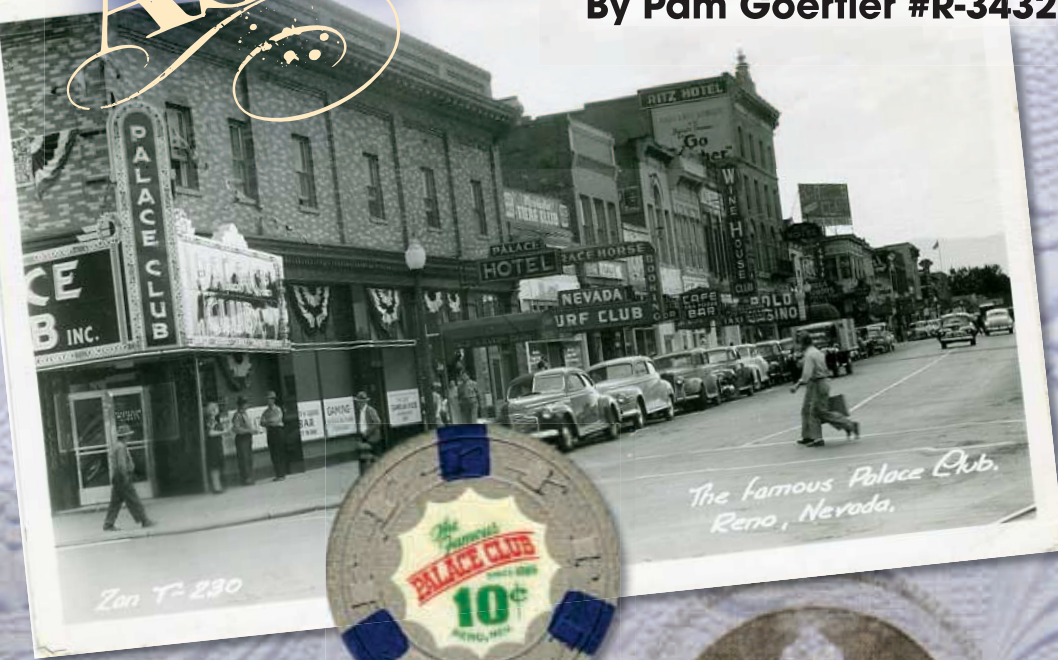


AS TIME GOES BY

By Pam Goertler #R-3432



THE DECADE WAS THE 1930S...

In 1930 families gathered around the radio, to laugh while comedian Eddie Cantor baited orchestra leader David Rubinoff. Listeners sang along to George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm", they swayed and hummed as they listened to "Body and Soul" and "Georgia on my Mind".

The family could go to the movie theater to see the 1930 Academy Award winning motion picture "All Quiet on the Western Front", or perhaps "The Big Trail" which was John Wayne's first leading role.

The stock market, which had started its descent on "Black Thursday", October 24, 1929, kept falling through 1930 and 1931. It finally bottomed out at 41.22 on July 8, 1932, after a high of 381.17 on September 3, 1929...a drop of 89%. The stock market crash triggered the Great Depression; a time when banks failed, businesses failed and people lost their savings, their jobs and their homes.

In 1930 the average income was \$1,970 and a new house cost an average of \$7,145; those figures would drop after a few more years of the depression. A 1930 Buick would set the buyer back \$1,195, a dime would buy a gallon of gas, and a postage stamp was 2 cents. Astronomers discovered Pluto, the 9th planet; Vannevar Bush, an electrical engineer and physicist, invented the "differential analyzer"—the first analog computer.

According to the Las Vegas Review-Journal, on December 6, 1930, federal agents made a raid and arrested nine bartenders from such spots as the Jazz, LaSalle, Green Lantern, Blue Goose, Honolulu Inn, Mineral, Brown Derby and Triangle Clubs. Federal prohibition was in effect until December 5, 1933.

Work began on the Boulder Dam project on September 17, 1930. Prior to that, thousands of desperate families had flocked to Las Vegas, from all over the country, in hopes of being hired as a dam worker. After the hiring was done, hundreds of the still-unemployed stayed in Vegas. Many of them slept on the lawns of the courthouse, across from the federal employment office. Every morning there would be a line of men, a block and a half long, hoping to be hired. About a hundred men a day would quit their dam jobs, because they couldn't stand the heat which went over 120 degrees some days, a few would be fired for not producing a full-day's work for their \$4 a day pay. The call would go

down to the one-room office in Las Vegas "We need 10 muckers and 15 drillers..." The hiring would be done and the workers would pile onto trucks for the bumpy 25-mile ride to Black Canyon.

1931

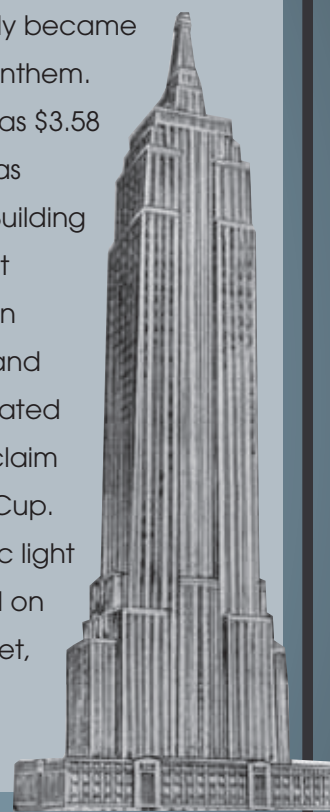


In 1931 Al Capone was sentenced to 11 years in prison for income tax evasion. Francis Scott Key's The Star Spangled Banner officially became the National Anthem.

Federal spending was \$3.58 billion; unemployment was 16.3%. The Empire State Building was completed. The Saint



Louis Cardinals won the World Series and Montreal defeated Chicago to claim the Stanley Cup. The first traffic light was installed on Fremont Street, in Las Vegas.



Nevada was the place to go if you wanted a divorce. In the 1920s, divorce was barely tolerated, causing society matrons to look down their patrician noses at anyone who would indulge in such scandalous behavior! In Nevada, however, divorce was accepted and residency requirements had been dropped from six months to three months. Then, in 1931, the residency requirements were dropped to a mere six weeks and Nevada could market itself as the place to come and have fun in the sun, while you waited out your six weeks. Many stars and socialites who sought a divorce headed for Reno, which became known as the divorce-capitol of the world.

THE NORTHERN CLUB AND MAYME STOCKER-LAS VEGAS

In 1911 Oscar Stocker arrived in Las Vegas, with his wife Mayme and their three sons. With no streets or sidewalks and no flowers, grass or trees, Las Vegas seemed to be on the doorstep of hell. Still, tired of moving every few years because of Oscar's job with the railroad, the Stockers vowed to stay in Las Vegas as long as possible. Like other members of the community, they hiked to the "Old Ranch" on hot summer days, to picnic and spend a few hours relaxing in the shade of the big trees that surrounded the ranch house. They listened to Ben Emrick and his band performing on Saturday nights, they cooled off at Ladd's Swimming Pool on East Fremont Street and they went to the Princess Theater to watch movies.

The 18th amendment went into law in 1920, forbidding the manufacture, sale or transport of intoxicating liquors. The law was widely disregarded by the thousands of speakeasies that operated throughout the country. The Stockers opened the Northern Club on Mayme's birthday, September 5, 1920; to those in the know, the name indicated that they offered more than just soft drinks. Since the railroad frowned on their employees being involved in anything like drinking or gambling, Mayme was the owner of the club. The Stockers served only mixed drinks insuring that, in the event of a federal raid, they couldn't be accused of selling liquor... at least not without the proof from a costly analysis. While wide-open gambling wasn't legalized until 1931, there were five games that were legal before that: stud, draw, and lowball poker, as well as "500" and bridge. During the 1920's, The Northern offered those games under the guidance of Mayme's son Harold, who had learned to deal the games when he was 17; he'd spent the summer working

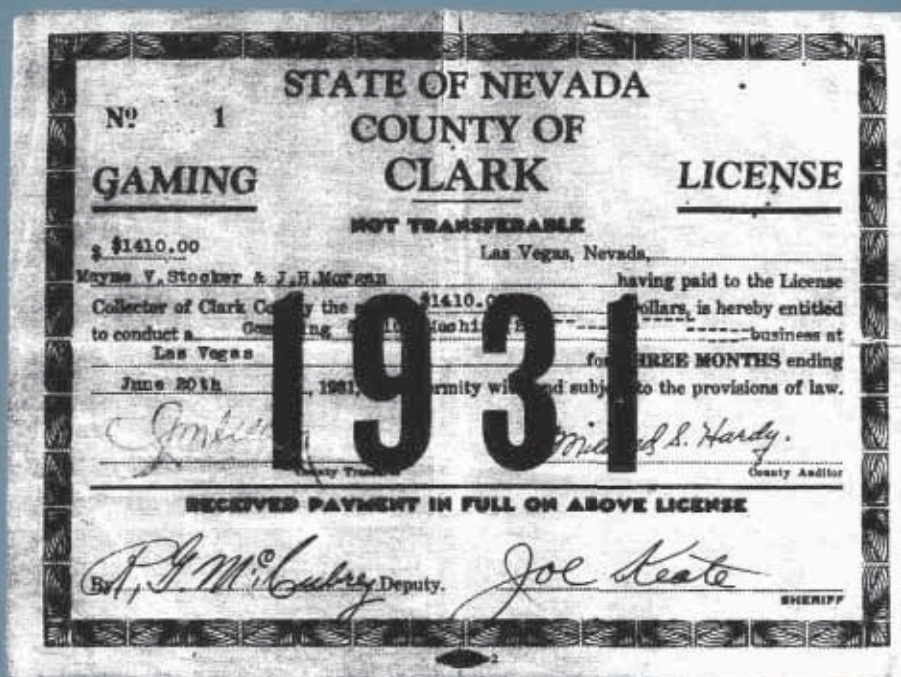
at a casino in Tijuana, where there were no age restrictions.

Mayme's son Lester was a professional gambler who was trying to get wide-open gambling legalized in Nevada. According to his brother Harold, Lester had tried but failed to get it passed in 1925, 1927 and 1929. In 1930 Lester called a meeting with some club owners, businessmen and politicians. The meeting was held at a table in the back of the Northern Club. Reportedly an un-named person said "If I had some money to spread around, I could probably get it done." The Stockers and their partners contributed much of the \$10,000 that was requested. Harold didn't know (or

care) where the money went from there, but Phil Tobin introduced the gambling bill, and it was passed. In a 1970 interview Tobin said that all he made from the deal was three bottles of scotch...he was "just plumb sick and tired of seeing gamblin' going on all over the state, payoffs being made all over the place". On March

19, 1931, wide-open gambling was legalized. It only seems appropriate that the first gambling license issued in Clark County went to Mayme Stocker and the Northern Club, which was located at 15 Fremont Street. According to Fuller's Index, the Club was licensed for 21, craps, roulette, poker and pan.

Harold and his brothers ran the club, while Mayme ran the hotel that was above the club. In 1943 the Stockers leased out the casino, which was renamed the Turf Club and Bar, but Clarence Stocker continued to operate the hotel. Mayme Stocker passed away in 1972, at the age of 97.



The first gaming license issued by Clark County for Mayme Stocker and the Northern Club. Notice the \$1,410.00 fee per quarter!

THE LAS VEGAS CLUB-LAS VEGAS

In 1929 John Kell Houssels moved from California to

Osborne, and Chet Carpenter. Nick hired Bill Graham to work at the Tonopah Club-Bill's first involvement with Nevada gambling. Bill would soon team up with James McKay and the pair would be two of the most influential men in Reno's early gambling history. The Tonopah Club was first licensed on March 23, 1931; it closed in 1974.

CAL-NEVA LODGE-CRYSTAL BAY



The original Cal-Neva Lodge, at Crystal Bay on the north shore of Lake Tahoe, was constructed in 1926 by San Francisco businessman Robert Sherman. The Lodge, built to

resemble a log cabin, was used as a guest house for Sherman's friends and real estate clients. It quickly became popular among celebrities who wanted to escape, for a time, from public view. Continuing the connection between the Cal-Neva and the rich-and-famous, in 1928 the Cal-Neva came into the hands of Norman Biltz, known as the "Duke of Nevada". In 1930 Biltz married Esther Auchincloss Nash, who was a granddaughter of the founder of Standard Oil and an aunt of Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis.

On March 23, 1931 the Cal-Neva received one of the first gaming licenses to be issued in Nevada.

On May 17, 1937 the Cal-Neva Lodge burned to the

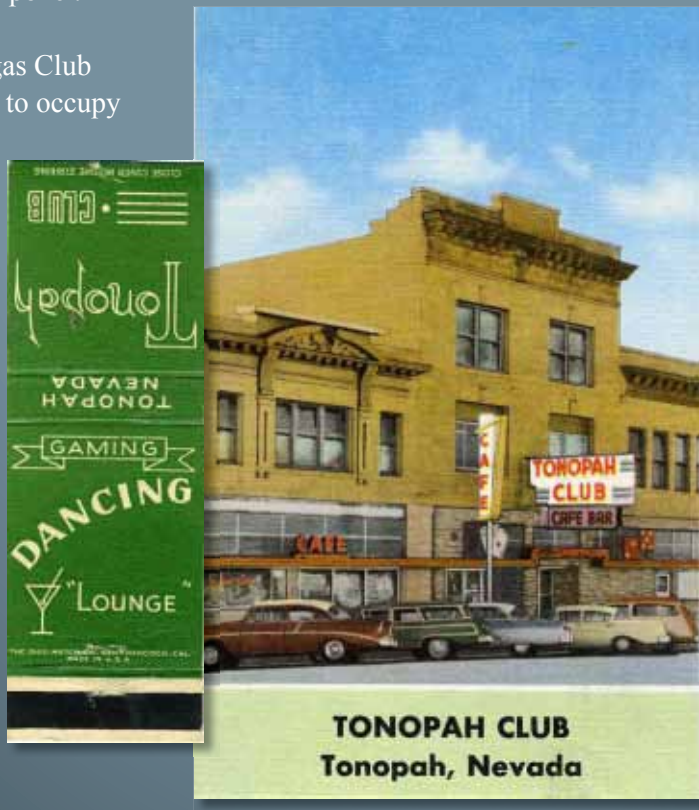


Las Vegas. He paid \$6,000 for one-third interest in the Smoke Shop, at 21-23 Fremont Street and renamed it the Las Vegas Club. When gambling was legalized in 1931 he and his partners J.F. Hordon and A.F. Gillmore were among the first to receive a license for their club. They remodeled their business to accommodate slots, blackjack, craps, roulette and keno, in addition to poker.

In 1949 The Las Vegas Club moved across the street to occupy a portion of the Overland Hotel building. They still occupy that location, though it's undergone many renovations and expansions.

TONOPAH CLUB- TONOPAH

Nick Ableman opened the Tonopah Club in 1913, along with James McKay, Charles Brown, G.T.





A beautiful interior shot of the Cal-Neva Lodge from 1947



ground. Cal-Neva was only open from spring until autumn (have you seen the snow they get up there?), so something had to be done quickly to save the season. Biltz employed 500 men to work around the clock, and the new lodge was built in 30 days, in time to accommodate the summer visitors. The new building included the Indian Room and Circle Bar, as well as a large new casino area. A gold and silver line was added, indicating where the Cal-Neva is divided by the California-Nevada state line.



The Cal-Neva underwent many changes, as it operated under several owners over the years. From 1960-1963 Frank Sinatra owned the Cal-Neva. Two of the changes that Sinatra made were the addition

of a helicopter pad on the roof and the building of the Celebrity Showroom.

Several years ago my husband and I were at the Cal-Neva and requested a tour of the tunnels. The club wasn't terribly busy and a security guard took us on the tour. He explained that a series of tunnels had been built during prohibition, when the original lodge was constructed. Boatloads of booze could be brought over the lake and stored in the tunnels, to be brought out as needed for the guests of the lodge. During later years the tunnels were often used by celebrities to bypass the public while going to and from the showroom. We were shown one cabin on the premises that was reserved for

Frank Sinatra's use, or the use of his personal guests. We were shown another cabin, next door, that was reserved for Marilyn Monroe. Both of those cabins contained direct access to the tunnel system, insuring complete privacy as the occupants went to and from the showroom or to and



ABOVE: George Goertler (Right), tour guide, and a Marilyn Monroe cardboard cut out at the entrance of one of the tunnels beneath The Cal-Neva Lodge.

LEFT: Tunnels have since been closed off.



Exit of one of the Cal-Neva tunnels in the Marilyn Monroe suite. The trap door is now sealed and carpet is laid over it.

from each others cabins. The guard told us that the wicker furniture in Marilyn's cabin was the same that was there when she used it, but the round bed that she used had been removed a few years earlier. Most of the tunnels had been closed off over the years, but it was still pretty cool to see what was left. The tour ended in the Celebrity Room, where Sinatra's piano still occupied the stage. We were allowed to go on the stage and play the piano, unfortunately I can't play the piano...sigh...

During the Sinatra era the Cal-Neva enjoyed a popularity that it had never known before, and would never know again. Some of the stars that performed in the Celebrity Room were Dean Martin, Trini Lopez, Vic Damone, Juliet Prowse, the McGuire Sisters and, of course, Marilyn Monroe and Frank Sinatra. Peter Lawford was a buddy of Sinatra's and visited the Cal-Neva, as did Lawford's brother-in-law the soon-to-be President John F. Kennedy. It was reported that Kennedy was granted the use of Sinatra's cabin, while Marilyn was in residence at her cabin.

Another visitor to the Cal-Neva was Sam "Momo" Giancana, of Chicago. His visits coincided with appearances by the McGuire Sisters, including his girlfriend Phyllis McGuire. Unfortunately for Sinatra, Giancana was one of the initial eleven names in Nevada's "black

book"...the list of names of persons who are barred from casinos. Admitting a black-listed person to a casino was asking for trouble with the Gaming Control Board and, in spite of Sinatra's arguments, Giancana's visits to the Cal-Neva cost Sinatra his gaming license and he was forced to sell the club.

From 1985 until 2005, after a period of neglect, the Cal-Neva was owned by Charles Bluth. Bluth restored the Indian Room, the casino and the main entrance to their original 1937 designs which include open-beamed ceilings and a slate floor in the entry-way. By the time all of the renovations were complete, the Cal Neva Lodge had become the Cal Neva Resort and Spa, with 200 lake-view rooms, cabins and chalets; a full service wedding and honeymoon facility; a florist, photography studio, video arcade, pizzeria, and a complete European Health Spa.

In 2005 the property was sold again, to the Namcal LLC. In December of 2008 Namcal defaulted on a 26.8 million dollar loan (for three adjoining parcels-the largest of which holds the Cal-Neva), and Canyon Partners, a Los Angeles based investment group, took possession of the Resort. In April 2009 two auctions were held, one in Nevada and one in California; with an opening bid of \$15 million for the Nevada portion, the Resort failed to sell.

BANK CLUB-RENO

The Bank Palace Club originally opened around 1890, at 239 North Center Street, and closed in 1910, when gambling was outlawed. In the 1920s the Club reopened





with a casino operating illegally in the basement. On March 30, 1931, the second gambling license to be issued in Reno went to the Bank Club with James McKay, Bill Graham and Ray Kindle named as the licensees. The



main floor was enlarged to house a casino that was nearly 5,000 square feet—the largest in the state. A new façade was added to the

building, and an electric keno board, with 1000 light bulbs, was installed. In addition to keno, the new club offered two roulette tables, two craps tables,

two blackjack games, three faro games, hazard, pan, stud poker and a slot machine. On April 25, 1931, the newly renovated Bank Club held their Grand Opening.

Jack Sullivan and Tex Hall came to Reno, from Ely, in the 1920's. Both of them went to work for Graham and McKay; Sullivan became manager of the Bank Club. Tex Hall worked at the Bank Club until he was sent to jail in



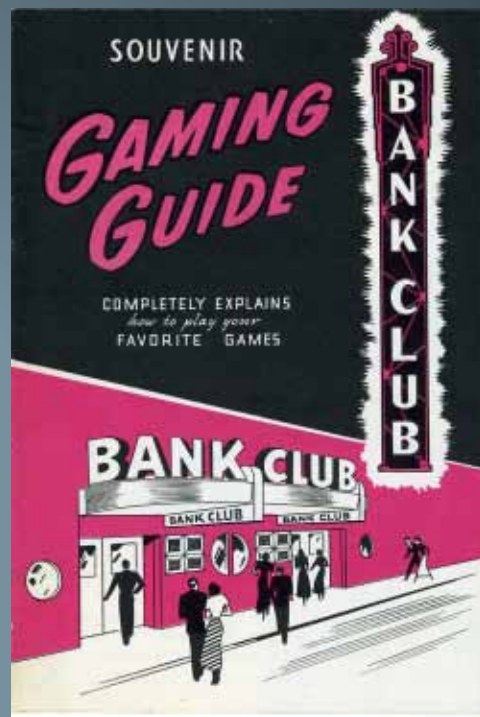
1935, convicted of conspiracy to harbor one of America's most wanted criminals...George "Baby Face" Nelson.

During the late 1930s and 1940s the Bank Club was the most popular casino in Reno; even the owners and bosses of other clubs gathered there to have an after-work drink and catch up on the events of the day. Bill Harrah often visited the Bank Club during the wee hours of the morning. One day a bartender from the Bank Club stole a \$1 slot machine out of Harrah's Blackout Bar. Jack Sullivan thought that he and Harrah should handle the

problem. Harrah didn't agree, he reported the theft to the police and testified against the bartender who was sent to jail. Harrah was never again welcomed in the Bank Club.

In 1950 Jack Sullivan sold his share of the Bank Club back to Graham and McKay. Then, in 1952 Graham became the sole lessee. He

negotiated a 20-year lease with Frank Hofues, owner of the Golden Hotel, and the casino became known as the Golden Bank. In 1954 Hofues sold the Golden Hotel to James and William Tommerlin. Soon the Tommerlins and their partners bought out the years that remained on the casinos lease. Effective on December 1, 1955, the Tommerlins were licensed by the state for nearly 300 slot machines and a dozen table games. That was the end of Bill Graham's career as a Reno casino owner. On April 3, 1962, the Golden Hotel and the Golden Bank Casino were destroyed by fire.

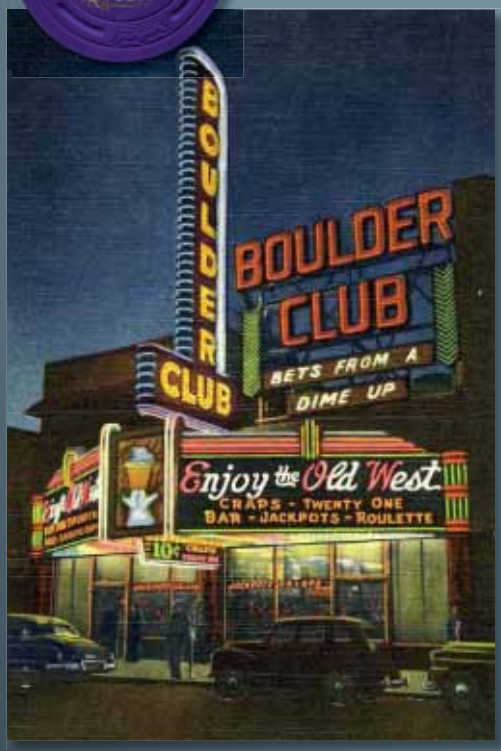
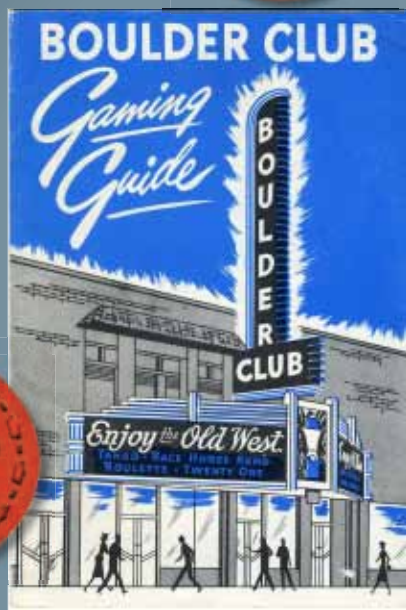


BOULDER CLUB-LAS VEGAS

The Boulder Club was opened in 1929 by P.J. Goumond, Clyde Hatch, J.V. Murphy and Walter Watson. It was advertised as a club for gentlemen, where cigars, cigarettes and soft drinks were available. On April 1, 1931 the

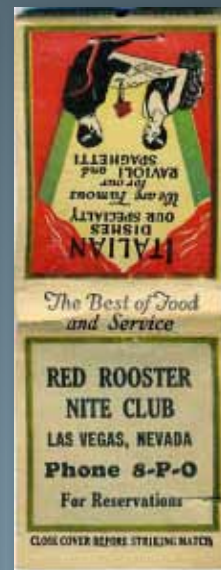
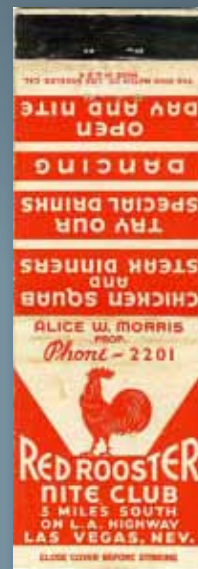


offerings were expanded to include slots, 21, craps, big 6, faro, keno and poker. The Boulder Club closed in 1960, and the Fremont Street property was taken over by the Horseshoe Club.



RED ROOSTER-LAS VEGAS

Alice Wilson Morris opened the Red Rooster, on the L.A. Highway (later the address would be known as 3201 Las Vegas Boulevard South), in 1931. The single story building had a stage for a singer and orchestra, a dance floor and a restaurant. It also served liquor... during prohibition. In February 1931



A Red Rooster Promo shot from 1946. Photo courtesy of UNLV Special Collections

a federal marshal ordered the Red Rooster to stop selling alcohol, or they would risk being shut down by federal agents. The management of the club complied with the order...for awhile.

On April 1, 1931, the Red Rooster received a license to operate one blackjack table and three slot machines. Then, in July, the club was raided by federal agents who found that liquor was again being sold. Morris was charged with illegal liquor sales and the Red Rooster earned the dubious honor of being the first casino to lose its gambling license.

In 1933, after prohibition was repealed, the county granted the Red Rooster a license to serve beer. In July of 1933 the Club burned to the ground. Like a phoenix, it

quickly rose from the ashes and reopened on December 30, 1933; the club soon regained its former popularity.



In 1947 actress Grace Hayes bought the club and renamed it the Grace Hayes Lodge. A motel, also known as an “auto court”, named the Sans Souci had been added to the property. Hayes changed the club’s name back to the Red Rooster and sold the club in 1950, only to buy it back a year later. In 1953 she sold the club again.

The club was sold several more times and operated under various names including Hi-Ho and the Patio Club. From 1955 until 1962 it operated as the Sans Souci Hotel. In 1963 the Castaways was built on the site; in 1987 it closed. The Mirage, which opened in 1989, is the current occupant of the property.

BRUNSWICK CLUB-RENO

Licensed for poker and pan only, on April 1, 1931, The Brunswick was a small club that was located in the Golden Hotel. The Brunswick closed in 1946 when the Golden Hotel was sold.

LAWTON'S HOT SPRINGS-RENO

In the 1880s Sumner Laughton opened a resort about five miles west of Reno. He intended to call the resort “Laughton’s Hot Springs”, but the first signs were spelled wrong and he didn’t have them changed...thus “Lawton’s Hot Springs”.

The Mark Yori family bought the resort in the 1920s and it became known for its large swimming pool and tree-filled



park areas, as well as the 130 degree mineral baths that it was famous for. Max Baer, later the world heavyweight boxing champion, used it as a training camp in the early 1930s. The resort often closed during the winter months, and the operations of casinos, bars, clubs and restaurants were sporadic as various people leased and operated the property.

Early in the 1930s Felix Turillas and John Etchebarren leased the resort from Yori, and on April 7, 1931 they were licensed for one craps game, one roulette wheel and seven slot machines.

Gene Rovetti operated club Lawton in 1936 and 1937. In 1938 there were eight greyhound dog races each night, with a ten-cent admission charge. In 1939 John Hickock opened a bar, club and dining room.

The property continued to operate under various owners and lessees, under several different names (including Holiday Lodge) until 1982.



NORTHERN CLUB-RENO

The Northern Club, on the ground floor of the Commercial Hotel at 207 North Center Street, was one of the earliest casinos in Reno to be granted a license. The casino, owned by Felix Turillas Sr. and John Etchebarren,





opened in the Spring of 1931 with craps, hazard, faro, 21, a big-six wheel, pan, stud poker and three slot machines. In May of 1936 a \$4,000 limit keno game was added. The Northern operated until December of 1940, when it was sold and renamed the Barn.



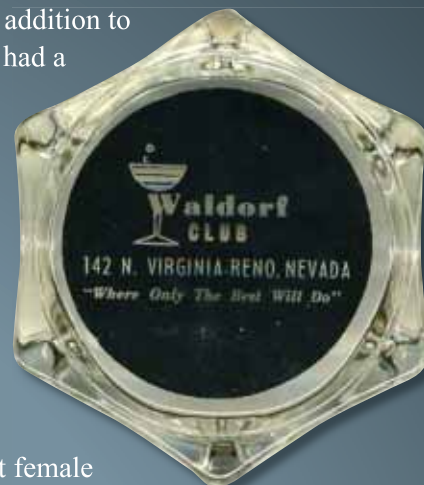
WALDORF CLUB-RENO

In April of 1931 the Waldorf Club, located at 142 North Virginia Street, received their first gambling license... for five slot machines. Over the next few months Robert Preston and Charles Brenda, owners of the club, added



various table games. In addition to the casino, the Waldorf had a smoke shop, a barber shop, a sandwich bar and offered Coca-Cola soft drinks.

In December 1932 Robert Preston died, leaving his share of the club to his widow Mildred. Thus Mildred Preston became the first female casino owner in Northern Nevada. Mildred, with Charles Brenda, operated the Waldorf until they sold it in 1938.



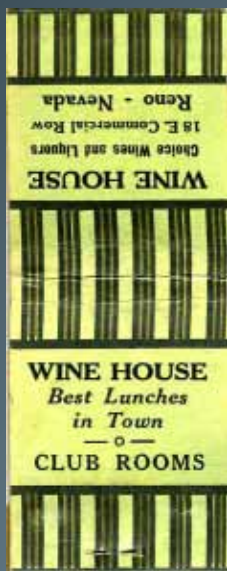
Throughout the next forty years the Waldorf was sold several times. It offered different games under different owners, and at times operated without gambling. In 1979 the property was sold to the Club Cal-Neva, which closed the Waldorf on July 28, 1979.

WINE HOUSE-RENO



The Wine House was originally opened in 1874 by Eli Frankovich. From the early 1900s through the 1920s the club offered a bar, a restaurant and all kinds of gaming including, at one time, cock-fighting.

The Wine House was located at 16-18 East Commercial Row, with entrances on both Commercial Row and Douglas Alley. It was licensed on April 6, 1931 for pan, craps, 21, roulette, faro and big-six. In August a racehorse pool was added; in October space was leased out for a faro game; racehorse keno was added in 1936. They also offered wire services from every major-league baseball park in the country.



As the years passed, the Wine House became more popular for food then for gambling, and the gambling became almost non-existent. In 1961 the property was sold to Harold's Club; the building was razed in the 1970s.



he got caught and was convicted. Cornero escaped before being incarcerated, but he later turned himself in. He served two years.

Soon after his release from jail Tony and his brothers Frank and Louis moved to Las Vegas. They purchased land near the intersection of Fremont Street and Charleston Boulevard and, early in 1931, built a casino with a small hotel. The hotel had electric lights and it had 30 rooms, each with a private bath. The casino opened on May 3, 1931, it was carpeted and was considered luxurious, at the time. It offered slots, 21, craps and roulette to its patrons. According to one old-timer, the casino was in the south wing of the building and there were about four parapets around the walls. Seated behind the parapets were guys with 30-30 rifles, ready to take care of anyone who came in with the intention to rob the place. He also says that The Meadows used silver dollars, instead of chips, because a bag of silver dollars weighs a lot, so if anyone tried to "heist them" they wouldn't be able to run fast and they wouldn't get away with much. Two months after The



TONY CORNERO AND THE MEADOWS-LAS VEGAS

Tony Cornero (born Anthony Stralla) was an entrepreneur. During the 1920's Tony ran a small fleet of boats...ostensibly shrimp boats. The shrimp, however, were only on the boats to hide the real cargo, which was booze. After all, during prohibition booze was much more



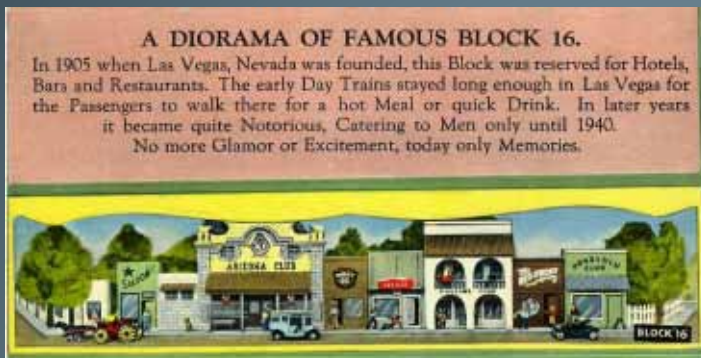
profitable than shrimp, and Tony was in it for the money. The "shrimp" boats waited off the coast of California, where they were met by smaller speedboats. Under the cover of darkness, Cornero would oversee the transfer of the cases of liquor into the smaller boats, which would then speed to a deserted beach where the booze could be unloaded before dawn. Cornero became a millionaire...then

Meadows opened, the Corneros sold the hotel part of the operation to Alex Richmond. Then, on Labor Day in 1931, the hotel burned to the ground. The Corneros continued to run the casino until early in 1932, when Tony returned to California to operate the SS Rex; a gambling ship that was anchored beyond the three-mile limit, but was only a 10-minute water-taxi ride from Santa Monica. According to Fuller's Index, The Meadows closed after a fire on February 2, 1943.

THE ARIZONA CLUB-LAS VEGAS

When Las Vegas was formed the railroad decreed that Block 16, and the lesser known block 17, were the only

areas in town where liquor could be sold. Block 16 was bordered by 1st Street, 2nd Street, Stewart and Ogden.



In 1905 The Arizona Club, an elite saloon and gambling hall, was built at 219 North 1st Street, by Jim McIntosh, and became known as “The Queen of Block 16”. The Club’s front door had beveled leaded glass and the fifty-by-seventy-five-foot bar was made of mahogany. Until gambling was outlawed in 1910, The Arizona Club offered nickel slot machines, faro, roulette and blackjack; drinks were fifteen cents each, or two for a quarter. There were other less elegant clubs on the block that offered liquor and gambling; The Gem, Red Onion, Turf and the Favorite. It’s been reported that a few of the clubs added “ladies” to the amenities that they offered--the Star Saloon, Double O and the Arcade. When McIntosh sold the Arizona Club, a second story was added with rooms and “ladies”. On July 7, 1931, the Arizona Club was licensed for slots and blackjack. The Club closed in 1942 and William Moore bought the beveled barroom entrance and the mahogany bar for use in the Last Frontier Casino.

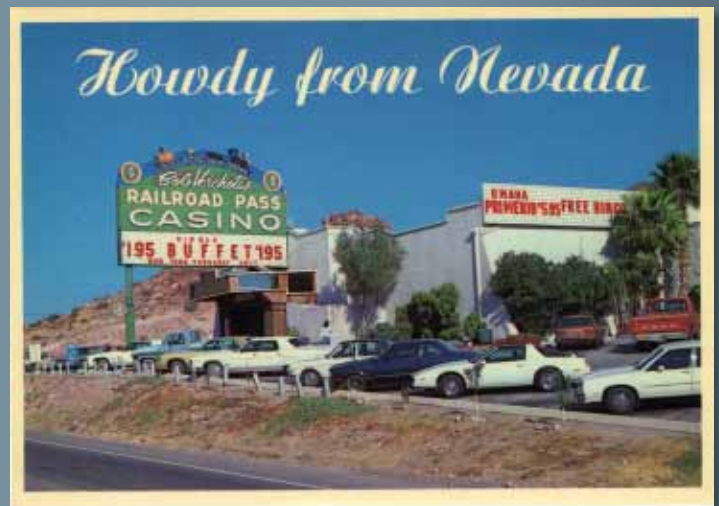


RAILROAD PASS-HENDERSON

Las Vegas was the closest town to the Boulder Dam site, but it was a 25-mile trip on an unpaved road, not really a reasonable option for most workers. In addition, Las Vegas

had a bad reputation because “everyone knew” that women, liquor and gambling were all readily available, in spite of being illegal. The Bureau of Reclamation was in charge of getting the dam built, and they decided on the location of Boulder City as the best area to build a town for the dam workers. They built dormitories for single men, family cottages and government buildings. They enclosed the town with a fence and stationed guards at the gate.

Sims Ely was the city manager, and it was reported that he governed with an iron fist. Everyone in the town had a job; if they lost their job, they had to move. People who lived there were issued passes, and they couldn’t just come and go through that gate...they had to present their



passes. Prostitution, gambling and alcohol were strictly forbidden, even after prohibition was repealed, and the vehicles coming through the gate were searched by federal rangers. The land just outside of the gate was littered with the glass of bottles that broke when they were tossed out the windows of cars approaching the gate.

Sims couldn’t control what happened outside of the gate. While there were dozens of tent bars and roadhouses between Boulder City and Las Vegas, the closest was only a quarter-mile beyond the gate; Railroad Pass. Opened on August 1, 1931, and the recipient of one of the earliest gaming licenses in Clark County, the Railroad Pass started as just one big room. There was a bar against the back wall, and dancing was in the front, with a three-piece orchestra. There was a pool table in front of the RR Pass, and when a customer got too drunk, they’d be stretched out on the pool table until they could navigate again.

RR Pass could be a rowdy place, filled with construction workers that were ready to let off steam. One time there

was a high scalers ball, and several fights broke out, nothing too serious, just their way of having fun...one of the attendees quipped that it should have been called the "High Scalers Brawl". Since many of the dam workers were single men, the RR Pass was an ideal place for single women to earn some money. The working-girls were discreet and didn't mingle with the women or families from Boulder City, there were a few cabins out in back where they entertained their male guests. Gambling was also available, but during the early 1930s it seemed secondary in importance behind the alcohol and the prostitutes.

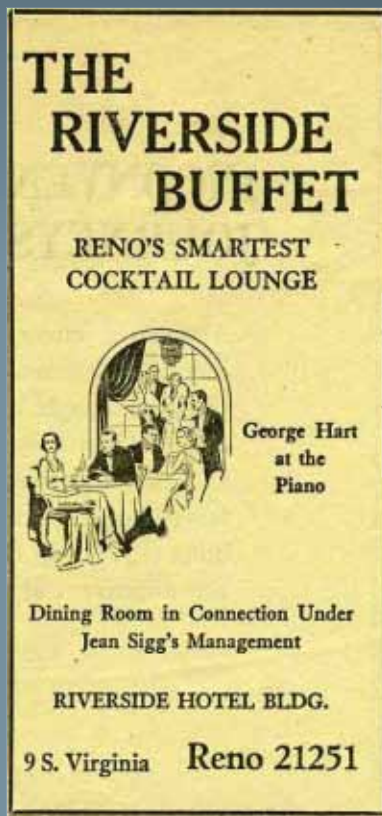


Still open, the RR Pass Casino advertises that they hold the oldest active license in Southern Nevada.



RIVERSIDE-RENO

In 1925 George Wingfield bought the property at 17 South Virginia Street. He built the Riverside Hotel, and in 1931 he received a gambling license. In 1933 he leased out a portion of the hotel to a group that included Nick Abelman. The group called their area the Riverside Buffet and they offered roulette, 21 and hazard in addition to dining and a bar



In 1949 the Abelman group left the Riverside, and Wingfield leased the gaming concessions to Mert Wertheimer. Wertheimer held his grand opening on May 7, 1949, with one 21



game, one craps table, one roulette wheel and ten slot machines. Over the years Wertheimer brought in big-name entertainment, including Frank Sinatra in 1951.

In 1955 George Wingfield sold the Riverside to a group that included Mert Wertheimer and his brother Lou, who had been added to the license, as a partner, in 1951. In 1958 The Wertheimer group sold the Riverside, but retained a ten-year lease on the casino, bars, restaurants and entertainment facilities. Five months later Lou Wertheimer



died; Mert died two months after that, and the lease was taken over by Virgil Smith. The Riverside was sold several times over the next few years.

The Riverside closed on December 20, 1962, telling the 325 employees that the corporation ran out of money and wouldn't be issuing their final paychecks. The Riverside

1932



remained closed for seven months while it was reorganized, and it reopened on July 25, 1963. The corporation continued to struggle throughout the 1960s; interests in the property were bought and sold, policies changed and management changed. In 1967 gaming agents confiscated crooked dice and put an end to the gambling and showroom. In 1968 the Riverside was sold, and it closed again, only to reopen in May of 1969, without gambling. In November of 1969 the IRS forced the closure of the Riverside, due to unpaid taxes. Taxes were paid and the Riverside was

sold yet again.

In 1971 Jessie Beck bought the Riverside, which reopened on April 1 with 100 slots, nine table games and keno. She operated it until 1978 when she sold it to Harrah's. Harrah's bought the Riverside so they could trade it to Pick Hobson in exchange for his Overland Hotel-Casino property at the corner of Center Street and Commercial Row. Harrah's would use the Overland site for an expansion.

In 1986 Hobson filed for bankruptcy, and closed the casino in December. In November of 1987 Hobson closed the restaurant and hotel and turned the property over to the bank. Nearly three hundred creditors were unable to collect on well over \$1 million that was owed to them.

In 1997 the City of Reno took possession of the Riverside. Portions of the hotel were demolished, but the original structure, built in 1927, was to be renovated and turned into lofts, restaurants and shops.

BIG 4 CLUB-LAS VEGAS

The Big 4 Club opened in 1931 at 112-114 South First Street. Licensed for slots, 21 and craps the Big 4 closed in the 1940s. Four



different dice styles and six different colors of chips (all are non-denominated) have been found from the Big 4, as well as matchbooks.



In 1932 The Reconstruction Finance Corporation was set up by the US Government, to lend money during the depression, in order to assist in the nation's economic recovery.



Charles Lindbergh's baby son was kidnapped and killed.

Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across

the Atlantic Ocean. Manhattan's

Radio City Music

Hall opened. The NY

Yankees defeated the

Chicago Cubs in a 4-game

World Series. Pearl S. Buck

was awarded a Pulitzer Prize

for her novel "The Good Earth".



In Nevada,

Patrick

McCarren was elected

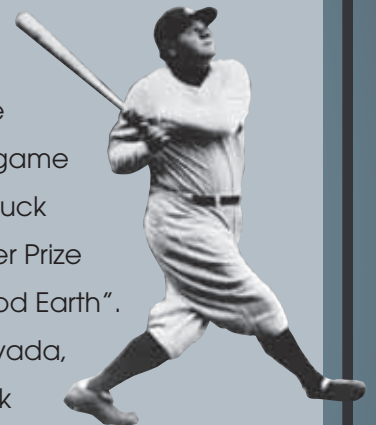
to the U.S. Senate. On

October 29, 1932 every

bank in Nevada, except

three, closed their doors

due to the economics of the Depression.



A Boulder Dam worker reminisces about the Las Vegas of the early 1930s: Probably every second or third building on Fremont Street from the Union Pacific depot down to Fourth Street was a saloon or gambling hall, or both. This was during Prohibition. They never closed them—they operated day and night. There were open saloons within a block of the police station—made no difference. It was a federal offense, not a state offense. Gambling? There was card games, slot machines, the works. Not sophisticated or fancy.

J. H. MORGAN AND THE SILVER CLUB-LAS VEGAS

Clark County Gaming License #1 shows that J. H. Morgan was a partner in the Northern Club. Harold Stocker had met Morgan at the Mexican border town of Calexico, in the 1920s. When the border was closed in 1926, Morgan and his girlfriend came to Las Vegas. According to Stocker, Morgan was active with the Stockers for six to seven years, and then he opened a little place around the corner, on North 1st Street.

It would seem that Morgan's affiliation with The Northern Club ended less than a year after gambling was legalized. According to the minutes of the January 6, 1932 meeting of the Clark County License Board, an application was made and approved for the operation of one twenty-one game at Morgan's Club, located at 108 North 1st Street. Morgan's Club is not listed in Fuller's Index or The Gaming Table. Perhaps Morgan's Club was just a temporary name? Both of the reference books indicate that the Silver Club opened at 108 North 1st Street in 1932, owned by Joe Morgan, and Fuller's Index shows that the licensed games were slots, 21, craps and roulette. Though it changed owners from time to time, The Silver Club operated under the same name until 1956.



SHIP AND BOTTLE CLUB-RENO

The Ship and Bottle Club was located at 222 North Center Street. It was licensed on March 31, 1932, and was operated by Nick Abelman, Steve Pavlovich and Bert Riddick. The front of the building replicated the prow of a ship. The interior of the club was decorated with antiques, including a clock that had previously been used in the captain's quarters on an old sailing ship.

The elegant club offered slots, blackjack and roulette, and featured top-quality entertainment. Many of the patrons were wealthy divorcees and celebrities including Barbara Hutton, actress Mary Pickford and boxing champ Max Baer.



The Ship and Bottle was sold several times over the years but continued to operate until late 1940. In February of 1941 the property reopened as the 222 Club.

HOTEL APACHE AND APACHE CASINO-LAS VEGAS

In May of 1931 P.O. Silvagni, who had emigrated from Italy in 1904, bought a lot on the corner of Second and Fremont Streets in Las Vegas, next to the Boulder Club. Construction began immediately on a three-story brick building, which would open less than a year later as the Hotel Apache. The hotel was decorated with thick carpeting, oil paintings and chandeliers; hand carved divans and arm chairs were scattered throughout the hotel. The Apache was home to the first elevator in Las Vegas. In the basement was a banquet hall that could hold over 300 people, where many luncheons, dinners and dances were held. The main Hotel entrance was on Second Street, approximately where Binion's newsstand is currently located. The main entrance to the Casino was on Fremont Street.



Silvagni leased the Apache Casino to Charles E. Mason and Jack Doyle. Though the Apache Casino wouldn't open until March 19, 1932, the minutes of the Clark County License Board meeting from



January 6 show that a license for one roulette wheel was approved. Licenses for more games would be granted at later meetings. The Apache Casino closed in 1941. See the Spring 2002 issue of CCTN for an in-depth article about the Apache (available on line at <http://cctn.ccgctcc.com>)

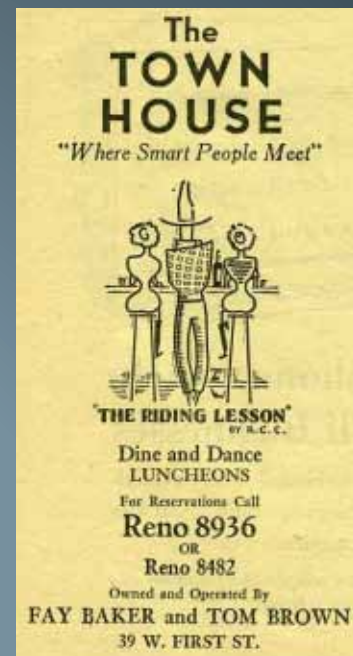


TOWN HOUSE-RENO

Charles Rennie built the Town House at 39 West First Street; it was first licensed on October 5, 1932. The casino, bar and restaurant were on the main floor, with dancing and small parties in the spacious basement. The décor resembled that of a western dude-ranch, including their famous "The Riding Lesson" logo which featured a cowboy flanked by two young women seated on barstools...all viewed from the rear.

The Town House was sold several times through the

years, and at times suffered from financial problems. In July of 1953, with an investment of \$14,000 Carl Amante was licensed by the state for 31% of the Town House. In 1954 Amante became the sole owner of the Town House, though the owner of the land was Mark Yori. Yori planned to have the Town House razed for the construction of a J.C. Penney store and eviction papers were served to Amante in August 1955, to become effective on January 1, 1956. On September 2, 1955 the Town House was destroyed by fire. Two insurance companies refused to pay claims, saying that the fire was the result of arson. On December 21, 1955 the court accused Amante of deliberately burning the property and ruled that the insurance companies did not have to pay the claims.



WHITE SPOT CAFÉ-LAS VEGAS

The White Spot Café, at 109 Fremont Street, was opened by J.M Pappas in 1932 to serve meals. In October of 1949 they added 50 new slot machines and began calling themselves the White Spot Café & Arcade.



1933



The hard hat was invented for the Boulder Dam workers.

Federal prohibition was repealed.

Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany and the reign of Nazi terror began.

President Roosevelt launched the New Deal program.

Unemployment rose to 25.2%.

"Esquire" debuted

as the first magazine for men.

"Stormy Weather" and "It's Only a Paper Moon" were two of the popular songs.

Fred and Ginger danced across the silver-screen in "Flying Down to Rio".



According to the Golden Anniversary edition of the Las Vegas Review-Journal, on March 1, 1933 the Las Vegas board of city commissioners voted keno parlors out. The Boulder Club was refused a keno license; keno licenses of the Rainbow Club and the Las Vegas Club were rescinded.

JOE DINI'S LUCKY CLUB-VERINGTON

Joe Dini had a soft drink parlor in the old mining town of Bodie, California. In June of 1932 two-and-a-half year old Billy Godward, later known as "Bodie Bill", was attending a friend's fourth birthday party. Billy discovered that, instead of cake and ice cream, Jell-O was to be served. He stomped off in a fit of pique, with his pacifier in his mouth. Somehow he got hold of some matches and managed to start a fire. Most of the buildings in Bodie were constructed from wood, and Billy's fire destroyed most of

the town. Many people, including Joe Dini, left Bodie after the fire.



Lucky Club first building on right

Joe Dini went to Yerington, Nevada and in 1933 he opened the Wooden Shoe Club in the middle of downtown. Soon after opening, the name of the club was changed to Joe Dini's Lucky Club, which was licensed for gambling in December of 1933.

In 1938 Joe bought the Bank Bar building that was at 45 N. Main St., and moved his Lucky Club to the new location.

Joe Jr. had gone away to college but he returned home in 1952 to help the family, because his father was ill. In 1960 he bought the Lucky Club business from his father, and then in 1965 he purchased the property from his parents. Eventually Joe Jr. bought the buildings on either side of the Lucky Club, which allowed the club to expand.

The Club is still operating, and is still in the Dini family. If you go to the Lucky Club, be sure to ask about the floor. You see, in 1911 a new floor was put into the building. No big deal...right? BUT...one of the people who helped to lay the new floor was future heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey. The same floor is still there, under the carpeting.

TOMMY'S VICTORY CLUB- CARSON CITY

Tommy's Victory Club was open from 1933 until 1937 at 406 North Carson Street, owned by Tommy Pardini. In 1937 the Club moved to 302 North Carson Street, where it operated until 1954. Over the years, Tommy's Victory Club offered slots, blackjack, craps, roulette and keno to their patrons.



STAG INN-RENO

The Stag Inn was located at 265 North Virginia Street and was first licensed on December 30, 1933. Over the next twenty-seven years various people were licensed for slots, blackjack, roulette, faro, poker and craps.

In 1960 the Club closed and Lincoln Fitzgerald bought the property for the construction of Fitzgerald's.



1934

The Dionne quintuplets were born, the first quints to survive beyond infancy. Clyde



Barrow and Bonnie Parker's crime spree ended when they were ambushed and killed in Louisiana. Near Chicago, John



Dillinger was killed in a shoot-out with the FBI. Detroit has a good year/bad year in sports; they

made it to the World Series, but they were defeated by the St. Louis Cardinals; they made it to the Stanley Cup finals, but were



defeated by Chicago. The Loch Ness Monster was sighted for the first time;

Donald Duck made his debut. The federal penitentiary at Alcatraz opened. Sophia Loren was born.

Five-year old Shirley Temple appeared



in Stand up and Cheer, later in the year she sang On the Good Ship Lollipop in the film "Bright Eyes".

PALACE CLUB-RENO

In 1924 John Petricciani purchased the property at 46 East Commercial Row. He leased out the property for the next 10 years; from 1931 through 1933 he leased the second floor to Bill Graham and Jim McKay for their Bank Palace Club.

In 1934 Petricciani himself received a license for one roulette game and one 21 game. In 1935 the license was



expanded to one 21 game, one stud poker game, two faro, two roulette and two craps games, in addition to six slot machines.

In April of 1936 the Palace Club began advertising "Reno's newest sensation" racehorse keno; post time twelve noon. Racehorse keno proved to be so popular that, only a week after introducing the game, the Palace changed the first "post time" to 10:00 am, with new "races" beginning every twenty minutes until 2:00 am, 4:00 am on Saturdays. By the first of June, the game was offered 24-hours a day, and the game limit had been extended to \$500.



In July of 1943 the Palace Club announced that they had female dealers, for the first time. That November the Palace Club posted an ad in the help-wanted section of the paper, offering young women from 21 to 25 years old the opportunity to learn to deal, and make up to \$90 a week.

John's son Sil (Silvio) had always worked with him at the Palace Club. In June of 1943 Sil entered military service, and John began leasing out the Palace Club again. Various people held the lease until 1964 when John Petricciani's four children applied for, and received, the gaming license at the Palace. Led by Sil, the club was cleaned up, a new restaurant offering good food for reasonable prices was added, and an eye-catching new sign was added to the outside of the building.



On September 28, 1979 Sil Petricciani announced to his 281 employees that the Palace Club had been sold to Harrah's Club. Soon after that, the Palace Club was closed and demolished.

EL CORTEZ HOTEL-RENO

On October 9, 1934, W.H. Rutledge was granted a gaming license for the El Cortez Hotel, which had been open since 1931. In 1941 the El Cortez was renovated and expanded, nearly doubling the room count and adding the Trocadero, a nightclub and cocktail lounge. Adjacent to the cocktail lounge was a casino with two roulette tables, one craps table and seventeen slot machines; blackjack was added later. Table games ended in 1948.



SAL SAGEV-LAS VEGAS

It is believed that the gambling stopped at the Sal Sagev Casino on October 27, 1934, and that the roulette wheel, manufactured by Albert Pick, was packed up and put into storage on that very day, not to be seen again until sometime in 1956. But that's the middle of the story, perhaps I should go back to the beginning...

In 1906 the Hotel Nevada opened at the corner of Fremont and Main Streets, downtown Las Vegas. In 1931



the hotel was expanded and the name was changed to Sal Sagev, which is Las Vegas spelled backwards. There are hundreds of postcards that picture the Sal Sagev hotel, there are ashtrays, china and matchbooks...but there were more questions than answers about the early days of the Sal Sagev. Was there gambling at the Sal Sagev? Did they have a license? What about chips? In the 1990s Gene Trimble did some research and found some answers.

It isn't known if, or when, the Sal Sagev was licensed; there was a fire in 1960 at the White Horse Hotel in Carson City, that destroyed many of the early licensing records. There was evidence to indicate that Abe Miller offered roulette and blackjack games in the early 1930s. In October of 1934 Abe said that he was finished with gambling, and wrapped the roulette wheel plus five colors of SSC roulette chips in newspaper and a tarp, then stored the bundle in the basement of the Sal Sagev. Poker games were witnessed at the Sal Sagev in the 1940s and early 1950s, reportedly with SSC chips similar to the roulette chips that were still stored in the basement; perhaps the chips that had been used for blackjack in the 1930s.



In 1955 Abe Miller made a deal with four men from San Francisco, to open a casino in the Sal Sagev; Picardo, Durante, Ghelfi and Massaro. In 1956 Miller told one of the men that he had something for him "a souvenir of the early days of the Sal Sagev", and he gave the man the roulette wheel and chips, still wrapped in the newspapers and tarp. The man took the roulette wheel home, and it became a coffee table that was shown to Gene, along with 686 chips: 5 brown, 200 white, 162 yellow, 162 blue and 157 green. The chips are small key and were distributed by B.C. Wills. The chips are hot stamped in gold, with SS over an oblong C.

On October 7, 1955 the four men from San Francisco opened the Golden Gate Casino, though some of the early items use the name Golden Gate Club. The décor had a San Francisco theme with the Golden Gate Bridge used often on ashtrays, chips and dice. In 1991 the Golden Gate served their first shrimp cocktail, beginning a Las Vegas tradition that continues today.

TO BE CONTINUED...