in the development of Nevada.

#### National Historic Preservation Month

The theme for National Historic Preservation Month 2007 is "Making Preservation Work!" The National Trust declares it "...a call to action for areas to begin a rebirth of the historic neighborhoods, revitalization of commercial buildings, and improvement of other natural settings in the places they call home."

#### Wednesday, May 16, 2007 – 9:00 a.m.

City of Las Vegas  
Historic Preservation Month Proclamation  
and Presentation of city's  
Historic Preservation Awards  
City Council Chambers, City Hall  
400 E. Stewart Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

#### Saturday, May 19, 2007 – 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

(Tentative)  
Cultural History Fair  
Old Mormon Fort  
500 E. Washington Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

#### Saturday, May 19, 2007 – 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.



Morelli House Tours hosted by the  
Junior League of Las Vegas  
861 Bridger Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

#### Saturday, May 19, 2007 – 7:00 p.m.

#### Helldorado Parade & Events

Route to be announced. Applications for parade entries are being accepted at [www.lasvegasnevada.gov](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov). What began as a tool in 1935 to bring tourists to town following the completion of construction on Hoover Dam evolved into a celebrated event that united locals with community spirit and raised money for local charities. In its heyday Helldorado featured western-themed events such as the Kangaroo Court, Old Timers Parade, Rodeo, Whiskerino Contest, Beauty Parade and Children's Parade. These events are once again planned for 2007 and will take place at Cashman Center.

### June 2007

#### Friday, June 8, 2007

Springs Preserve Public Grand Opening

# Gone But Not Forgotten:

## The Historic Union Pacific Railroad Buildings

Las Vegas saw one of the last great industrial railroad buildings, the ice plant, burn down at the old Union Pacific railroad yard in 1988. The tragedy was broadcast by local news channels with coverage befitting the loss of a community icon. Built in 1908, the ice plant exemplified America's obsession with industry and transportation at the turn of the 20th century. After 80 years, its stately utilitarian form had become a landmark of Las Vegas' industrial skyline.

Before the ice plant fire, most of the railroad complex had already succumbed to the wrecking ball or fire. And with it went the remains of the major force that created Las Vegas and the ability to see, touch and accurately interpret the city's early development.

The importance of the railroad to Las Vegas cannot be understated. They owned the

land, the utilities, and were the primary employer of the new townsite. They had complete control over the physical and commercial development of Las Vegas.

Over 100 years ago in 1905, Las Vegas was established as a division point on the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Company. The railroad laid out a townsite and auctioned off lots for William A. Clark's Las Vegas Townsite. The lots were located east of the railroad tracks with Fremont Street as the heart of the town's business district.

The railroad yards were located downtown, west of Main Street. By 1911, most of the railroad's major industrial buildings were completed, including the machine shops, round house, power house, company agent's house, ice plant and warehouse, Hanson Hall (demolished in 1991).

The ice plant provided ice for the train shipments of perishable food, and generated electricity for the railroad and the town. It was the only facility of its type on the rail line between Utah and California. The building represented the most advanced industrial design in 1908, with a concrete grid system, dropped beams and flat slab construction developed just three years earlier in France.



The Ice House

In 1909 the railroad began building houses for its mid-level employees. Located in four square blocks downtown, the small, concrete block cottages were simple, comfortable and attractive in a modest Bungalow style. At a time when most Las Vegasans were living in tents, cottage residents appreciated the built-in cabinets with scalloped trim, running water, fireplaces and shaded porches.

The original passenger depots were the dominant features of Fremont Street for many years. The original Mission style depot was described by noted architectural critic and author Alan Hess in *Viva Las Vegas: After Hours Architecture* as, "by far the grandest building [in Las Vegas]. The location established the dominance and wealth of the east side of town for most of the century."

The Moderne depot, built in 1940 to replace the Mission style depot, was itself a catalog of the sleek, streamlined Moderne style, with rounded corners, ribbon windows and smooth, white walls. A prominent tower with recessed vertical lines and curved profile reflected the streamlined railroad engine and the spirit of the twentieth century's excitement over high speed transportation.



The Union Pacific train depot

Of these buildings, only a handful of the railroad cottages remain today. In 2002, one cottage was relocated to the Clark County Heritage Museum for permanent display at the Heritage Street exhibit. In 2005, four cottages were moved to the Springs Preserve. These cottages will be restored as part of an interpretive exhibit by 2008.

Sixty-one acres of the original Union Pacific rail yard were purchased by the city in 1995. The new master plan for Union Park includes the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute, designed by architect Frank Gehry, the Smith Center for the Performing Arts, and office, hotel, retail and residential space.



The Historic Preservation Commission is an 11-member board made up of community members appointed by the Las Vegas City Council. The board is responsible for hearing and making recommendations regarding the designation of historic landmarks, properties and districts to the city's historic register; overseeing alterations and new construction of designated historic properties and making recommendations to the City Council. Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each month, 12:15 pm, 731 S. Fourth Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101 except in November and December which are typically held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Bob Stoldal, chairperson

Dorothy Wright, vice-chair

Ray Aikens

Bob Bellis

Mary Hausch

Janet White

James Veltman

Richard Cuppett, P. E.

Pat Klenk

Claytee D. White

Andrew Kirk

Dave Millman, Ex-Officio

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