

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001527 Date Listed: 10/24/91

Desert Valley Museum
Property Name

Clark NV
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Annuelte Lee
Signature of the Keeper

Nov. 6, 1991
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Description: The roof materials section is amended to read:
"composition."

This information was confirmed with Michelle McFadden of the Nevada state historic preservation office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Desert Valley Museum
other names/site number Mesquite Branch - Clark County Library
Mesquite Branch - Clark County Hospital (Mesquite Hospital)

2. Location

street & number 31 West Mesquite Boulevard not for publication N/A
city, town Mesquite vicinity N/A
state Nevada code NV county Clark code 003 zip code 89024

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Ronald M. Jones 9/16/91
Signature of certifying official Date
Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Antoinette G. Bee 10/24/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/MuseumEducation/LibraryHealthcare/HospitalHealthcare/Clinic

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20thcentury revivals/Pueblo

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls Stoneroof Woodother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance

1941-2

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hughes, Walter Warren

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	1	7	6	7	0	0	0	4	0	8	5	6	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Desert Valley Museum is shown on the accompanying map entitled Part Tract 37, Mesquite, Nevada.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the .14 acre property (APN #670'100'001) historically associated with the Desert Valley Museum.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald M. James, Michelle McEadden
organization Historic Preservation and Archeology date March 1, 1991
street & number 123 West Nye Lane, Room 208 telephone (702) 687-5138
city or town Carson City state Nevada zip code 89710

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Desert Valley Museum Clark Co. NVDescription

Constructed in 1941 as a joint effort between the National Youth Administration and the City of Mesquite, the Pueblo revival style Museum/Library Building has been returned to the same purpose for which it was originally constructed. In the interim of four decades, the building was utilized as a clinic and hospital. Warren Walter Hughes, a local builder, provided the designs and also supervised the building's construction. Although the structures has had minor modifications - interior remodeling, removal of the original doors, and metal bars placed over some of the windows - the alternations do not impair the integrity of this historic structure.

The museum is located on the north side of the only major street through town, Mesquite Boulevard, and is surrounded by various residential and commercial structures. The south and east elevations of the building have landscaping - grass, shrubs, and trees - while the west and north elevations border a parking lot and fenced-in storage area, respectively. Flagstone walks lead from the sidewalk to the east and west doors on the south facade. The square lot on which the Museum/Library Building also contains a one-story, brick garage located at the northwest corner. This non-intrusive structure is utilized by the city for storage (APN# of lot: 670-100-001).

The one-story, L-shaped Museum/Library Building (53' wide by 53' deep) rests on a concrete foundation and has 1' 6" thick rubble walls, filled in with clay, gravel, and bailing wire. A cornerstone in the southwest corner of the building contains historic records.¹ The walls rise to a flat parapet capped with concrete. The roof is composed of pine poles which support the roof sheathing. The poles, which project approximately 6" from the wall surface, run north-south over the main section of the building and east-west over the top of the "L". The asymmetrical facade is divided into five bays; a east and west entrance with two windows between them, and a third window to the east of the east entrance. The windows, which are original, are

¹Interview of Victor Knight and Marion Hughes, Mesquite, Nevada, February 7, 1991 by Michelle McFadden. Notes on file with the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Carson City, Nevada.

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6 over 1 lite, double-hung sash windows. Both the doors and windows have concrete transoms and lintels. The fenestration is asymmetrical around the rest of the facade, with additional entrances, on the west and south walls, at the inside of the "L". A protruding fireplace is located on the east wall; the chimney stack rises approximately 2' above the roof height.

The interior of the museum has been remodeled c.1943, when the museum/library was changed into a clinic/hospital, and in 1984/5, when the clinic/hospital was changed back to a museum. The original appearance of the interior is not know. As a clinic/hospital, the building had seven rooms, including a kitchen and a bathroom. The exterior walls had a rough rock finish, painted white, and partition walls to define the rooms. A large fireplace, painted white, is located in the center of the east wall. The letters "NYA" have been formed in concrete in the chimneybreast. The main section of the building is currently a large, undivided room which now houses display cases for the museum artifacts. The top of the "L" contains an open area, and two smaller rooms, one of which is a bathroom. The rock walls have been covered with drywall in this section of the museum. Other changes to the interior include covering the original flagstone floor with cement, and the addition of posts to support the pine logs which carry the roof (this was done when the original museum was changed to a clinic/hospital).

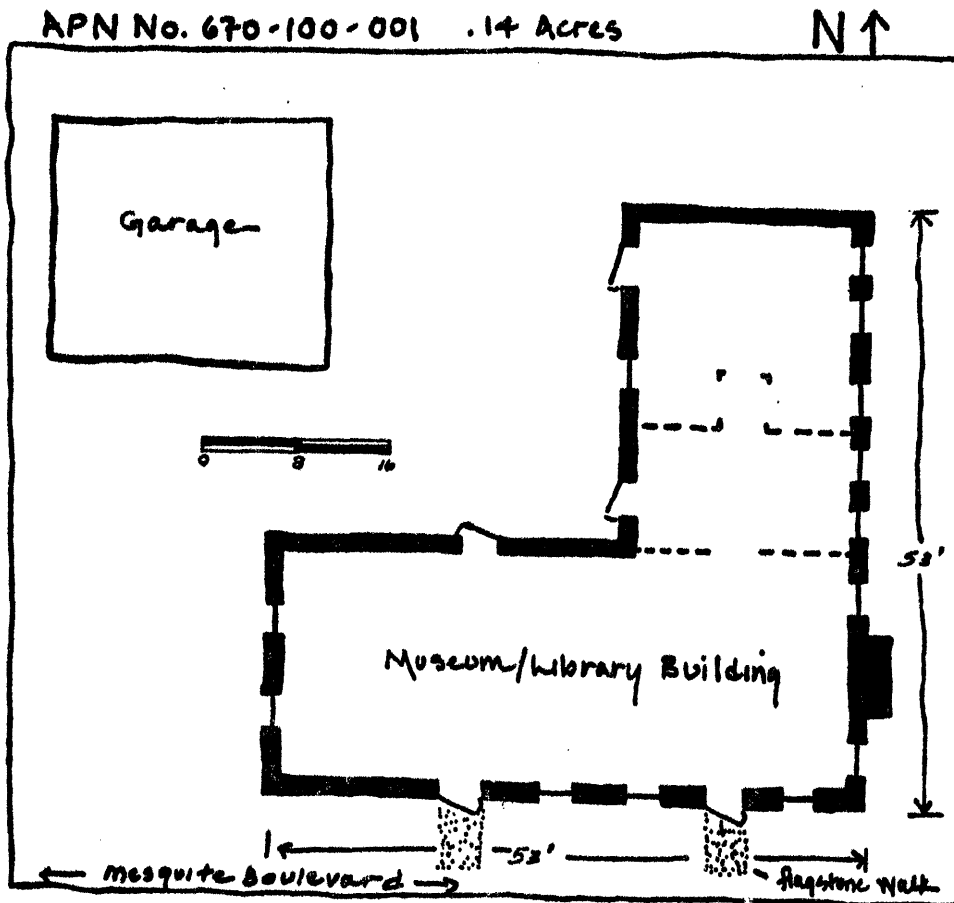
The Museum/Library Building, now known as the Desert Valley Museum is one of the few Pueblo revival style buildings in Nevada. The simple floor plan, the projecting pine poles which resemble the vigas of Hispanic architecture, the dual entrances on the primary facade, the flat roof outline, and the protruding drainage spouts, are all characteristic of the pueblos of the southwest, and the subsequent Pueblo revival style. The building is in good condition. Modifications to the interior, replacement of the original doors, and the addition of bars to the windows have not significantly altered the building's historic appearance or condition. A large crack has formed in the west wall, nearest to the southwest corner. Otherwise, little deterioration is noted.

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Desert Valley Museum Clark Co. NV

Photo List

Desert Valley Museum, Mesquite, Clark County, Nevada

Michelle McFadden, Photographer

February 1991

Original Negatives on file at: Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology
123 West Nye Lane, Room 208
Carson City, Nevada 89710

1. Photograph No. 1
Facade
Camera facing north

2. Photograph No. 2
West and North elevations
Camera facing southeast

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Statement of Significance

The Museum/Library Building of Mesquite, Nevada is significant as one of two of the only known surviving examples of National Youth Administration (NYA) activity in Nevada. It is eligible under criteria A and C for association with this New Deal program and for the method of construction and design. Built in 1941 at the end of the program's duration, the Museum/Library building is a vernacular adaptation of Pueblo Revival architecture, a style rarely seen in Nevada.

Setting:

Mesquite is situated on the Nevada/Arizona border not far from Utah. The nineteenth-century Spanish Trail cut through the vicinity, and Mesquite was serviced by the twentieth-century Arrowhead-Trail portion of the transcontinental highway. Mesquite was founded in 1880 when ten families, members of the Church of Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ, moved from St. George, Utah to the north side of the Virgin River of southern Nevada. The Post Office called the community Mesquit from 1880 to 1887 when service was terminated. Unfortunately, the Virgin River was prone to flooding, endangering structures, canals and fields. A severe flood in 1882 caused many of the original settlers to leave the area which was abandoned entirely by 1891. It was, however, reestablished in 1895 by another, smaller group of Mormons who reinstated cultivation of the fields. Postal service was resumed in 1897 to the community, there after called Mesquite.¹ The population has remained limited throughout most of the community's history: In 1900 there were only 102 residents there; by 1940 it had grown to 515; and by 1980 it was home to 922 people, many of whom were descendants from the 1895

¹ See Violet Leavitt, "The History of the Virgin Valley," Nevada State Historic Society Historic Papers IV (1923-1924), 2343-254 and Florence Lee Jones and John F. Cahlan, Water: A History of Las Vegas (Las Vegas, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, 1975), 54.

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Desert Valley Museum Clark Co., NVsettlement.²

Initially, settlers were attracted to area because of its temperate climate and available source of water from the Virgin River. This made the cultivation of cotton and grapes possible. Eventually, cotton was replaced by alfalfa.³

Structures in the valley were originally adobe since the closest lumber supply was 85 miles away and the nearest railroad station was in Milford, Utah, 150 miles away. In 1900 telephone service reached the valley. In 1909 a Mormon temple was erected. About the same time the community constructed a lumber school building. This was replaced in 1923 by "A beautiful cement block building."⁴ By 1923 there were four small stores in town.⁵ The community changed dramatically in 1981 with the construction of a major hotel/casino resort.

National Youth Administration - Criterion A:

The NYA was inspired largely by Eleanor Roosevelt who once said that "I have moments of real terror when I think we might be losing this generation."⁶ While the Civilian Conservation Corps was created to care for the most desperate cases, those young

²James W. Hulse, Lincoln County, Nevada: 1864-1909 (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1971) 49; Forty Years in the Wilderness: Impressions of Nevada (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1986), 20; and The Nevada Adventure: A History (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1972), 150.

³Interview of Victor Knight and Marion Hughes, Mesquite Nevada, February 7, 1991 by Michelle McFadden. Notes on file with the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Carson City, Nevada.

⁴Leavitt, "History," 252.

⁵Ibid.

⁶John Salmond, "National Youth Administration" from Otis L. Graham, Jr., ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt: His Life and Times, An Encyclopedic View (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1985) 278.

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people who no longer attended school and were dropping out of society, the NYA was organized specifically to assist young people who were in school and yet were threatened with the need to drop out because of lack of funds. Created on June 26, 1935 by executive order, it was initially attached to the Works Progress Administration.

There were two divisions of the NYA, one of which dealt with student work. This program provided funding for students, chiefly belonging to relief families, who needed support to stay in school. The second program was designed to assist young people who had dropped out of school. This program provided training to these young people so that they could assume their place in the labor market as qualified workers.

Audrey Williams, who became the head of the new agency, decided that the national office would impose only the most general guidelines on the program to enable state and local officials to tailor the program to fit local needs. John Salmond points out that "By early 1937, more than 400,000 young people were receiving assistance, and the monthly number rarely dropped below 300,000 thereafter. By the time the program was terminated in 1943, more than 2 million young people had received assistance."⁷

Initially the NYA worked on parks projects and community efforts which required little capital but a great deal of labor. This approach was largely abandoned by 1937, replaced by one which called for more technical training, since this was more in keeping with the spirit of the NYA. In 1939 the NYA began yet another transition as it postured itself in the federal effort to prepare for war. Increasingly the youth were trained in the defense industry and as Salmond points out, "From mid-1940, its nondefense function were progressively shed until by 1942 it was involved solely in the war effort."⁸

Nevada's participation in the NYA was minimal. Although the New Deal was generally effective in Nevada, minimal participation was generally the rule due to limited population and to the fact

⁷Ibid., 279.

⁸Ibid.

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that the state suffered less from the Great Depression than others.⁹ It consistently ranked at the bottom in the nation for the number of schools and students participating and for the amount of funds expended. The Final Report of the National Youth Administration: Fiscal Years 1936-1943 points out that between 1939 and 1940 only 38 Nevada schools and colleges participated in the NYA Student Work Program. At the same time, Nevada had only 301 students participating--213 in the School Work Program and 88 in the College Work Program. In comparison, Delaware, the next highest state, had fifty schools and 507 students involved. In 1940-41, for further contrast, Illinois had 25,466 students participating and Pennsylvania had almost 30,000. During the fiscal year 1941-42, Nevada's enrollment dropped to 218 and by the following it diminished to 31, reflecting the national process of phasing out the NYA. Similarly, the Nevada Out of School program employed 227 young people in 1940, 268 in 1941 and 187 in 1942. Between 1936 and 1943, \$373,742 was distributed in Nevada through the NYA for both programs. This represents the smallest amount given to any state. Delaware, recipient of the next largest amount, received \$794,928, while Pennsylvania, which received the most, was awarded \$47,998,272.¹⁰

The NYA in Nevada supported college students at the University of Nevada campus (located in Reno) who were employed to grade papers and to help professors. It appears that the program designed to employ young people not enrolled at the University took a variety of forms, but the specifics of the program are not documented in the state.¹¹

⁹See Harold T. Smith, New Deal Relief Programs in Nevada, 1933-1935 (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada, Reno, unpublished dissertation, 1972).

¹⁰Federal Security Agency: War Man Power Commission, Final Report of the National Youth Administration: Fiscal Years 1936-1943 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944) 242-250.

¹¹Personal communication (1/24/91) with Russell R. Elliott, Professor Emeritus, University of Nevada, Reno, History Department who was enrolled at the University of Nevada during the late 1930s.

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The building constructed by the NYA in Mesquite provides an excellent opportunity to understand how the program was implemented in Nevada for non-University students. Although construction of buildings was not a commonly funded goal of the NYA, the program occasionally supported such tasks as a means of employing and training NYA youth. Such buildings were constructed by boys working under qualified supervisors.¹² In this case, Walter Warren Hughes, a local resident, acted as supervisor and builder. There is only one other known example of the NYA building program in Nevada: in Lovelock, Nevada, the NYA funded the construction of a Vocational Agriculture building also in 1941.

The building in Mesquite, Nevada was constructed in 1941. This structure was originally intended to serve the community as a museum and library. It housed the Mesquite Branch of the Clark County Library for about a year after which it was used as a clinic and hospital. The building served in this capacity until 1977 when it was vacated. Following a hiatus of several years, the Boy Scouts assumed control of the building, which in 1985 became a community museum.¹³

The modest size of the Mesquite Museum/Library corresponds to the limited population of Mesquite in 1940 (510 people) and to a sluggish agricultural community. Indeed, no architect was hired for the project and funds for the construction of the building ran out by the time the walls had reached the top of the windows. Volunteers finished the project and lumber was donated for the roof: five students traded their labor at Johnny Bower's lumber mill, located in the Pine Valley Mountains, for the material. A shift in the size of rocks provides evidence of this break in construction: smaller stones are used to the top of the windows above which larger rocks, which took less time to set in place, are used.

¹²Federal Security Agency, Final Report, 152-153.

¹³Much of the information on this building is based on papers on file with the Desert Valley Museum in Mesquite, Nevada. A summary history written by Museum staff is also on file with the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Carson City, Nevada.

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Initially the NYA project employed between fifteen and twenty-five high school students who earned fifty cents a day for work. About five worked at a time. The students hauled rock from the nearby Virgin River.

A newspaper article in the Las Vegas Review Journal at the time of the ground breaking in January, 1941 pointed out that "When completed, the building will house old pioneer and Indian relics as well as mounted specimens of insects and birds prevalent in the Virgin Valley. In connection there will be a school library which will be open to the public."¹⁴ The article also pointed out that the students received training in "rock masonry, carpentry, plumbing, blacksmithing, and landscaping of the grounds."¹⁵ The fact that the building, which continues to serve the community, was completed stands as testimony to the New Deal program and to the voluntary efforts of Mesquite's youth who donated their time when funds ran out to make the project a success.

Vernacular Adaptation to Pueblo Revival Architecture -
Criterion C

The Mesquite Museum/Library building is constructed in a vernacular adaptation of Pueblo Revival style architecture. This style is rarely found in Nevada. The only other known example is in the Lost City Museum, constructed by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers in 1935 in Overton, Nevada, about 25 miles to the southwest. The Lost City Museum was erected to house artifacts gathered from the Anasazi ruins at Lost City overlooking the Colorado River. The site was in danger of flooding caused by the rising waters of Lake Mead, produced by the Hoover/Boulder Dam project. CCC workers were employed to build the museum and to create replicas of the ruins for museum use. The Pueblo-Revival style architecture was considered appropriate for a museum facility designed to house Anasazi ruins since those prehistoric Native Americans, although inhabiting only a small portion of the state, traditionally employed pueblo architecture. Since the Lost City facility was constructed only

¹⁴Review Journal (Las Vegas, Nevada) January 17, 1941.

¹⁵Ibid.

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a few years before the construction of the Mesquite NYA project, and since the Mesquite building was also intended as a Museum to "house [in part] Indian relics," it seems clear that Hughes, the project supervisor, selected this style of architecture as appropriate. As one of the few historic uses of Pueblo Revival architecture in Nevada, the Mesquite Museum/Library is of considerable significance. That it represents a vernacular adaptation influenced by yet another New Deal project makes it all the more impressive.

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Secondary Sources:

- James W. Hulse, Lincoln County, Nevada: 1864-1909 (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1986).
- Florence Lee Jones and John F. Cahlan, Water: A History of Las Vegas (Las Vegas, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, 1975).
- Violet Leavitt, "The History of the Virgin Valley," Nevada State Historic Society Historic Papers IV (1923-1924), 234-254.
- John Salmond, "National Youth Administration" from Otis L. Graham, Jr., ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt: His Life and Times, An Encyclopedic View (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1985).
- Harold T. Smith, New Deal Relief Programs in Nevada, 1933-1935 (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada, Reno, unpublished dissertation, 1972).

Primary Sources:

- Federal Security Agency: War Man Power Commission, Final Report of the National Youth Administration: Fiscal Years 1936-1943 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944).
- Russell R. Elliott, Professor Emeritus, University of Nevada, Reno, History Department: interview, 1/24/91.
- Marion Hughes, Mesquite Nevada: interview, 2/7/91.
- Victor Knight, Mesquite Nevada: interview, 2/7/91.
- Review Journal (Las Vegas, Nevada) January 17, 1941.
- Verticle File: historical information on the Mesquite Museum, located at the Mesquite Museum, Mesquite Nevada; a copy of the file is available at the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

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