

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Harrison's Guest House

Other names/site number: Harrison House

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1001 F. Street

City or town: Las Vegas State: NV County: Clark

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

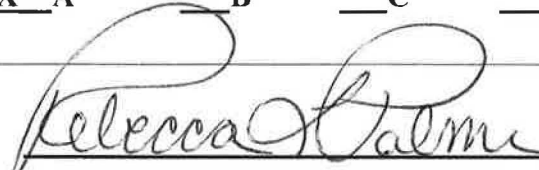
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A     B     C     D

	March 8, 2016
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

*by Barbara Wyatt*  
Signature of the Keeper

*5-3-16*  
Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	<u>2</u>	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Boarding house

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Cultural Center, Non-profit offices

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman  
OTHER

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STUCCO, BRICK

## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

Harrison's Guest House sits on a 0.15-acre lot on the corner of Adams Avenue and F Street in the Ham, Ferron, Martin, & Mildren (H. F. M. & M.) Addition in Las Vegas, Nevada, frequently referred to as the Westside neighborhood. The nominated area includes two contributing and two non-contributing resources. Anchoring the site is Harrison's Guest House, the main house developed between 1942 and 1954 to serve as a boarding house. Also contributing to the nomination is the Guest House, an additional but separate building Genevieve Harrison added to the property's northwest corner in 1955 to further expand bedroom space for her growing boarding business. Once completed, these two buildings formed a roughly U-shaped footprint, creating a small courtyard space in the rear of the property. The non-contributing Shed, constructed in c.1975 along the property's northern boundary, serves as a hyphen between Harrison's Guest House and the Guest House. A non-contributing Masonry Wall bounds the outer extent of the property's east and south boundaries along the public sidewalk. Although there are alterations dating to between the 1970s and 1990s, Harrison's Guest House and its contributing elements retain integrity to the historic period between 1942 and 1960, especially in overall design and floorplan, and in workmanship, materials, setting, feeling, association, and location.<sup>1</sup>

The Clark County Assessor's records indicate that Genevieve Harrison constructed the modest bungalow known as Harrison's Guest House in 1942, although Craftsman-style elements on the southeast portion of the building suggest that it may have been built earlier. Harrison, an African American entrepreneur, operated a boarding house for African Americans at the site from 1942 to her death in 1957, with her sister continuing operations until 1960. During that time, she built several additions onto the main house, and constructed an additional Guest House to expand her accommodations. Currently, the house and its attachments encompass 1,716 square feet in a

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sarann Knight-Preddy, interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013, at the Harrison Guest House. Dr. Knight-Preddy is a long-time resident of Westside and was involved in the operation of the Moulin Rouge; A building permit for the property from the City of Las Vegas' Department of Building and Safety, dated August 22, 1955, outlines some additions to be made to the house, and identifies the materials to be used as "frame and stucco."

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rectangular L-shaped plan on what appears to be a concrete perimeter foundation, with a gable-roofed carport, added in the late 1990s, extending off the north end of the front elevation. The earlier massing and the additions are covered by a medium-pitched gable roof sheathed in composition shingles. The exterior walls of the two buildings and the additions vary between painted brick, or stucco over wood framing.

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

Harrison's Guest House is located in the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas, a historically African American neighborhood located northwest of downtown Las Vegas proper. This area has also been referred to by long-time residents as "Old Westside," and by the City of Las Vegas as "West Las Vegas." The neighborhood was historically bounded by Bonanza Road on the south, A Street on the east, Harrison Avenue on the north, and H Street on the west. The construction of Interstate Highway 15 destroyed much of the eastern quarter of the neighborhood between A Street and B Streets. From the 1940s through the 1960s, the blocks surrounding the Harrison's Guest House comprised a mix of residential and commercial buildings. Currently, there are few remaining houses from the early and mid-twentieth centuries. What few historic buildings are left are scattered among apartment houses, numerous churches, and many vacant lots that reflect building losses to fires, demolition since the 1960s, and recent new construction.

### 1. Harrison's Guest House. c.1942. Contributing Building

The east-facing, c.1942 Harrison's Guest House is a 1,700 square foot, one-and-one-half story bungalow with a mostly rectangular footprint, and a small ell extending the main building to the north. The main building is seated on a concrete perimeter foundation and topped with a medium-pitch, front gable roof with boxed and bracketed eaves. The walls are mostly stucco over frame, with some additions completed with painted brick over frame. A rectangular ell addition extends the main building to the north, and has a north-facing, gabled roof. The exterior walls on the earlier portions of the building are not visible, but inspection of the stylistic elements suggests the wall cladding underneath could be either brick or lapboard. However, the entirety of the building's exterior is currently covered in stucco, added by Mrs. Harrison by 1955. Fenestration is varied throughout, dominated by one-over-one wood sash windows. Nearly all windows are covered with decorative metal grates, added in approximately 1975.<sup>2</sup>

The interior of Harrison's Guest House follows a center hall plan on the interior, with the entry on the east façade, two bedrooms and a bathroom on the north side of the hall, and the living room, dining room, and kitchen on the south side (see attached floor plan).

Though records indicate the modest bungalow was built in 1942, features such as bracketed eaves suggest potential for earlier construction. According to building permit records, Mrs. Harrison constructed four additions to Harrison's Guest House between 1946 and 1954 to facilitate her boarding house business. These spaces added bedrooms and bathrooms to the

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<sup>2</sup> Knight-Preddy interview, 2013.

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The east façade is dominated by a one-story, full-width, hipped-roof porch on a concrete foundation, with metal bars and a gate enclosing its entirety. The four square porch posts are covered by stucco and have decorative imprints on the front (east side). The majority of the porch is an historic feature, but the porch's original poured concrete flooring was modified, likely in 1975, covering the concrete with red tiles, along with the addition of the decorative metal features. A south-facing picture window with decorative metal guard flanks the roughly-centered entryway. Above the porch roof in the east gable end are undecorated brackets at the eave and roof crest. There is a window port that is covered with particle board, and the historic window has been removed. Based on the period of construction, remaining stylistic elements, and a similarly-shaped window opening on the rear of the building, it is possible that this was originally a vent, or a small single-light or one-over-one window. The north addition to the north has a roughly centered entryway flanked by another picture window to the north with a matching metal guard. The east elevation of the north addition is almost completely covered by a carport, added in the late 1990s, with square posts and a low-pitched, front gable roof of a slightly lower pitch than the rest of the house.<sup>3</sup>

The south elevation is anchored by a blonde brick external wall chimney with a tin chimney cap near the southeast corner of the building. East of the chimney is a boxed bay window with an aluminum frame, which was added in 1985. Fenestration along the elevation varies, including a wooden sash window, an aluminum slider, and a modern panel door toward the west end of the elevation .

The west elevation is mostly unadorned except for fenestration, and is dominated by an historic painted brick addition from 1946 that has been lightly stuccoed. In that year, Mrs. Harrison constructed an 8" painted brick-over-frame addition onto this elevation to extend the rear by fifteen feet. It included three bedrooms and a bathroom, connected by a north-south running hallway along the rear of the original house, terminating at an exit centered in the south elevation. The northernmost bedroom in this addition was expanded in 1953, also with 8" brick. In that same year, Mrs. Harrison added a small extension onto the north of the sitting room at the northeast corner of the house. The following year, she further extended this addition to create a den. A door along the back exterior wall has been filled in with stucco. There are three wooden one-over-one sash windows of varying sizes with metal grates, as well as a small wood fixed window in the gable.

The north elevation includes several wall breaks that indicate additions made to this portion of the building. There is a single one-over-one wood sash window on the north elevation of the 1953 addition. Two windows remain on the original portion of the main house on this elevation, but they have been replaced with aluminum slider windows, likely in 1985 during a significant interior renovation.

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<sup>3</sup> Historic aerial imagery available from [Historicaerials.com](http://Historicaerials.com) shows the carport as absent in a 1994 aerial but present in a 1999 aerial. [Historicaerials.com](http://Historicaerials.com) is supported with aerial imagery from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Geological Survey.

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The building's interior retains its historic floorplan. Interior walls are largely undecorated gypsum drywall. Gwen Walker, director of the Walker African American Museum and Research Center, described some of the features of Harrison's Guest House that existed while in operation by Genevieve Harrison:

The interior of the house had a cozy Persian rug and patterned wallpaper complemented a roomy sofa and assorted chairs. There was an array of pictures and mementos. A desk was tucked conveniently in a corner between two windows, thus permitting a writer to have sunlight on either side of him. Guests, including Sammy Davis, Jr (then part of the Will Mastin Trio), Lena Horne, and Arthur Lee Simpkins, would often relax in this room and either take a nap on the roomy sofa or engage in lively conversations.<sup>4</sup>

Genevieve Harrison's sister, Agatha Wilson continued to operate the boarding house until approximately 1960. Wilson undertook the first set of post-1957 modifications when she received a building permit for "exterior remodel" in October of 1975. The inspection record signed off for framing, suggesting that it was at this time that the Shed was added between Harrison's Guest House and the c.1955 Guest House. It is likely that Ms. Wilson's exterior remodel also resulted in the addition of the metal enclosure around the front porch, and the addition of red tile flooring over the historic poured concrete porch foundation.

In 1979, Wilson sold the property, and it rotated ownership frequently until 2009 when it was purchased by the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Chamber of Commerce. Many of the intervening owners made modifications and alterations to the building, although they retained the core historic characteristics of the boarding house. In 1983, the City of Las Vegas issued to owners Leandrew and Lounell McDaniel a "Notice and Order to Demolish, Remove, or Repair" the building. The order claimed that the building, which apparently was unoccupied at the time, had been vandalized to the point that it was substandard. The City gave the owners less than a month to remedy the problems or face demolition. How the situation was resolved is not known, but in 1985, a new owner, Andrew Bowie, undertook an interior rehabilitation, including electrical and plumbing upgrades. It appears that the interior remodel also replaced the interior walls with gypsum drywall, replacing the original materials but retaining the historic floorplan, corridors, and circulation pattern. Rehabilitation over the next two years included the addition of a bay window on the south elevation in 1985, and the replacement of one window on the north elevation of the original building facing the courtyard with an aluminum slider unit. In 1987, Mr. Bowie replaced the roof.

## 2. Guest House. 1955. Contributing Building

The Guest House is a contributing 1955 addition that is situated toward the northwest corner of the property, and is a modest, symmetrical, stuccoed building with a southern façade and a side-gabled roof resembling a salt-box. Gwen Walker described the Guest House as "a small, comfortable guest house situated at the back of the main house used by the likes of Pearl Bailey and her family." It has a centered, front-gabled porch with square posts and sits on a concrete

<sup>4</sup> Gwen Walker, *History of West Las Vegas*, Unpublished manuscript, Walker African American Museum and Research Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2.

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foundation. There is a new panel door at the entry. The house was constructed as a frame building with stucco cladding, and retains this outer sheathing. There are two one-over-one, wood sash windows on the façade flanking the entry. The north elevation is unadorned except for a single one-over-one wood sash window.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Shed. c.1975. Non-contributing Structure

A small, south-facing Shed opens into the courtyard between the main house and the Guest House. The Shed has unfinished plywood wall cladding on the exterior, with a small entry on the south elevation. The north (rear) elevation of the Shed is clad with what appears to be vertical board siding. The roof consists of asphalt composition shingling over wooden sheathing, and is in very poor condition. A building permit from the City of Las Vegas suggest this structure was added to the property in 1975.

### 4. Masonry Wall. 1993. Non-contributing Structure

A concrete masonry unit (CMU) wall with decorative metal fencing, added by Andrew Bowie in 1993, surrounds the . The wall runs along the interior of the public sidewalk, and consists of standard 16"x8" CMUs with CMU posts every eight feet that rise approximately 4'6" above grade. Arched decorative metal fencing intersperses the CMU posts, and is capped with steeple finials. On the east section of the wall is a decorative metal gate of matching style flanked by two CMU posts. Directly inside (west of) the gate is a small, wooden trellis with a rounded arch covering the concrete walkway that leads to the main house entrance.

### Integrity

Harrison's Guest House retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and materials to convey its significance as a segregation-era boarding house for African Americans in Las Vegas. Modifications between the 1970s and 1990s have detracted from the building's integrity of design, but the historic building is still quite recognizable. The two contributing resources retain their historic massing, profiles, and footprints, as well as their stucco wall cladding. The footprint of Harrison's Guest House reflects the alterations made by Genevieve Harrison throughout the period of significance. The façade of the building contains two non-historic additions, specifically the c.1993 stone and metal wall around the front yard, and the c.1999 carport. Although it slightly alters the relationship of the house to the public street, the fence is of compatible design and materials, and its low profile and spacing retains clear views between the street and the house. Although of compatible design with the Gable-Ell plan of the house, the c.1999 carport disrupts the historic massing of the east facade. Other non-historic modifications include some window replacements on secondary elevations, the addition of metal detailing on the porch and most façade windows, and the 1985 addition of the bay window at the southeast corner. Despite several non-historic alterations to the building, including the carport and masonry wall additions, the Harrison's Guest House retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. It reflects its importance as the only known surviving example of an African American boarding house in Las Vegas from the segregation era.

<sup>5</sup> Gwen Walker, *History of West Las Vegas*, Unpublished manuscript, Walker African American Museum and Research Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2.



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Work in Progress

The current owners of Harrison's Guest House, the Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce, and others are working to develop a plan for the Westside neighborhood. Harrison's Guest House, which serves as the headquarters for the Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce will play a significant role in the revitalization of the area, and will be undergoing some modifications in order to maximize its use as a cultural center. Although the final plans have not yet been completed, the work, which will mostly be interior remodeling, will be directed by Rick Van Diepen, executive director of Green Chips, with a goal to become a state-of-the-art, net-zero energy, LEED-certified model demonstration home as well as a cultural and community resource center. The Harrison's Guest House complex is currently listed in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places, as well as the City of Las Vegas Historic Property Register. Due to its local historic designation, the project must be approved by the City of Las Vegas' Historic Preservation Commission (a Certified Local Government) to ensure compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black  
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1960

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942 – Harrison opens boarding house

1957 – Harrison passes away

1960 – last documented use of property as a boarding house

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Harrison's Guest House is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage-Black as an African American boarding house that provided accommodations to black entertainers and divorce-seekers in Las Vegas during the mid-twentieth century. It is also significant at the local level in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for providing boarding services for some of the twentieth century's leading African American entertainers in Las Vegas and on the Las Vegas Strip, including Nat King Cole, Pearl Bailey, and Sammy Davis, Jr.. As in other cities in the West, African Americans who moved to Las Vegas during and after the Second World War faced racial segregation as a matter of law and social practice. Boarding houses became one of the few options available for African Americans who were new arrivals to a community or were traveling through the region. In Las Vegas, a section of the town developed as a distinctly African American neighborhood during the 1930s and 1940s, referred to as the

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Westside. This neighborhood was roughly bounded by Bonanza Avenue and U.S. Interstate 15 on the south, B Street on the east, Van Buren Avenue on the north, and H Street on the west. Harrison's Guest House stands as the only known surviving example of an African American boarding house in Las Vegas from the segregation era.

The National Register currently recognizes four other sites associated with Las Vegas' African American history, including the Berkley Square Historic District (NRIS 09000846), the Westside School (NRIS 79001460), the Clark Avenue Railroad Underpass (NRIS 03001509), and the Moulin Rouge Hotel (NRIS 92001701) listed in 1992 but burned in 2009 and partially demolished in 2010.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

African Americans in the West and Las Vegas

Like many communities in the American West, Las Vegas experienced a tremendous amount of growth during and following the Second World War. Initially developed in the first decade of the 1900s, it remained a small town alongside the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad. In part due to the community's small size, opportunities for blacks in the West were generally limited, outside of specific urban areas including Los Angeles and Denver. Although some groups of black settlers used the Homestead Act to acquire land, or banded together in all-black settlement towns throughout the region, the lack of opportunity, and persistent segregation in western communities limited the presence of African Americans in most areas.<sup>6</sup>

Research and census records indicate that by the 1870s, a small but vibrant collection of African American communities were scattered throughout Nevada. The 1870 census shows just over 300 black residents in the state, which rose to nearly 400 in 1880 (there were 62,000 residents in the state in that year). The volatile nature of Nevada's population, heavily dependent on mining booms and busts, might have affected the representation of African Americans in the census. Although Nevada's nineteenth century black population remained small, many of the state's communities supported small numbers of black entrepreneurs, often without any apparent geographic segregation. However, both economic decline and the results of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court case in 1896 appear to have reduced the African American population, which dropped to 134 in the 1900 census. Black communities remained small (below 1000) within the state until 1940, a trend significantly influenced by the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan throughout the nation in the 1910s and 1920s. Research by Nevada historian Elmer Rusco reveals that between 1890 and the 1920s, there was a general exodus of African Americans from the state, especially professionals, due to segregation, open racism in government leadership, and general exclusion of blacks from most meaningful employment opportunities. Though racial tensions appear to have eased by the 1920s, most communities such as Las Vegas still practiced

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<sup>6</sup> Elmer R. Rusco, "African Americans in Nevada, 1860s-1920s," in *Peoples of Color in the American West*, Sucheng Chan, Douglas Henry Daniels, Mario T. Garcia, and Terry P. Wilson, eds., (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1994), 323-328.

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de-facto segregation.<sup>7</sup>

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During Las Vegas' first years as a railroad siding in the early 1900s, the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad employed several blacks on its local crews, leading to the growth of a small African American community in the town's Original, or McWilliams, townsite on the east side of the railroad tracks. The McWilliams Townsite, platted by J.T. McWilliams, was comprised of former ranch land owned by Helen Stewart, and attracted settlers until May 1905. At that point, Senator William A. Clark, a railroad investor, developer, and Clark County namesake, upstaged McWilliams with his own Clark's Las Vegas Townsite on the west side of the railroad tracks. Although it would become an almost exclusively black neighborhood after the Second World War, Clark's Las Vegas Townsite began as a mostly white area of the city. Senator Clark held the auction for lots in Clark's Townsite on May 15, 1905. Clark's Townsite achieved more success and popularity than McWilliams's Townsite, which later became known as West Las Vegas or the Westside.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1910 and 1940, lack of jobs and housing discrimination contributed to the small size of Las Vegas' African American community in the McWilliams Townsite. Most black men in the community worked for the railroad, while the women worked as housekeepers for white families. In the 1910s, railroad entrepreneur Walter Bracken commented on the ethnic landscape of Las Vegas, stating, "our colored population, Mexicans, etc. is growing very rapidly and unless we have some place for this class of people, they will be scattered all through town." De-facto segregation on the part of the fledgling town meant that most blacks in Las Vegas lived downtown in Block 17 of the Clark's Townsite, roughly bounded by First, Fifth, Ogden, and Stewart Streets. People in the community owned and maintained businesses, and frequently acquired homes that they then rented out, mostly to other blacks who were either temporary laborers or travelers. Segregation of the city's religious institutions compelled black Methodists to establish the Home Mission in 1916. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Las Vegas' community of roughly forty African Americans possessed some economic opportunities, as illustrated by early black residents like A.B. Mitchell, a railroad machinist and real estate entrepreneur. The solidarity of this small community is further demonstrated by the establishment of the Zion Methodist Church, the Colored Progressive Club, and the Colored Democratic Club, all in 1917, and the foundation of a chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1918.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives – Nevada," <https://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/nevada.pdf>, accessed March 8, 2016; Elmer R. Rusco, "Good Time Coming?": *Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975), 124; Rusco, "African Americans in Nevada," 326-327; Ron James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode*, (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 97-99.

<sup>8</sup> Moehring 1995, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History*, (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 34, 53; Moehring, 1995, 174; Clarence Ray, *Black Politics and Gaming in Las Vegas, 1920s-1980s*, Helen M. Blue and Jamie Coughtry, eds., (Reno, NV: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1991), 22-24; Earnest N. Bracey, "The African Americans," in *The Peoples of Las Vegas: One City, Many Faces*, Jerry L. Simich and Thomas C. Wright, eds., (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 79; Moehring, 1989, 174.

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While most venues and accommodations in Las Vegas remained segregated, there is some incongruity in historical accounts about the nature of the black experience in early Las Vegas. After statewide legalization of gambling in 1931, the competitive early casino market generally accepted black patrons openly into the late-1930s. Clarence Ray, an early black resident of the city, did not recall overt discriminatory practices until the 1930s, although other sources from the period, including Bracken and A.B. Mitchell, suggest otherwise. However, the majority of accounts indicate that black community members in Las Vegas faced segregation, declining housing conditions, and lack of employment by the 1930s. In 1931, many residents in the Westside lived in shacks or tents along unpaved roads with no municipal utility connections. It is clear that white attitudes toward blacks in Las Vegas changed in the 1930s as a result of various federal projects, such as the Boulder Dam project (more commonly known as Hoover Dam). These projects attracted thousands of workers of various ethnicities and nationalities from across the country. A significant number of these newcomers arrived from the southern United States, where racial segregation and discrimination had been a matter of course for generations. An influx of white southerners contributed to a shift in the City of Las Vegas' approach to segregation from de-facto practice to institutionalized policy, as many federal job supervisors either refused to hire blacks, or limited their presence in the workplace. It appears that local business owners soon followed suit.<sup>10</sup>

Faced with opposition from white officials, black residents began to leave downtown Las Vegas in favor of the Westside neighborhood, bounded approximately by A Street on the east, Bonanza Road on the south, H Street on the west, and Harrison Avenue on the north. Accounts differ as to whether this movement occurred voluntarily, or as a result of discrimination. Considering the timing of this transition in the 1930s and 40s, it is very likely that the opportunity to own homes and the increasing discrimination downtown both compelled black Las Vegas residents into the Westside. Recollections by Clarence Ray and George Ullom, early residents of the city, indicate that many African Americans began purchasing real estate in the Westside as early as the 1920s or 30s, and by the 1940s, the Westside was predominantly African American. Other accounts indicate that as segregation became more overt, Las Vegas city officials accelerated the process by refusing to renew business licenses to black business owners in the downtown area.<sup>11</sup>

The Second World War complicated the trend of segregation in many western communities including Las Vegas, and historian Jacqueline Jones has called the era an historical watershed for black labor. Wartime industries with high paying jobs encouraged many minority ethnic groups, including African Americans, to move to production centers like Las Vegas. Though the social atmosphere was rarely more welcoming than the southern towns and cities they left behind, many African American families experienced improved working conditions and economic advancement as a result of President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 of 1941 that banned discrimination in the defense industries. Despite this, black women often found themselves limited to positions in domestic labor and the service industries, a situation that worsened after

<sup>10</sup> Walker, n.d.; Ray, *Black Politics*, 48-53; National Register of Historic Places, Clark Avenue Railroad Underpass, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, National Register #03001509, Sec. 8, p 11.

<sup>11</sup> Ray, *Black Politics*, 30; Claytee White, interview by Mella Harmon, December 21, 2013.

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the war.<sup>12</sup>

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Wartime production in magnesium processing, the establishment of what became Nellis Air Force Base, and the federal efforts to end segregation in wartime industry precipitated a massive increase in Las Vegas' African American population during and after the war years. In 1940, there were only 178 blacks living in Clark County, but by 1955, over 16,000 blacks lived in the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas alone. As a result of the social networks that enticed African American job seekers out of the South, a significant percentage of new arrivals in Las Vegas came from Fordyce, Arkansas, and Tallulah, Louisiana. Fordyce was a segregated community, but one remembered by contemporary blacks as relatively harmonious despite offering few job opportunities. In comparison, Tallulah was notorious for its racial violence, dubbed by some black residents as the "lynching capital of the South." The recruitment of employees for the Basic Magnesium, Incorporated (BMI) facility in nearby Henderson, Nevada, along with Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, encouraged many to settle in the quickly expanding western towns of Henderson and Las Vegas. BMI's Carver Park provided some residential units for newly arrived African Americans, but most had to look elsewhere for housing. In many cases, the male head of household would travel first to secure employment and seek housing, with his spouse (and children, if applicable) following within several weeks. In cases like these, boarding houses became an important first accommodation while men sought permanent housing for their families. As black men were displaced from factory jobs after the war due to production draw downs, and the return of white soldiers, Las Vegas' growing service sector became an increasingly important source of wage labor for African Americans in the city.<sup>13</sup>

Alongside defense-related development, the legalization of gambling in Nevada in 1931 contributed to the overt segregation begun in the Hoover Dam work camps. The popularity of Nevada's gambling meant that national attitudes on racism began to dictate the social strata of Las Vegas. Like other entertainment venues throughout the country, the largely white audiences of Las Vegas' casino resorts demanded performances by black entertainers at the same time that those venues practiced strict segregation in their overnight accommodations. In 1942, El Rancho Vegas began offering stage shows featuring nationally known performers such as Pearl Bailey and Nat King Cole. While downtown casino owners frequently headlined black entertainers such as these, they also refused to provide lodging for them, forcing many of the twentieth century's leading artists to seek accommodations in the hotels and boarding houses in the Westside. There, they competed for rooms along with travelers, temporary workers, and out-of-state lodgers taking advantage of Nevada's liberal divorce laws, a popular trade in Nevada until other states

<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Jones, "Shifting Paradigms of Black Women's Work in the Urban North and West: World War II to the Present," in *African American Urban History Since World War II*, edited by Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 298.

<sup>13</sup> Albert S. Broussard, *Expectations of Equality: A History of Black Westerners*, (Wheeling, Illinois and Cody, Wyoming: Harlan Davidson, Inc., and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2012), xiii-xiv, 102; Claytee D. White, "'Eight Dollars a Day and Working in the Shade': An Oral History of African American Migrant Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry," in *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*, Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 277-278; Claytee D. White, "The Roles of African American Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry, 1940-1980," Master's thesis, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, 1997; Jones, 298; Moehring & Green, 162-163.

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loosened restrictions in the late-twentieth century. This reality suggests that without lodgings such as Harrison's Guest House, Las Vegas may have lost several of its major African American entertainers and not attained its status as one of the country's leading entertainment cities.<sup>14</sup>

The Westside neighborhood that greeted these short-term residents was one of increasingly limited economic opportunity by the 1940s. Real estate lending practices known as redlining restricted the availability of mortgage loans in what were considered high-risk zones, usually areas where racial minorities lived. As it combined with increasing discrimination in the private workforce, redlining limited the housing options for many Westside residents who had moved there in the 1940s and later. It was common for black service workers to rent small, substandard houses in the neighborhood. Conditions became poor enough in the Westside that the City of Las Vegas razed 375 buildings between September 1944 and April 1945. The City made no efforts to house dislocated residents. Despite the conditions and poor investment in public services, oral history accounts and existing buildings indicate that a business community began to develop along Jackson Street (four blocks north of Harrison's Guest House) by the mid-1940s. These businesses included beauty shops, dry cleaners, barber shops, restaurants, and popular nightclubs like the New Town Tavern, the Cotton Club, the El Morocco, and the Ebony Club. The community formed its own Westside Chamber of Commerce in 1948 to support this entrepreneurship. However, city services continued to lag. Westside was without a municipal fire station until 1951. Las Vegas established regular street maintenance and utility services in the mid-1950s only after white-only neighborhoods began to develop north and west of the Westside.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike other western cities that saw their African American residents leave once wartime industries closed, postwar Las Vegas provided ample employment for African Americans in its hotels, clubs, casinos, and other tourism-based businesses. The city's black population grew to over 5,000 people by 1950 and continued climbing, which necessitated the expansion of housing and employment opportunities. This growth compelled state legislators to make several unsuccessful attempts to integrate Nevada's hotels and casinos in 1939, 1949, 1953, and 1957. For Westside residents, housing continued to be a primary concern for the neighborhood, but lack of concerted action meant that the community was largely on its own. The independence fostered among black leaders in the Westside contributed to the development of a modest middle class within the neighborhood. Through activism and lobbying efforts, federal housing programs took the first actions in the 1950s to address the housing shortage among black residents. In 1952, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) opened Marble Manor on the Westside, a 40-acre housing tract of 154 two-bedroom houses "for colored people." Private investors followed suit, building the Berkley Square neighborhood to the north in 1955, and the Highland Square project in 1956. Berkley Square became another predominantly black neighborhood in Las Vegas, bordering the original Westside area to the north, and designed by internationally renowned

<sup>14</sup> Walker, n.d.; Ray, *Black Politics*, 48-53.

<sup>15</sup> Knight-Predy interview 20 December 2013; National Register of Historic Places, Berkeley Square, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 09000846, 8-4; White, "Eight Dollars a Day," 279-280; Bracey, "The African Americans," 81; Moehring & Green, 163-164.



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African American architect Paul Revere Williams.<sup>16</sup>

Las Vegas experienced modest successes in the provision of housing for blacks, however, racial discrimination persisted through much of the mid-twentieth century. In 1949, Stanley Hunter attempted to turn the Biltmore Hotel into an all-black establishment, leading to the revocation of the hotel's liquor and gaming license by the City. However, the opening of the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino in the Westside on May 24, 1955 had a profound impact on the lives of African American residents and visitors in Las Vegas. The Moulin Rouge was the brainchild of several white businessmen who billed it as "America's First Interracial Hotel." Possibly encouraged by national civil rights successes such as the desegregation of the U.S. military by President Truman in 1948, and the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, the Moulin Rouge hired black waiters, waitresses, and dealers. The former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Lewis was given a small share of the ownership to serve as the Moulin Rouge's official greeter. Both whites and blacks frequented the Moulin Rouge, which offered three nightly stage shows. The experiment lasted only five months. Its closure in October of 1955 was a shock and a disappointment to employees and patrons alike. Though most sources point to lack of profit leading the owners to close the hotel, the precise reason for its sudden end is unknown. Historian Michael Green suspects it was a mix of bad management, bad location, bad timing, and bad luck. Though the hotel-casino re-opened in 1957, controversy plagued its subsequent management.<sup>17</sup>

Despite its short life, the example set by the Moulin Rouge strengthened the Civil Rights movement in Las Vegas. Within a decade, activists successfully pressured city and state officials to end segregation in downtown Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Strip. In 1960, under threat of a downtown protest march against racial discrimination by Las Vegas casinos, Nevada's governor, Grant Sawyer, called a meeting between hotel owners, city and state officials, and local black leaders, including Dr. James McMillan, the president of the Las Vegas chapter of the NAACP. Mediated by local newspaper owner Hank Greenspun, the group held the meeting on March 26 at the closed Moulin Rouge, resulting in the Moulin Rouge Agreement, which called for the desegregation of Las Vegas' casinos. While most hotels and casinos began to accept black customers after 1960, some continued to bar African American patrons from their businesses until the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 forced integration. The opening of overnight accommodations throughout the city to African American patrons closed the door on the need for boarding houses like Harrison's Guest House. With more options in downtown Las Vegas, as well as in the Westside, Agatha Wilson appears to have shut down Harrison's Guest House by 1960. Despite these gains in the early 1960s, it was not until 1971 that African Americans in Las Vegas made serious gains against discriminatory housing and employment practices. The

<sup>16</sup> NRHP, Berkeley Square, Sec. 8, p6; Jeffrey J. Sallaz, "Civil Rights and Employment Equity in Las Vegas Casinos: The Failed Enforcement of the Casino Consent Decree, 1971-1986," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 47, No. 4 (Winter 2004), 286; Hal Rothman and Mike Davis, "The Many Faces of Las Vegas," in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas*, Hal K. Rothman and Mike Davis, eds., (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 10-11; Moehring & Green, 165.

<sup>17</sup> Cook 2013:1-7; National Register of Historic Places, Moulin Rouge Hotel, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 92001701, 8-4; Earnest N. Bracey, *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2008), 56-58.

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NAACP filed a complaint with the Las Vegas federal district court judge, Roger Foley. Under pressure from Foley, many Las Vegas venues signed a consent decree that effectively ended employment discrimination for many non-white workers, including African Americans. That same year, also under pressure from Foley, Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan led the Nevada legislature in adopting legislation against housing discrimination.<sup>18</sup>

The social mobility afforded to black workers after 1971 led to further economic decline in the Westside. African American families with additional income moved to better-maintained communities in the Las Vegas metropolitan area that could no longer legally bar them from purchasing homes. Regional and city planning decisions, especially for the Interstate Highway 15 corridor between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, compelled others to leave the Westside. Similar to highway projects in other urban areas across the country, the federal government and the City of Las Vegas condemned large sections of property in the Westside to provide land for the route. Research indicates that local officials in many urban areas throughout the United States took advantage of federal highway construction projects to eliminate predominantly African American neighborhoods, especially those that had become "ghettos" due to lack of public infrastructure and private development dollars. Collaboration between federal, state, and local officials often meant that highway projects destroyed significant components of black communities through the nation, including homes, churches, businesses, and schools. During the late-1960s and 1970s, Interstate 15 development severed most of Westside as through-streets closed and isolated the remnants of the community from downtown. In 1968, the City closed seven streets, despite protests from hundreds of Westside residents, many of whom termed the new highway the "concrete curtain" once completed. Despite incremental infrastructure improvements in the 1970s through the 2000s, Westside remains somewhat isolated from downtown Las Vegas with few passageways across Interstate 15. The neighborhood is still primarily composed of poor and working class families. In 2016, the remaining buildings are a mixture of small urban homes, multi-family housing, and sweeping expanses of vacant lots.<sup>19</sup>

#### Harrison's Guest House and African American Boarding Houses

Boarding houses like Genevieve Harrison's arose from a nation-wide need to house traveling African Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In cities across the country, segregation in public accommodations required the creation of separate facilities and social networks to inform travelers of those facilities. Despite the need, accommodations were notoriously limited throughout the country into the 1950s, especially in the West, and continued to be limited until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. In many communities, boarding houses provided the only overnight accommodations available to African Americans traveling between cities in the West. Throughout the western United States, boarding houses such as the Harrison's Guest House that addressed this need were often in low-income areas that suffered from neglect. Redevelopment has changed many of these neighborhoods and many former boarding houses have been demolished. Harrison's Guest House stands as the only known

<sup>18</sup> Moehring & Green, 201-202; Moehring, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 199-200.

<sup>19</sup> Moehring & Green, 148; Robert J. McKee, *Community Action Against Racism in West Las Vegas: The F Street Wall, and the Women Who Brought It Down*, (Lanham, Mass.: Lexington Books, 2014), 14; Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy since 1939*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 103.

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example of its type remaining in Las Vegas, and potentially the only remaining in Nevada.<sup>20</sup>

Due to the rigid segregation of Las Vegas' housing and public accommodations in the 1940s and 1950s, only a few hotels and boarding houses in Las Vegas' Westside neighborhood provided housing to temporary visitors and travelers. There was massive growth in the city's African American population during and after the Second World War. Due to this expansion, Las Vegas' boarding houses provided housing to these newly arrived blacks who hoped to work in the city's wartime industries, or in entertainment venues in downtown. New arrivals to Las Vegas discovered a generally inadequate housing market for African Americans, forcing many into temporary housing, either in boarding houses or frequently in tents in the neighborhood until home construction caught up with demand.<sup>21</sup>

Genevieve Harrison established one such boarding house for African American travelers and recent arrivals when she purchased the property at 1001 F Street in the Westside neighborhood in 1942. At this time she began renting rooms to African Americans, accommodating black men and women seeking divorce under Nevada's relatively loose divorce laws. More famously, she provided lodgings for some of the twentieth century's most renowned African American performers who played the Las Vegas showrooms in hotels and casinos where they were forbidden to stay. Entertainers such as Pearl Bailey, Nat King Cole, and Sammy Davis, Jr., stayed at Harrison's Guest House and other boarding houses on the Westside from the 1940s into the 1960s, when civil rights agreements and legislation opened the hotels and casinos of downtown to black patrons.

Like many of Las Vegas' African American residents, Genevieve Harrison arrived in the 1940s as defense industries attracted Americans from throughout the country to new communities where defense-related facilities were located. Harrison was born on March 28, 1902 in Marshall, Harrison County, Texas.<sup>22</sup> She and others like her who had also relocated to the Westside, took advantage of the economic opportunity and offered housing to the wartime laborers as well as black entertainers performing at the nearby casinos and resorts. Harrison's Guest House and other Westside boarding houses also catered to black divorce-seekers establishing residency in Nevada to take advantage of Nevada's liberal divorce laws. Since the early 1900s, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, and Arkansas had softened restrictions on process, and reduced the residency period required to obtain a divorce. Nevada became a popular location, with an entire sector of the economy dedicated to the divorce trade, which remained until other states began to loosen their divorce restrictions in the late 1900s. For African Americans in states with strict divorce

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of this nomination, there are no other known African American boarding houses remaining in Nevada. Both the Westside in Las Vegas, and the African American community west of downtown Reno, experienced significant demolition in the mid and late-twentieth centuries. Future survey work may uncover other former boarding houses related to this context, but based on what is known, their discovery is considered unlikely. Lyell Henry, Accommodations 'For Colored,'" *SCA Journal*, 23 (No. 2) Fall 2005, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Brenda Williams, interview by Claytee White, May 24, 2013, transcript, p280, Las Vegas Oral History Program, University of Nevada – Las Vegas; Claytee White, "Eight Dollars a Day and Working in the Shade": An Oral History of African American Migrant Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry," in *African American Women Confront the West*, edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 279.

<sup>22</sup> "Genevieve Harrison," obituary, *Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 18, 1957.

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laws, cities like Reno and Las Vegas provided an opportunity for a quick end to their marriages. Boarding houses that catered to blacks in those communities became welcome accommodations for these temporary visitors to Nevada. It is not clear what percentage of Mrs. Harrison's business came from Nevada's divorce trade, but divorce-seekers were a portion of her income. Aida Smith, the sister of current Westside resident Dee Dee Jasmin, stayed at Harrison's Guest House along with her young daughter for six weeks in 1949, while awaiting her divorce. She found the guesthouse to be a lovely place, and Sammy Davis, Jr., who was staying there at the time, would play with her child.<sup>23</sup>

Harrison's Guest House became one of a small number of boarding houses operating on the Westside between the 1940s and 1960s, which also included Mrs. Shaw's, and Mrs. Cartwright's operations.<sup>24</sup> In his autobiography *Yes I Can*, noted African American entertainer Sammy Davis, Jr. described his encounters with the policies of the Las Vegas resorts and what motivated him to stay at boarding houses in the Westside like Harrison's Guest House. The first time the Will Mastin Trio booked a show at the El Rancho Vegas, Sammy Davis asked the stage manager if rooms came with the deal. The manager replied, "Sorry. We can't let you have rooms here. House rules. You'll have to find a place in the—uh, on the other side of town [Westside]." Once in a cab on their way from the El Rancho, the cab driver said, "There's a woman named Cartwright over in Westside takes in you people."<sup>25</sup> The cab pulled up in front of what Davis described as one of the few decent houses in the neighborhood. The proprietor, presumably Mrs. Cartwright, greeted the trio, assuring them she had three nice rooms for them, but adding insult to injury with the price: at least twice what they would have paid had they been able to stay at the El Rancho. Prices may have been high due to the lack of available accommodations in the Westside in the 1940s and 1950s. Mr. Davis stayed at the house frequently at least as late as 1960. After 1960, there is no confirmation that the property continued to operate as a boarding house. Due to neglect and redevelopment efforts mentioned previously, Harrison's Guest House is the only known example remaining in Las Vegas of these once well-known boarding houses.<sup>26</sup>

By all accounts, Harrison's Guest House was a popular place to stay. Among the more endearing stories of Harrison's Guest House and its famous occupants comes from Hannah Brown, a prominent businesswoman and community activist who grew up on the Westside. She tells of being a young girl when the stars stayed at Harrison's Guest House. She was especially enamored of Nat King Cole, who would sit on the porch and smoke. The local children, Hannah included, would do all they could to get his attention. He would ask how they were doing in

<sup>23</sup> Mella Harmon, "Reno: Twentieth Century Divorce Capital," *Online Nevada Encyclopedia*, September 17, 2009, <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/reno-twentieth-century-divorce-capital>; Dee Dee Jasmin, telephone interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013. Rolando Larraz, telephone interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013. Mrs. Jasmin was the former actress Harriette Young. Her sister, Aida Smith stayed at Harrison's Guest House in 1949 while waiting for a divorce. Sammy Davis, Jr. was staying there at the same time. Mr. Larraz is the founder and publisher of the *Las Vegas Tribune* and was friends with Sammy Davis, Jr. He recalled dropping him off at Harrison's Guest House after a night of clubbing following one of Sammy Davis's performances around Thanksgiving 1960.

<sup>24</sup> Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 182.

<sup>25</sup> Davis et al 2012:90.

<sup>26</sup> Davis et al 2012:90; Moehring 1995:182; City of Las Vegas, *West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory*, by Courtney Mooney, Las Vegas, September 2003, 16-17; Dee Dee Jasmin interview, 2013..

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school. Hannah, who was a star student, was ready and eager to answer that question, presenting Cole with her latest report card. These exchanges went on until Hannah went off to high school and got a job at a local record store, Larry's Music Bar. Larry's was also popular with entertainers, who would come in and buy records. One day, several years after Hannah had visited with Cole at Harrison's Guest House, she saw him getting a haircut in the barbershop next to Larry's Music Bar. Finding an excuse to cross paths with Cole, Hannah greeted him and to her utter delight he recognized her and remembered her name and her stellar academic accomplishments.<sup>27</sup>

The local newspapers provided some coverage of the Westside and its residents, providing a filtered vignette into the social life of Harrison's Guest House:

How would you like to nonchalantly have Clark Gable, Gregory Peck, Betty Hutton, and maybe Sophie Tucker as dinner guests some evening? (And some smelling salts for yourself?) Mrs. G. Harrison, 1001 North "F" Street in the Westside, can boast the counterpart of such notables, having hosted last week the top Negro performers in the entertainment world all at one time! The interesting array of guests came to pass as Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Bob Parrish, the Edwards Sisters, the Jubalaires, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee Simpkins all chanced to be in town at one time. Mrs. Harrison, resident of Las Vegas for 15 years, maintains a boarding house, which is comfortably claimed by many noted Negro entertainers whenever any of them happens to be in town. "We're just one big happy family," Mrs. Harrison declares as she reported that her guests dine together and later gather in her ample living room to swap entertainment gossip and stories. Anderson, who concluded a week's engagement at the Thunderbird hotel, planned to return to Los Angeles to join Jack Benny again as "Rochester" over the radio show, which begins October 8. Parrish, a well-known singer, performed at Club Bingo and en route to Europe, while the Edwards Sisters arrived in Las Vegas for a nightclub engagement. The Jubalaires were Flamingo hotel headliners. Rounding out the list of notables was Arthur Lee Simpkins and his wife, who stopped here overnight en route to New York for a fall engagement. Mrs. Harrison disclosed that her musical household this time was without a piano and thus no song fests materialized. "Arthur Lee usually brings his piano with him, but he didn't this time," she added. (Traveling light, eh?).<sup>28</sup>

The Moulin Rouge Agreement of 1960 effectively put an end to the need for places such as Harrison's Guest House. Black entertainers, tourists, and divorce-seekers were free to stay where they wished. However, racial discrimination continued well into the 1970s, in particular in education and employment. Nevada's notorious divorce trade also came to an end by 1970, as other states liberalized their divorce laws. As an indication of how renowned Genevieve Harrison had become in the community, when she applied for a divorce in 1957 while suffering from cancer, the judge, her attorney, the court clerk, and a court reporter came to her bedside to grant her divorce. The May 10, 1957 *Las Vegas Sun* article explained that such service was warranted

<sup>27</sup> Hannah Brown, interview by Claytee White, September 27, 2012, transcript, Las Vegas Oral History Program, University of Nevada – Las Vegas. Hannah Brown, interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013, at Harrison Guest House. Ms. Brown grew up on the Westside and knew Mrs. Harrison and her illustrious guests personally.

<sup>28</sup> Verna Suesov, "Top Negro Performers Entertained in Vegas," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, September 28, 1948, 5:1-2.

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because Mrs. Harrison had long been a “friend, counselor, and housemother to visiting Las Vegas entertainers.” Harrison’s Guest House had been a second home to the entertainers for 15 years. Genevieve’s sister, Mrs. Agatha Wilson, lived at 24 Stewart Avenue in Las Vegas. She inherited Harrison’s Guest House and operated it for several years after Mrs. Harrison’s death in 1957, with the last documented use of the property as a boarding house in 1960. Wilson was the owner of record of the house until she sold the property to Hazel Ferguson in 1976. From that point onward, the house rotated through various owners on a frequent basis until the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Chamber of Commerce acquired the property in 2009.<sup>29</sup>

### Summary

Harrison’s Guest House is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage-Black, and Entertainment/Recreation. The boarding house provided accommodations for African Americans during the developmental period of both Las Vegas’ casino and resort economy, and during the city’s black civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s. During the segregation era, the boarding house hosted some of the twentieth century’s most renowned black entertainers including Pearl Bailey, Nat King Cole, and Sammy Davis, Jr. The significance of the site within the broader history of Las Vegas is recognized locally. It is stop No. 8 on the Las Vegas Pioneer Trail, which “celebrates the early history of Las Vegas by offering glimpses of the people and places that made Las Vegas thrive.” It is also the only known African American boarding house that survives in Las Vegas to reflect this important period in the city’s history.

### Acknowledgements

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<sup>29</sup> Obituary of Genevieve Harrison, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 17, 1957, 2:2; “G. Harrison Services Set for Wednesday,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 18, 1957, 2:5; “Ownership History,” Clark County Recorder, records for parcel #010-552-08, accessed March 8, 2016.

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Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

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<http://www.paulrwilliamsproject.org>. Accessed November 10, 2014.
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- Rose, Mark H., and Raymond A. Mohl. *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy since 1939*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012.
- Rothman, Hal K., and Mike Davis, eds. *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.
- Rusco, Elmer R. "African Americans in Nevada, 1860s-1920s." In *Peoples of Color in the American West*. Sucheng Chan, Douglas Henry Daniels, Mario T. Garcia, and Terry P. Wilson, eds., 323-327. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1994.
- . "Good Time Coming?": *Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975.
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- Walker, Gwen. *History of West Las Vegas*. Unpublished manuscript. Walker African American Museum and Research Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.
- White, Claytee D. "'Eight Dollars a Day and Working in the Shade': An Oral History of African American Migrant Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry," in *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.
- . "The Roles of African American Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry, 1940 – 1980." Master's thesis, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, 1997.

---

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government



Harrison's Guest House \_\_\_\_\_

Clark, Nevada  
County and State \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

\_\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_ B5886 (NV SHPO) \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_\_ 0.15 acre \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: 11 Easting: 666385.93 Northing: 4005732.78

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of Harrison's Guest House National Register nomination encompasses the legal boundaries of Clark County Assessor's Parcel Number 139-27-210-091 as depicted on the attached Assessor's Parcel Map. The parcel comprises portions of both lots 5 and 6 on Block 18 of the H. F. M. & M. Addition to the City of Las Vegas, Section 27, Township 20, Range 61.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for Harrison's Guest House conforms to the historical legal boundary of Clark County APN 139-27-210-091.

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: \_\_\_\_\_ Mella Rothwell Harmon and Jim Bertolini \_\_\_\_\_

organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Nevada State Historic Preservation Office \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: \_\_\_\_\_ 901 S. Stewart St., Suite 5004 \_\_\_\_\_

city or town: \_\_\_\_\_ Carson City \_\_\_\_\_ state: \_\_\_\_\_ NV \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ 89701 \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ jbertolini@shpo.nv.gov \_\_\_\_\_

telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ 775-684-3436 \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_ January 21, 2016 \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Harrison's Guest House

Clark, Nevada

Name of Property

County and State

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
- **Floor plan showing dates of additions**
- **Assessor's Parcel Map**

## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Harrison's Guest House

City or Vicinity: Las Vegas

County: Clark

State: Nevada

Photo 1 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_01

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

Description: East façade of Harrison's Guest House, looking west.

Photo 2 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_02

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

Description: Front and north elevations, facing southwest. Multiple additions are visible in the right view.

Photo 3 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_03

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

Description: Close-up of additions along north elevation of the boarding house, facing west. At the far end is the "Guest House."

Photo 4 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_04

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

Description: South elevation and street context of Harrison's Guest House, looking northwest.

Photo 5 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_05

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: East façade of Harrison's Guest House

Harrison's Guest House

Clark, Nevada

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 6 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_06

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: South elevation of Harrison's Guest House, looking northeast

Photo 7 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_07

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: West elevation of Harrison's Guest House, looking northwest. "Guest House" is in left background at northwest corner of property.

Photo 8 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_08

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: North elevation of 1953 addition onto rear of Harrison's Guest House, facing courtyard; looking west.

Photo 9 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_09

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: West elevation of 1953 hyphen and 1954 den addition onto Harrison's Guest House, looking east.

Photo 10 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_10

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: Harrison's Guest House main hallway, looking west from entrance.

Photo 11 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_11

Photographer: Jim Bertolini

Date Photographed: September 10, 2015

Description: South elevation of the "Guest House," looking northwest.

Photo 12 of 12; NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_12

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

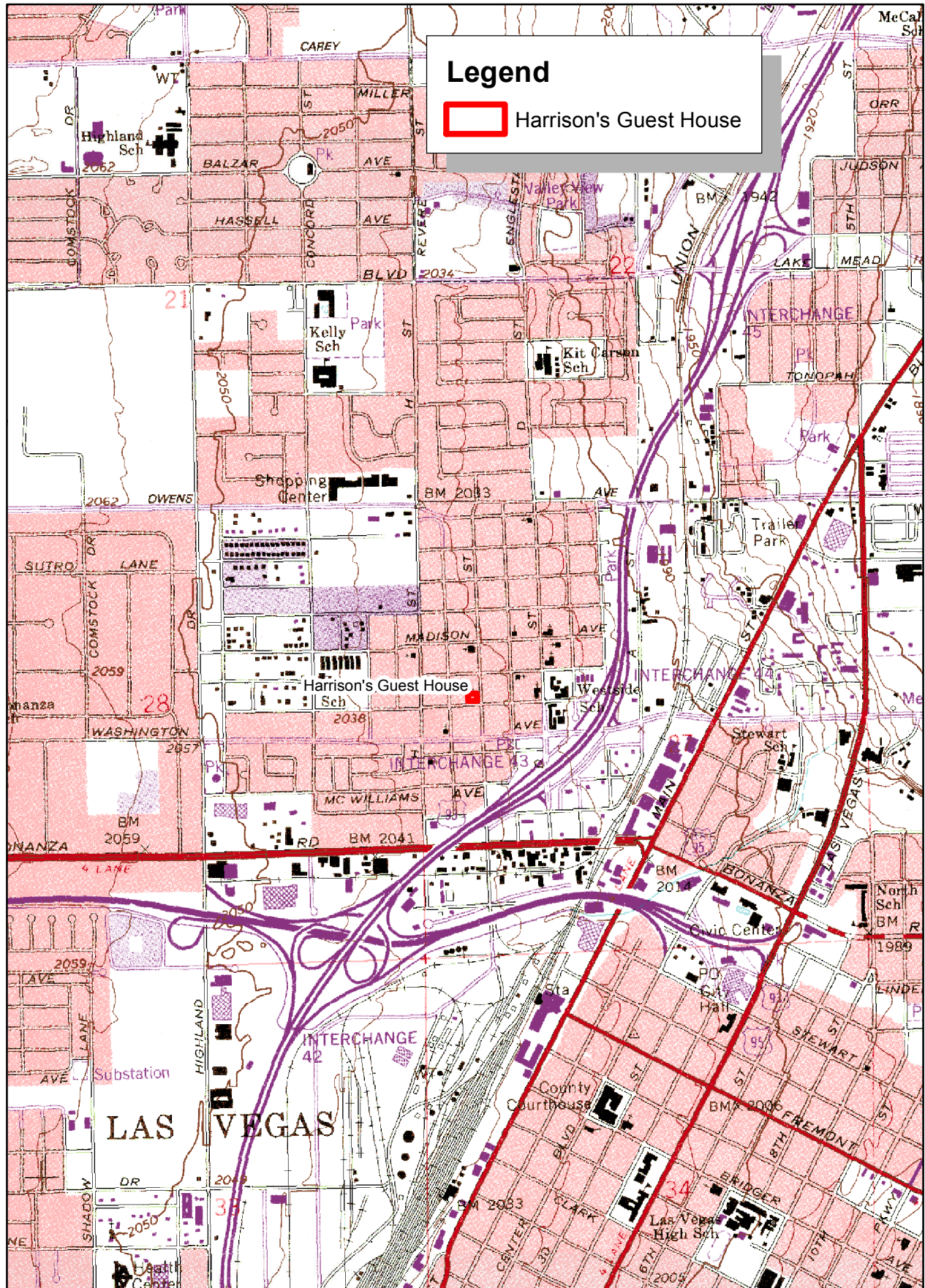
Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

Description: South entry to the "Guest House," looking north.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

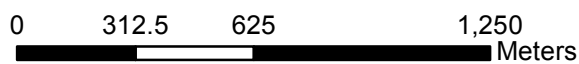
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# Harrison Guest House and Las Vegas Westside USGS - Las Vegas Quadrangle (large extent)



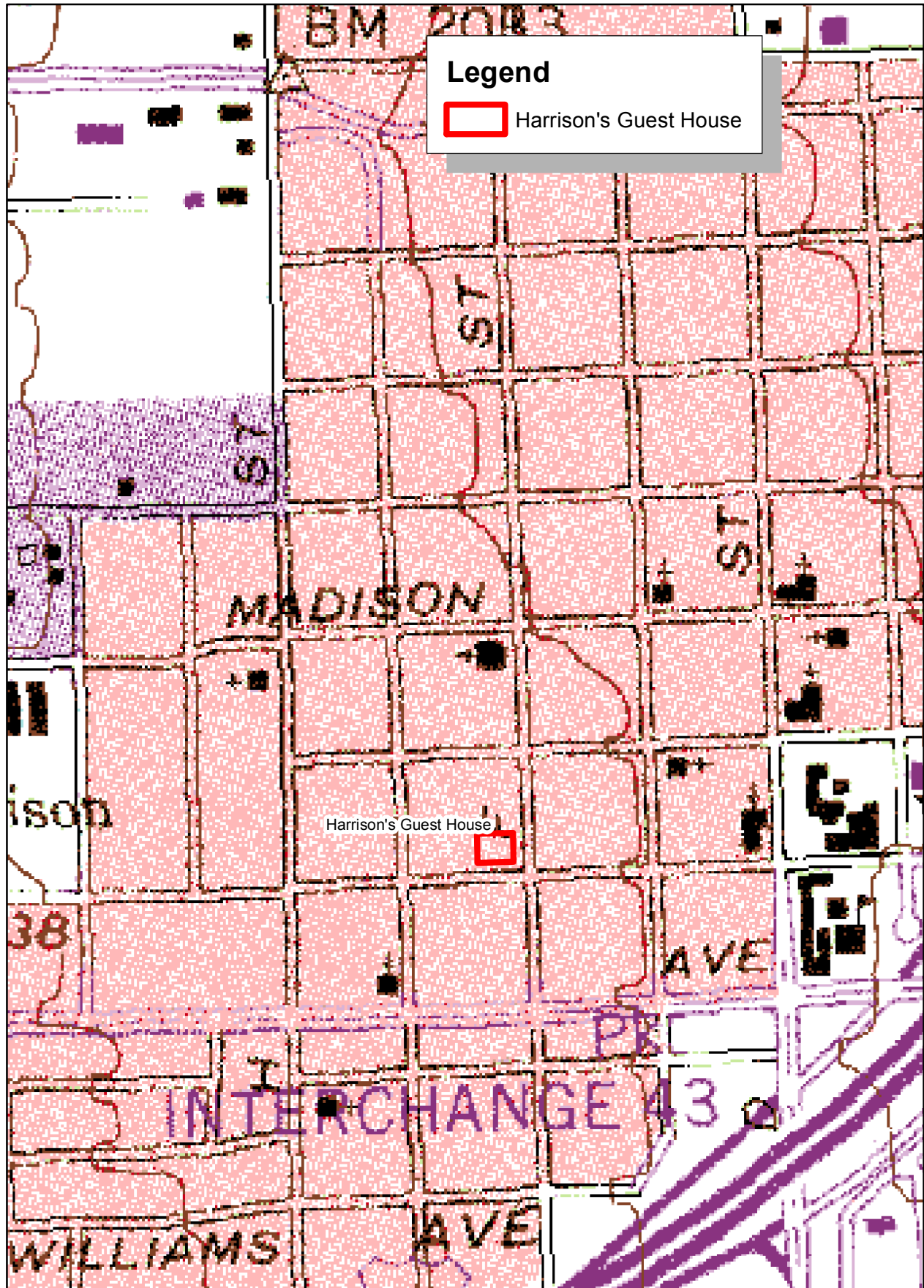
**Legend**

 Harrison's Guest House



Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: March 8, 2016

# Harrison Guest House and Las Vegas Westside USGS - Las Vegas Quadrangle (small extent)



0 75 150 300  
Meters






Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: March 8, 2016

# Harrison's Guest House Aerial Site Map



**Legend**

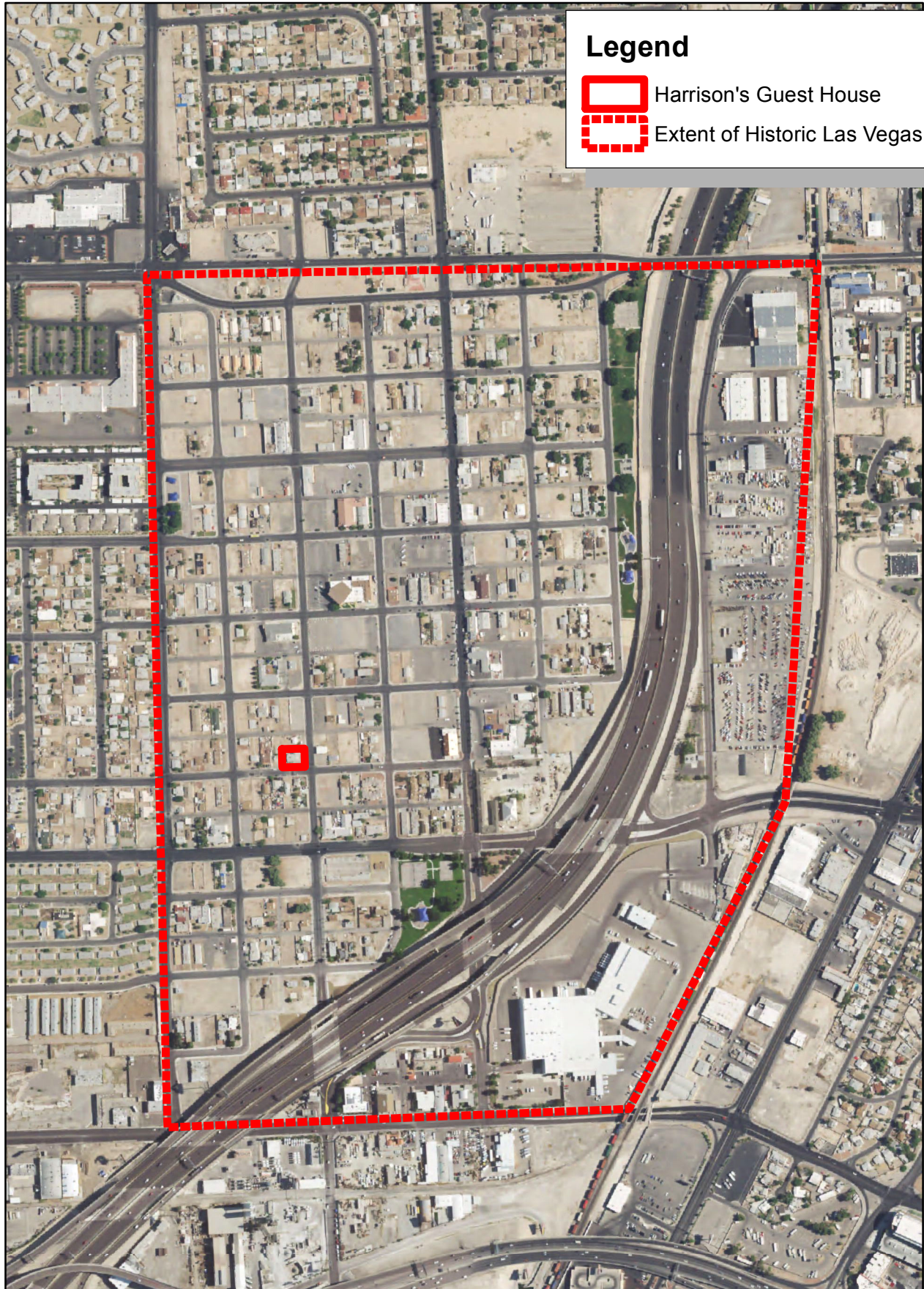
-  NRHP Boundary
- Property Type**
-  Building
-  Structure

0 5 10 20  
Meters





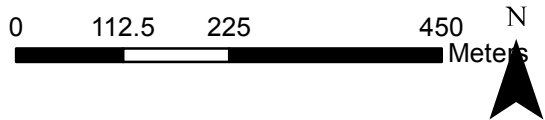
Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: January 21, 2016  
Source: NAIP 2015 (National Agricultural Imagery Program)

# Westside Las Vegas Aerial Overview

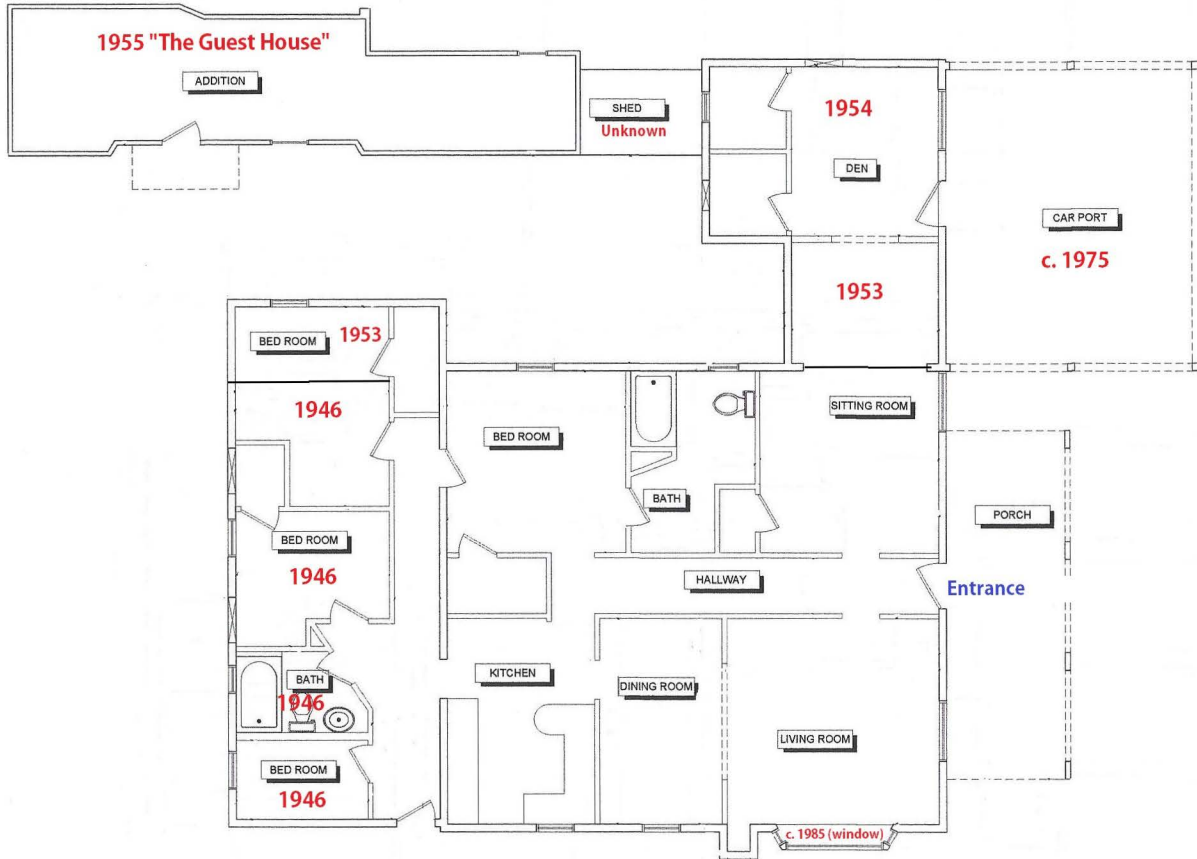


**Legend**

-  Harrison's Guest House
-  Extent of Historic Las Vegas Westside



Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: January 21, 2016  
Source: NAIP 2015 (National Agricultural Imagery Program)



**Harrison's Guest House, 1001 F Street, Las Vegas, NV**

**Dates of additions indicated in red**

**Original house built 1942 or earlier**





This map is for assessment use only and does NOT represent a survey.

No liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein. Information on roads and other non-assessed parcels may be obtained from the Road Document Listing in the Assessor's Office.

This map is compiled from official records, including surveys and deeds, but only contains the information required for assessment. See the recorded documents for more detailed legal information.

NOTES

USE THIS SCALE(FEET) WHEN MAP REDUCED FROM 11X17 ORIGINAL

# ASSESSOR'S PARCELS - CLARK CO., NV. Michele W. Shafe - Assessor

**MAP LEGEND**

- PARCEL BOUNDARY
- - - SUB BOUNDARY
- - - PMLD BOUNDARY
- - - ROAD EASEMENT
- - - MATCH / LEADER LINE
- - - HISTORIC LOT LINE
- - - HISTORIC SUB BOUNDARY
- - - HISTORIC PMLD BOUNDARY
- - - SECTION LINE
- CONDOMINIUM UNIT
- AIR SPACE PCL
- RIGHT OF WAY PCL
- SUB-SURFACE PCL

001 ROAD PARCEL NUMBER  
001 PARCEL NUMBER  
1.00 ACREAGE  
202 PARCEL SUB/SEQ NUMBER  
PB 24-45 PLAT RECORDING NUMBER  
5 BLOCK NUMBER  
5 LOT NUMBER  
GL5 GOV. LOT NUMBER

BOOK T20S R61E

SEC 27

MAP S 2 NW 4

139-27-2

138	139	140
163	162	161

8	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	28	27	26	25	24
31	32	33	34	35	36



Scale: 1" = 200' Rev: 10/21/2013



Harrison's Guest House  
1001 F Street, Las Vegas, Clark County, NV  
APN 139-27-210-091

TAX DIST 200,204



PRIVATE -  
KEEP OUT

PARKING REAL DEN









1001



**POSTED**  
NO TRESPASSING  
**KEEP OUT**





POSTED  
KEEP OUT













No Smoking / No Warning

SMOKE  
KACCLV.ORG



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Harrison's Guest House

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Clark

DATE RECEIVED: 3/18/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/03/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000009

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Harrison's Guest House is listed in the National Register under Criterion A for significance in Ethnic Heritage, as one of the last remaining African American boarding houses in Las Vegas. It is locally significant, with a period of significance of 1942 to 1960. The guest house represents a type of accommodation available in Las Vegas to African Americans when segregation was common. Notable entertainers, like Sammy Davis, Jr., often stayed at Harrison's.

RECOM. / CRITERIA A

REVIEWER Briana Nyatt

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE 202-354-2252

DATE 5-3-16

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

# Historic Resource Survey Report - Scan Control and Cover Sheet

(use initials)

Scan cover checked  
 Data entry
 
 Scan file checked  
 Data QC



**S00731**

Paper and Electronic

In GIS

Asset Tag CLA-TWE-2003-06

City, County Las Vegas, Clark

**Reference Citation**

Mooney, Courtney M.

2003 (Sep)

West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, City of Las Vegas, September, 2003

City of Las Vegas

Las Vegas, NV

**Completed for:**

**Lead Agency:**

**Survey Type:**

**Comments and notes**

**Document Classification** (select only one)

A - Many resources, no forms  
  B - 1 resource, no forms  
  C - 1 resource, 1 form  
  D - Multiple resources, multiple forms  
  Deaccessioned

**Page count (approx)** (select only one)

Not counted  
  1-25  
  26-100  
  101-250  
  251-500  
  >500

**General contents** (check all appropriate)

Title Page  
  Table of Contents  
  Location Map(s)  
  Detailed context  
 Bibliography  
 # bib pages: 3  
  Already provided in digital format

**Resource Forms**

Resource forms  
 OR  
  Lacks resource forms  
 n of forms 91  
 Form type(s)  HRIF  
  IMACS  
  Other format  
  HRIF pre-2000  
  Ad Hoc/Informal

**Photographs** (check all appropriate)

	Prints		-- Film Media --		Prints
	Color	BW	Negative	Slide	
<input type="checkbox"/> Provided on digital media					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos chosen for scanning are sufficient representation of report and resources	35mm		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2-1/4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3x5, 4x5, 4x6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8x10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in comments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Contents NOT SCANNED**

Approx. n 119

Parts of document  
 Photos/Prints  
 Maps  
 Drawings, renderings  
 Other:

Blueprints, plans  
 Deeds, other records  
 Correspondence

**Flags for Additional Scanning**

Photos/Prints  
 Other - described in comments

5/12/2009





Survey Summary Form

Survey Title: West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, Las Vegas (September 2003 (Volume 1 – Binder #1))

Survey Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconnaissance
Total Properties Surveyed:	<u>89</u>	<u>230</u>
Total Determined Eligible:	<u>27</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Determined Not Eligible:	<u>62</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Unevaluated:	<u>0</u>	<u>120</u>
Total Vacant:	<u>0</u>	<u>110</u>
Total Acres Surveyed:	<u>17.21</u>	<u>42.34</u>

Reviewed for:  Section 106 – Date of Correspondence: \_\_\_\_\_

HPF – Grant #: 32-02-17558 (CLG-4)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

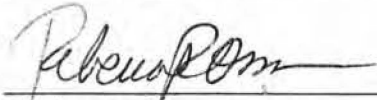
Meets NPS Standards:     Yes             Yes, conditionally             No

Comments/Notes: Data for the quantity of properties considered under the 'Reconnaissance' category were taken from the Clark County Assessor's Website aerial photo dated 9/5/2005 for the survey area. Several of the lots in this area were either vacant, or have buildings that were not yet 50 years of age at the time the survey was completed in September 2003. Also, some have been demolished since 2003. HRIFs were not completed for these properties.

\*\*\*\*\*

Reviewed by: Rebecca R. Ossa, Architectural Historian

03/8/06  
Date

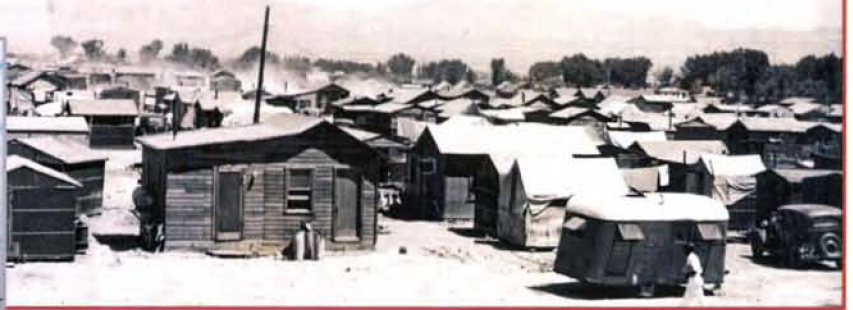
  
Reviewer Signature

West Las Vegas  
Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
City of Las Vegas  
September, 2003

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*Original Plat  
Town-site of Las Vegas  
Lincoln Co. Nevada  
Embracing the N/2 of SW 1/4 Sec 27  
Township 20 S. R. 61 E Mr. Diablo Meridian*



West Las Vegas  
Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
City of Las Vegas  
September, 2003

---



*Original Plat  
Town-site of Las Vegas  
Lincoln Co. Nevada  
Embracing the N/2 of SW 1/4 Sec 27  
Township 20 S. R. 61 E. Mt. Diablo Meridian*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	Survey Objective	2
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	Summary and Conclusion	4
	Historic Context Report	6
	Bibliography	21
II.	List of surveyed buildings and maps	
	List of surveyed buildings	24
	Insert: Maps of surveyed area	26
III.	Nevada State Historic Resource Inventory Forms*	
	Photograph indices with Building Photographs	
	Forms	
	Maps	

"This survey has been financed in whole or in part with Federal Funds from the National Park Service, a division of the United States Department of the Interior, and administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of the Interior or the State Historic Preservation Office."

"This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127."

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\* Nevada State Historic Resource Inventory Forms, Maps, Photograph indices and black and white original photographs are archived at the City of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department, Comprehensive Planning, Historic Preservation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **Survey Objective**

20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, an independent historic preservation consulting firm under the employ of the City of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department, conducted a historic resource survey of the historic West Las Vegas, located northwest of Downtown Las Vegas, to formally inventory and document the existing historic properties. The results of this Reconnaissance *Intensive* Level survey will be used by the Planning and Development Department, as well as the Neighborhood Services Department as a preservation planning tool during future revitalization and development efforts for this historically rich area. The boundaries for the survey are roughly W. Van Buren Avenue and Bonanza Road on the north and south, and H Street and B Street on the west and east, respectively. For visual boundary reference please see maps following the list of surveyed buildings, page 25.

The intent of this survey is to complete one part of a continuing endeavor to document the rich history of Las Vegas' first townsite. Because this portion of land was surveyed in 1902 and platted in 1905 by J. T. McWilliams<sup>1</sup>, some of the earliest homes in Las Vegas are located here. In addition, the area evolved with completely different patterns of development due to several factors discussed in the following historic context report. This pattern of development gives the survey area a unique variety of buildings, offering the researcher clear physical evidence of the local and national events that helped define the Westside. The study of this physical manifestation of the events that developed the Westside is extremely important in the understanding of the broader history of Las Vegas, and further studies and historic resource surveys should be considered.

### **Methodology and Resources**

The comprehensive field survey and research was conducted between the months of March and September 2003. The field survey was completed block by block throughout the survey boundaries. Using information provided by the Clark County Assessor's Office, each property determined to retain a significant level of historic integrity, and representative of the significant historic context, was photographed. Preliminary data, such as building descriptions, were also collected, and a Historic Resource Inventory Form (HRIF) provided by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office was subsequently completed for each property. A definite focus of the survey was to document those properties that were historically socially significant to this community, as well as the many homes remaining that tell the story of the development of West Las Vegas. It is hoped that the survey be used as a background study for future, more in depth studies to determine eligibility of some properties for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The standards for determining which buildings were to be included in the survey are not always obvious by viewing the building's exterior conditions. A building was first judged on the extant

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<sup>1</sup> See *Historic Context Report*, page 6.

historic materials and architectural elements such as windows. Occasionally a building would appear to lack some of the original historic materials, but retains the original massing and/or profile. It is for this reason that the standards for inclusion may appear to be liberal and most of the properties were recorded, some regardless of the level of extant historic material and detail.

Archival research for the Historic Context Report and individual survey forms was conducted at the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, and the Special Collections library at the Lied Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The Clark County Assessor's office was consulted for additional historic information; specifically, original plat maps, year of construction and historic owner information. Additional research was conducted through interviews, academic journals and other published works and reference manuals.

**The Clark County Assessor's Office website:**

The official information provided on this website generally includes the legal description and use of each parcel, and current and historic ownership. If the parcel is used for residential purposes, the information will include building materials and whether there have been additions or conversions. If the building has been converted from residential to commercial use, this information will not be included.

Although generally accurate, the year of building construction shown on the website can be misleading because sometimes it refers to the date of the last physical change to the building on the parcel. Without visiting the City of Las Vegas Building and Records department, it is impossible to confirm the year of construction listed on the website. The HRIFs that were completed for each building use the year of construction given on the Clark County Assessor's Office website, unless obviously incorrect, in which case an approximate year of construction is provided.

In addition, the historic owner information offered on the website usually does not reflect the original owner(s) during time of construction. Again, this information can only be obtained at the City of Las Vegas Building and Records department. The information listed on the HRIF, under Section 3A. Original Owner, is the earliest recorded owner given by the Clark County Assessor's Office website.

Finally, as minor alterations can occur to the exterior of buildings in a relatively quick manner, or without proper permits, the Clark County Assessor's Office website will occasionally list incorrect building materials. Typically this relates to roofing materials or siding. Care was taken in the field to note current building materials, and were listed as viewed in the HRIFs.

## Summary and Conclusion

As a result of this survey, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation has determined that the West Las Vegas properties included within the survey boundaries contain socially historic value as representing the development of Las Vegas' first townsite. The houses, schools and churches that make up this incredible community reflect several significant local and national events and architectural styles. The majority of the properties included in the survey are not individually eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, mostly due to significant alterations. Nor would a National Register or a locally designated historic district be feasible due to the incongruity of the historic resources; however, some of the properties such as religious properties and community meeting houses, social clubs, and some individual residences should be researched further and considered for multiple property nominations. Those individual properties have been noted as potentially eligible on the Historic Resource Inventory Forms for that property. In addition, it is recommended that a more in-depth survey be completed of the McWilliams townsite area to document all of the accessory buildings that share lots with the primary buildings, including those without addresses. The boundaries for the McWilliams townsite are the south blocks of Washington Avenue on the north, the north side of Bonanza Road on the south, A Street on the east, and H Street on the west.

A quick-reference list of potentially eligible individual properties located throughout the survey area has been provided below:

### Religious properties/Social Clubs

400 W. Adams Ave.	(1954) New Bethel Baptist Church of Las Vegas
311 Madison Avenue	(1952) Moments of Miracles Church, formerly St. James Baptist Church of Las Vegas
317 Madison Avenue	(1951) Calvary Baptist Church, or "Keepin' It Real Ministries", formerly Calvary Baptist Church
500 W. Monroe (1305 E. St.)	(1954) Victory Mission Baptist Church
500 Jackson Avenue	(1946) True Vine Baptist Church
504 Jackson Avenue	(1946)
1300 C Street	(1953)
1308 D Street	(1947) Neway Church of God in Christ, formerly The Brown Derby
1402 D St.	(1954) Muhammad Mosque #75, formerly the Elks Club
1515 D Street	(1945) Pilgrim Church of Christ
1117 F Street	(1949) Pentacostal Temple Church of God
1312 F Street	(1949) Victory Missionary Baptist Church Annex, formerly the Louisiana Club
820 H Street	(1945) World Headquarters Deliverance Church's Fellowship International, Inc., formerly St. James Baptist Church of Las Vegas

### Residences

500 W. Van Buren	(1932-33) Christiensen Home
------------------	-----------------------------

603 W. Adams Ave. (1935)  
321 W. Van Buren Ave. (1945) Childhood home of Henry Moody, West Las Vegas' first  
black police officer

Miscellaneous

330 W. Washington Ave. (The 1948 addition) Westside School  
1400 E. Street (1940) Husky gas station

Suggested for further study

618 W. Adams St. (1953)  
715 W. Adams St. (1948)  
602 Washington Ave. (900 F. Street) (1951)  
1201, 1203, 1205 D St. (1945)  
600-606 Jackson Avenue (1955) The Town Tavern



## WEST LAS VEGAS HISTORIC CONTEXT REPORT

### Early History

The survey area is located north of present downtown Las Vegas, and west of the site of the first settlement in the Las Vegas valley, commonly referred to as the Mormon Fort, established in 1855.<sup>2</sup> The Mormons had traveled from Salt Lake City, Utah to the Las Vegas valley in order to establish a mission and a rest stop on the existing mail route to Southern California. The settlers constructed a fort located at the southeast corner of present Las Vegas Boulevard and Washington Avenue. However, the mission was not as successful as the settlers had hoped, and the Indians would frequently raid their fields to steal the crops. In 1857 the Mormons abandoned the fort due to internal dissension regarding leadership and failed attempts to mine useable lead from Mt. Potosi, 35 miles to the southwest.

The Mormon fort lay abandoned and at the mercy of passing travelers and Indians who stole lumber and supplies until 1860 when a California party of prospectors rediscovered the Potosi mining area. The miners formed the Colorado Mining Company and used the fort until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. The fort remained largely unused until a former miner named Octavius Decatur Gass and two partners took over the site to raise cattle and recultivate the deserted fields. As the fort was largely in ruins, Gass and his partners rebuilt the original adobe building and constructed another, which Gass eventually lived in with his wife and family. In the 1870s Gass bought out his two partners and continued to farm and raise cattle on the 640 acres. The fort was eventually named the "Las Vegas Ranch", and became a rest stop for weary travelers where they could camp and obtain a decent meal for a nominal fee.

In the 1860s and 1870s Gass served four consecutive terms as legislature in the Arizona Territory, as the 640 acres was located in Mojave County, Arizona at the time. As legislator, he backed a bill to remove a large portion of land from Mojave County to create Pah-Ute County on the border of the new state of Nevada. By 1872 the land in question had been given to Nevada and became Lincoln County. The State of Nevada demanded back taxes from all former Arizona residents of this area and this, along with extravagant spending and poor management, forced Gass into debt causing him to eventually lose the ranch in 1881 to one of his debtors, Archibald Stewart from Pioche, Nevada.

Archibald Stewart and his wife, Helen, moved to the Las Vegas Ranch in 1882 and began a prosperous ranching operation until 1884 when Stewart was killed under suspicious circumstances at the neighboring Kyle ranch. As a widow with five children, a member of the School Board and women's club leader, Helen Stewart continued operating the now 2,000-acre ranch and farm for another 18 years, becoming the largest landowner in Lincoln County. In 1902 the newly formed San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad became interested in a portion of the Stewart land and began searching for a qualified surveyor.

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<sup>2</sup> The Mormon Fort was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in March 1981.

### John T. McWilliams

John T. McWilliams was born on December 10, 1863 at Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada. His father, an Irish immigrant named John McWilliams, was a building contractor who taught John surveying skills. Aspiring to be an engineer, young John moved to the United States in 1879 to attend University of Chicago. Within a year he was employed by the Northern Pacific Railroad in its engineering corps. In 1879 the governor of South Dakota appointed him a delegate to the National Irrigation Congress in Los Angeles, which introduced him to the western United States. When the conference concluded, McWilliams decided to tour the region where he found plenty of work as a surveyor. His work brought him to Needles, California, where he met his future wife, Iona, eventually moving to Goodsprings, Nevada in 1901 with their newborn baby girl. It was here that McWilliams was living when summoned by William McDermott, a representative of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, to survey Helen J. Stewart's 1,840 acre Las Vegas Ranch in 1902.

The railroad was financed by Montana Senator William Clark, for whom Clark County is named, with ownership held by Clark's Las Vegas Land and Water Company. The railroad was considering the Stewart land for a new townsite and railroad division point, eventually purchasing much of the ranch from the Stewarts in 1902. McWilliams had been to the area previously, when in 1894 he surveyed and made claim to approximately 1,300 acres of heavily forested land at the Spring Mountains, specifically Lee Canyon, located northwest of present Las Vegas.<sup>3</sup> He was well aware of the valley's huge artesian water belt, and seeing opportunity, purchased 80 acres of land from the Stewarts. In 1904 he began laying out an orderly townsite, which he called the "Original Las Vegas Townsite", and selling lots.

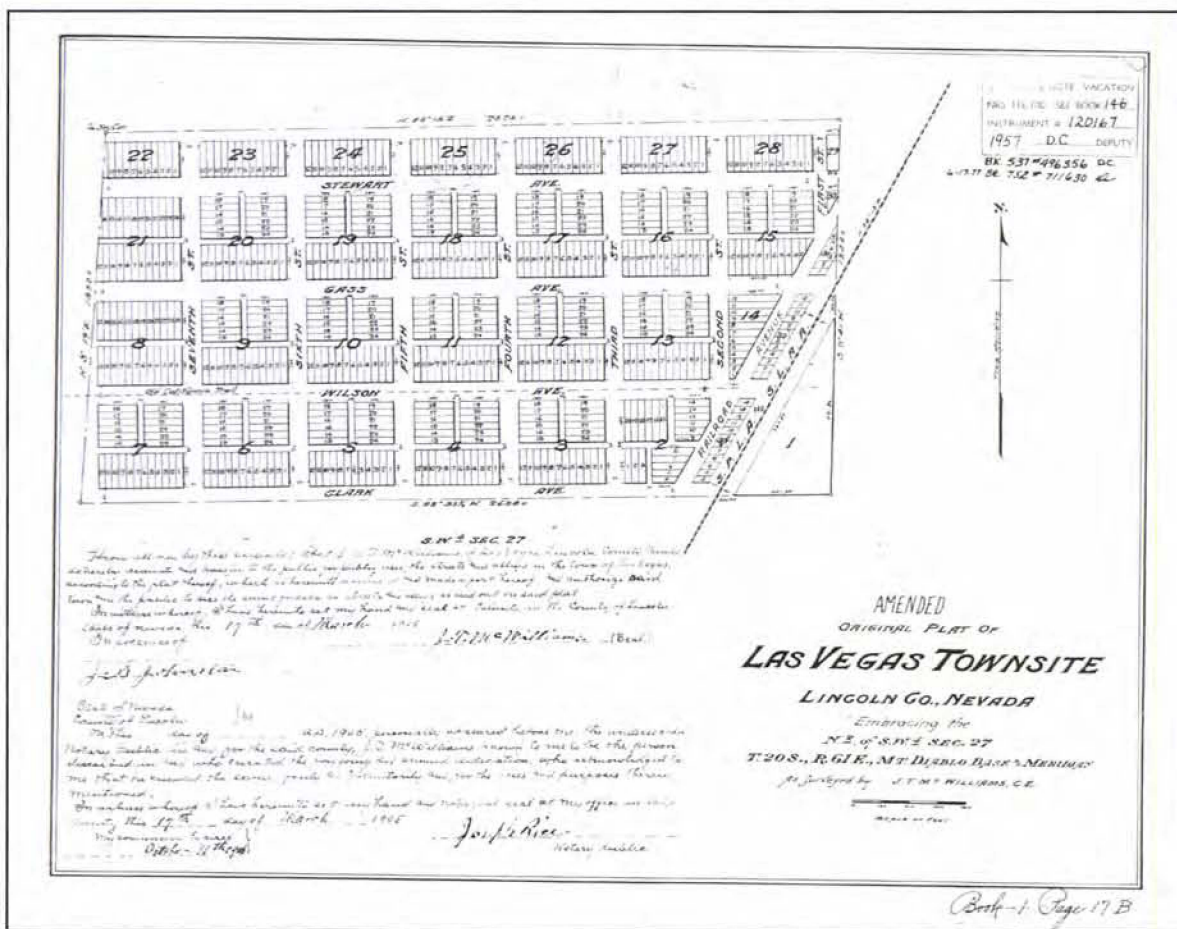
When the railroad was completed through Las Vegas that same year, McWilliams' land was on the west side of the tracks. Not willing to share the profits of a new town, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company began to lay out a townsite of its own on the opposite side of the tracks from McWilliams' land and auctioned off the lots that same year. The townsite, called "Clark's Las Vegas Townsite", boomed almost overnight with lots selling at the May 1905 auction for as much as \$1,200. Almost half of the 1,200 lots sold in one day, purchased mostly by speculators from Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. The most valuable lots were closest to the train depot located at the intersection of Main and Fremont Streets. The depot, and consequently the freight loading and unloading ramps, were located on the east side of the tracks, making it difficult for carts to cross over the embankment. Most importantly, the railroad owned nearly all the water from Big Springs, the source of Las Vegas Creek. Clark's Las Vegas Townsite came with the promise of water, eventually forcing many of the early residents of the McWilliams' townsite, which was served by several small shared wells, to place their buildings on skids and move across the tracks to Clark's Las Vegas Townsite.

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<sup>3</sup> McWilliams spent the next forty years battling to preserve the canyon and open it to public recreational use. His opponents in the government were never officially named, but Senator Clark was suspected as he had a practice of exploiting public lands for timber without compensation, ostensibly for mining development.

McWilliams' Townsite

The first plat for the Original Las Vegas Townsite was filed with then Lincoln County, Nevada on January 13, 1905. The boundaries were First Street and Eighth Street on the west and east, respectively (now A Street and H Street), and Clark Avenue and the north side of Stewart Avenue on the south and north, respectively (now Bonanza Road and Morgan Street.) The site was located northwest of Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, with the railroad running through the lower southeast corner at A Street and Clark Avenue (see below). Each block had 24 lots, with 12 running north/south and 12 running east/west. A 20-foot-wide T-shaped alley separated the lots into three groups. The north/south lots were typically 25 feet wide, and 125 feet long. The east/west lots were typically 25 feet wide, and 140 feet long.<sup>4</sup>



McWilliams Townsite, 1905

<sup>4</sup> Today, this pattern can be seen in a few of the remaining blocks, although some of the alleys have been closed and some of the east/west lots now run north/south. A large swath through the center of the neighborhood has been cleared for the construction of Interstate 15, and the lower right corner is now a large industrial complex (page 25, Maps insert).

By all rights, McWilliams' Townsite should have been a huge success. It was close to Las Vegas Creek, and accessible to roads to the surrounding mining communities of Rhyolite, Goldfield and Tonopah. For some time the townsite prospered, with lots selling well through the winter of 1904-1905, reaching a peak of 2,000-3,000 residents. It served as a transportation hub for mining supplies and goods brought by the railroad, with dozens of freight wagons leaving daily for the outlying mining districts. McWilliams built his house there, and by May of 1905, it had the valley's first bank, blacksmiths, wholesale houses, a bottling works, drug and general stores, and several good restaurants. Disaster struck in September 1905 with a series of fires that destroyed almost all of the wooden structures in town. Until the 1930s, the townsite consisted of little more than tents and shacks. When McWilliams was appointed State Water Rights Surveyor for the region in 1906, the residents of Clark's Las Vegas Townsite were already referring to it as "Ragtown".



McWilliams, 1904

Clark County was carved from Lincoln County in 1910, and Clark's Las Vegas Townsite became an incorporated city, Las Vegas, adopting its first charter on March 16, 1911. At the time of incorporation, the city encompassed 19.18 square miles, and had approximately 1,000 inhabitants, less than 1 percent of the state's total population. Fremont and Main Streets developed as the main commercial arteries of Las Vegas. Main Street ran parallel along the east side of the railroad tracks and the majority of the businesses were

dedicated to the railroad. Fremont Street became the town center with a bank, post office, and retail shops. Nightclubs and speakeasies flourished, even during Prohibition, on the infamous Block 16 located on N. First Street, one block north of Fremont Street.

McWilliams' Townsite became a subdivision of Las Vegas, and in 1916 began to demand water services from the railroad's land and water subsidiary. The Las Vegas City Commission passed a resolution that year asking for compliance from the railroad. At the time, the Westside was developing slowly, with little more than tents and a few permanent homes. There was no protection from fire because with no water lines, there were no fire hydrants, forcing firemen to run a hose from Las Vegas. Several homes would be lost if one home were to catch on fire due to the amount of time it would take for the firemen to treat the fire, as well as other factors which will be discussed later. In addition to the fire hazard, the lack of a water system contributed to noxious living conditions which was repeatedly reported in the *Las Vegas Age* and *Las Vegas*

*Review Journal*. "Old Town has suffered heavily from sickness due entirely to the contaminated water supply from surface wells, and the condition is a menace to the entire city."<sup>5</sup>

Las Vegas had recently received ten acres of land from the Las Vegas Land and Water Co. for the creation of a cemetery,<sup>6</sup> and not wanted to spend "large amounts of money for the purpose" of bringing water to the Westside, was considering the project as an addition to securing water for the new cemetery.<sup>7</sup> It is not known if this plan was ever realized, however, and the battle for water continued for ten years until the residents of "Old Town" began petitioning the Nevada Public Service Commission for service. After another year of long, complicated negotiations it was decided that the Westside would receive city water, and John T. McWilliams would lay out the system. However, the Westside did not receive the promised water at this time. This was only the beginning of a series of battles the townsite would fight with the Las Vegas city leaders for basic services.

In 1927 a meeting was held on the Westside concerning municipal improvements and a possible bond issue proposal. Present were then Mayor Hesse, City Attorney Frank Stevens, and prominent developer and newsman Al Cahlen. It was stated that the population of the Westside was approximately 1,200 and without sufficient water for fire protection, sewers, or domestic use, the situation endangers the health of the entire city and stifles the Westside in its growth and development.<sup>8</sup> Three years prior to this meeting, two new tracts had been laid to the north of McWilliams Townsite, and were beginning to be developed. The first tracts were the Valley View Tract with boundaries of N. First Street to N. Fourth Street (A Street to D Street), and Washington Avenue to Harrison Avenue on the north, and the H.F.M.&M. Tract, with boundaries of N. Fourth Street to N. Eighth Street (D Street to H Street), and Washington Avenue to Harrison Avenue. In addition, the Westside School, or Las Vegas Grammar School opened in 1922 with four rooms. The school was built on land donated by Helen J. Stewart to the Clark County School District in 1921, eventually hosting the U.S.O. during WWII.<sup>9</sup> All total there were thirty-two blocks that would quickly fill up with families coming to work as laborers for the construction of Boulder Dam (now Hoover Dam). Clearly the increased development called for these services.

At the meeting, Attorney Frank Stevens explained that the City Commissioners had the power to issue a bond to construct a municipal plant. The Westside emergency will "form the basis for a municipally owned water system to cover the entire city."<sup>10</sup> A few days after the meeting, Stevens reported to the *Las Vegas Age* that an amendment to the city charter was required before a municipal water system can be established.<sup>11</sup> The bond was finally issued in 1930 for \$82,000 which, among other improvements, provided for the purchase of 240 acres of water-rich land west of the city. In a public notice in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the bond details were

<sup>5</sup> Squires, Charles "Pop". Editorial, *Las Vegas Age*, April 29, 1916.

<sup>6</sup> Rinella, Heidi Knapp. "Living in the Past." *Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 28, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Squires, Charles "Pop". Editorial, *Las Vegas Age*, April 29, 1916.

<sup>8</sup> "New Water System Under Discussion", *Las Vegas Age*, July 2, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> The Westside School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

<sup>10</sup> "New Water System Under Discussion", *Las Vegas Age*, July 2, 1927.

<sup>11</sup> "Must Amend Charter for Water System", *Las Vegas Age*, July 16, 1927.

revealed, stating that the bond also covered the costs of drilling the Artesian well which it was believed had ample water to supply the whole city. In order to "save the city from a bond issue for delivering this water to the West Side", Mayor Hesse convinced the local water company to extend its water mains for the service of the Westside residents.<sup>12</sup> However, according to articles from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the Westside did not receive water until the early 1940s.

Conditions on the Westside worsened as the population increased with the opening of the new housing tracts and the construction of Boulder Dam. By 1931 crowded sub-standard housing and tents were the norm, the streets were still ungraveled and there was still no sewer system. A bond issue went before the city in April 1931 for the installation of a sewer mains and laterals, but was not passed. As mentioned above, it wasn't until 1934 when the city received federal aid from the Roosevelt administration through the New Deal programs, that the Westside saw substantial infrastructure improvements. The New Deal programs were designed by the Roosevelt Administration and passed by Congress in 1933 to provide relief and recovery from the Great Depression through, among other things, public works programs. The New Deal programs funded many projects in Las Vegas, including new parks and buildings such as the War Memorial Building (no longer extant), and street improvements such as the paving and widening of the Los Angeles Highway.

The sewer project for the Westside was completed through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), in conjunction with the Civil Works Administration (CWA). FERA, now FEMA, was one of the first New Deal programs set up to provide funding for areas in need. Typically funding went to Home Relief Bureaus and Departments of Welfare for Poor Relief, as well as infrastructure improvement and repair after a disaster.<sup>13</sup> The Nevada state CWA board, a New Deal program designed to provide jobs through federally funded building projects, gave approval for the use of FERA funds.<sup>14</sup> That same year federally-funded programs provided assistance for the installation of a sewer system for the entire city of Las Vegas, including part of the Westside and all new subdivisions built during the boom created by the construction of Boulder Dam. The CWA and FERA workers paved over fifty-eight blocks in Las Vegas and graveled many Westside streets.

Water and sewer services were not the only bones of contention, as the Westside did not have paved or even graveled streets, nor did they have streetlights or markers. When McWilliams Townsite was first platted, the north-south streets were named First, Second, Third and so on. This caused confusion with the fire and police departments because the streets of Las Vegas had the same names. When responding to calls, the fire and policemen would always rush to the Las Vegas streets first, allowing many Westside fires to consume several properties before it could be put out. The Westside street names were changed to letter names in the 1930s to eliminate this hazardous situation. Also hampering rescue response time were the actual street conditions.

<sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Public Notice, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 19, 1930.

<sup>13</sup> Kait, "The New Deal Project: Federal Emergency Relief Administration," April 6, 2001, <<http://web54.sd54.k12.il.us/schools/keller/newdeal/fera.htm>> (October 16, 2003)

<sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "CWA Forces to Begin Labor on the Westside System First", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 28, 1934.

After every rain, the streets became so muddy it prevented children from attending school.<sup>15</sup> Petitions were circulated in early February 1931 and handed to the City Commissioners, but rejected based on property valuations. If the Westside residents wanted to foot the bill, the improvements would be made. However by late February 1931 an editorial in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* reported that the Westside streets were finally being graveled. It continues on to add that the city elections are only two months away.<sup>16</sup>

It is obvious that Las Vegas was reticent to supply water and other basic services to Westside residents due to low land valuations, and the low-income population lacked the necessary political influence to make demands. The population of the Westside during that time was comprised of mainly low-income whites and some Chinese, Mexicans and blacks that had come to the area to work for the railroad and in the mines. In 1922 the black population of Las Vegas and the Westside numbered only about 50, increasing to 75 during the early 1930s.<sup>17</sup> Because land was so inexpensive on the Westside, with lots selling from \$50 to \$100 each in 1925,<sup>18</sup> many of the new immigrants to the area were forced to move there, as they could not afford the \$1,000 lots selling in Las Vegas. It was a vicious circle: Low land value, no water, no significant middle- to high-income residents, low land value, no water, and so forth.

As early as 1917 the Las Vegas Land and Water Company Vice President Walter Bracken tried to confine blacks to Block 17 (next to the brothels and taverns at Block 16), in fear that integrated housing would encourage more minority residence or discourage white financial support in the new town.<sup>19</sup> His efforts failed, and when rumors of the construction of Hoover Dam began to circulate in the early 1920s, the black population increased as several black men and families arrived to find work at the dam. A small black community began to develop north of Fremont Street between Ogden and Stewart Avenues, and First and Fourth Streets. However many more were forced to live in tents and shacks on the Westside, as the sudden influx of unemployed caught Las Vegas unprepared and unable to provide housing or jobs. To make matters worse, Six Companies, the organization building the dam, refused at first to hire any blacks until 1932.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Editorial, "Should Be Successful", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 7, 1931.

<sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Cahlan, A.E. "From Where I Sit", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 20, 1931.

<sup>17</sup> Tackett, Karen. *McWilliams Townsite: 1905-1980*. Las Vegas: Department of Funds Coordination, City of Las Vegas, 1980.

<sup>18</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Advertisement for the H. F. M. and M. tract, *Las Vegas Age*, November 21, 1925.

<sup>19</sup> Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-2000*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Tackett, Karen. *McWilliams Townsite: 1905-1980*. Las Vegas: Department of Funds Coordination, City of Las Vegas, 1980.

The largest blow came in 1931 when the established black community north of Fremont Street was asked to relocate for the construction of the Federal Post Office on Stewart Street. An article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* from February 1931 states that the “colored residents” are making plans to move to the Westside.<sup>21</sup> By May 1932, the “removal of the colored district” to the Westside in preparation for the Post Office had begun.<sup>22</sup> As blacks were not allowed in other areas of the city, the Westside was the most logical place to go. Many new subdivisions, such as Williams Addition No. 2, advertised, “Caucasian Race Only”.<sup>23</sup> Las Vegas had begun to unofficially institute Jim Crow laws, confining the black population to live in one area. Unfortunately the segregation was not limited to housing, as most of the casinos and other business establishments did not allow black patrons, or charged them higher prices for the same product or service.<sup>24</sup> Black club owners were often not able to attain liquor and gambling licenses or were restricted to certain areas of town,<sup>25</sup> and the black-owned business establishments were constantly raided during this time.<sup>26</sup>

In 1935, the city leaders began plans for a railroad underpass structure to facilitate an easier and safer route across the Union Pacific railroad tracks which separated the Westside and the east side of Las Vegas. The route chosen was Clark Avenue, which was part of the Tonopah-Reno Highway and the major link between the Las Vegas business district and the Westside. Under direction of the State of Nevada Department of Highways, the Clark Avenue railroad underpass structure, now called Bonanza Underpass, was designed by the Union Pacific company engineers and construction began in 1935.<sup>27</sup> The total

# GRAND OPENING

## WILLIAMS ADDITION NO. 2

Unsurpassed Location on Main Salt Lake Highway-3 Minutes from New Federal Building

**Moderate Restrictions Unhampered By Building Codes**

Caucasian Race Only

**LIGHTS-WATER-STREETS GRAVELED**

**BUY NOW AND PROFIT**

# FREE

FIRST PRIZE—  
1—20 x 110 FOOT LOT

SECOND PRIZE—  
1000 Equites in one 30 x 110 ft. lot

THIRD PRIZE—  
100 Equites in one 50 x 110 ft. lot

FREE DRAWING

Every adult visiting this property during the next week, will be given a ticket entitling them to a chance on one large choice lot FREE.

# FREE

FOURTH PRIZE—  
800 Equites in one 50 x 110 ft. lot

FIFTH PRIZE—  
300 Equites in one 50 x 110 ft. lot

SIXTH PRIZE—  
800 Equites in one 50 x 110 ft. lot

*Drawing to Be Held on the Property Next Sunday August 16 at 4 p. m.*

**TOM WILLIAMS**  
Owner and Subdivider at Tract Office on Tract

**Kimball and Williams**  
Selling Agents, Auditorium Building 200 Fremont

Directions to reach tract... Drive out North Main one quarter mile beyond the City limits

<sup>21</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “U. S. Building Survey Finished”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 14, 1931.

<sup>22</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Colored Section in Vegas Will Move”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 24, 1932.

<sup>23</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Advertisement, “Grand Opening Williams Addition No. 2”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 8, 1931.

<sup>24</sup> Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Colored Annex to Restricted District”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 9, 1934.

<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Clean-up of Colored Area Ordered Here”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 20, 1931.

<sup>27</sup> For a complete report on the Bonanza Underpass, see National Register of Historic Places nomination report “Clark Avenue Railroad Underpass”, September 2003.



cost of the underpass came to \$200,000, all of which was covered using Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds, another New Deal initiated program.<sup>28</sup>

The underpass was hailed as not only a huge achievement for the Nevada Department of Highways, but it also represented a successful state, federal, and private collaboration. It was touted as the most spectacular event since the beginning of the city, and a tremendous success story for President Roosevelt's New Deal programs. Indeed, it increased the safety of travelers who had previously had to dodge swiftly oncoming trains and risk getting carts and wagons stuck on railroad tracks and swiftly oncoming trains. The underpass represented the symbolic gateway between the long-severed communities, facilitating desperately needed infrastructure improvements on the Westside.

The opening fete for the Clark Avenue underpass structure was scheduled for Friday, August 6, 1937. It was to be a huge event, attended by many community and political leaders from both the Westside and Las Vegas. A parade with the Color Guard, band, Las Vegas Horsemen's Association and the city fire and police departments started at Sixth and Fremont Streets, passed under the underpass and ended on the west side at the speaker's podium where refreshments were served and speeches given. It was to be the "most historic civic celebration ever held...marking an era in traffic safety" in Las Vegas.<sup>29</sup>

According to an article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, dated July 30, 1937, C.D. Baker was the head of the committee organizing the celebration with C.P. Squires as the Master of Ceremonies, both highly respected Las Vegas pioneers who were actively involved with local and state level politics.<sup>30</sup> The festivities began with then Las Vegas Mayor Leonard Arnett saying, "A short time ago the ribbons of steel of the Union Pacific separated the Westside and the east side of town. Today that barrier has been removed thanks to President Roosevelt for his program in making this underpass possible, to the state officials for their foresight, and to the workmen who constructed the project." He then predicted an increase in valuation for Westside property with the advent of the underpass.

Ed W. Clark, a prominent political and community leader and pioneer resident, who was equally as respected a community leader, and involved in many of the same development activities as Pop Squires, gave the address. The speech focused on the future of Las Vegas and how growth and industrial development will continue unhampered due to the availability of cheap power from Boulder Dam. Also in attendance were Lieutenant Governor Fred S. Alward, General Manager of the Union Pacific Railroad system H.J. Plumhoff, prominent local attorney Harley Harmon, President of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce O.A. Kimball, as well as a number of representatives from the Nevada Department of Highways, and the contractor and builder of the underpass, Jack Casson. The dedication speech was given by Nevada Governor Richard Kirman, and a large delegation of state officials from the Capital was present. Community

<sup>28</sup> "Underpass Fete Staged Friday is a Big Success", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 7, 1937.

<sup>29</sup> "Underpass Fete is Ready for Friday Evening", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 5, 1937.

<sup>30</sup> "Vegas and Westside to Join in Observing Underpass Opening", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 30, 1937.

leaders and local politicians from the Westside were present and spoke, although the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* did not name these individuals.

Sadly, the opening of the underpass was not the catalyst for a complete economic redevelopment for the Westside, and nor did it end the bitter racial contention that was beginning to brew. In August 1938 the Westside Improvement Association, chaired by L.A. Jarrett and James Shea, demanded full-time police protection, extended water facilities, paved streets, and streetlights and markers at a meeting of the Las Vegas Board of Commissioners. A delegate from the Westside stated, "Conditions on the Westside are a disgrace to the city. We are in the city limits, and we are willing to pay the taxes. We want the streets put in the same shape on the Westside as they are in the rest of the city." Then mayor H.P. Marble responded that the city does not have unlimited funds and he noted, "Three years ago the city put up street markers in Westside and they were torn down and used for firewood." The mayor promised that a police car would make rounds through the neighborhoods just like on the east side, but because the taxes collected in Westside amount to about \$1,200, there is insufficient funding to pay for a full-time officer.<sup>31</sup>

In November 1938, when no move had been made on the part of the city, a petition was circulated and presented to the board of commissioners for improvements. The lack of water in the Westside had been determined to be a health hazard by state engineer A.M. Smith in August of that year. He stated that the Las Vegas Land and Water Co. might be requested to extend the water system into the area by the public service commission. The utility company refused unless they saw a profit upfront, and the residents were to pay for the lines. It was going to be a very expensive project due to sparse development in the area which would require a lot of digging and pipe.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile the seeds of racism continued growing as, in 1939 white residents petitioned the city for zoning that would eliminate blacks from residing in certain parts of the Westside. The petitions were sent to the city attorney for legal determination, and it was ruled in violation of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution.<sup>33</sup> The black population was growing steadily in the Westside, initially inspired by the construction of Boulder Dam, but supported by a number of tactics that excluded blacks from living and working in Las Vegas. Aside from landlords and housing developments refusing to rent and sell to black residents, Mayor Cragin refused to renew black-owned business licenses downtown after 1943 unless they relocated to the Westside.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Residents of Westside Demand Improvements From City Board", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 20, 1938.

<sup>32</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Water System Extension for Westside is Said Looming Now", *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 22, 1938.

<sup>33</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Colored Residents to Win Legal Battle", *Las Vegas Review Journal*, October 17, 1939.

<sup>34</sup> Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-2000*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

## World War II

The overcrowding problem increased when in the early 1940s the government, fearing an attack on the western coast began feverishly building military bases and war industry plants throughout the western United States. Seizing upon the opportunity led by Hoover Dam which provided inexpensive power and water, the Basic Magnesium, Incorporated (BMI) magnesium refinery plant was constructed in Basic Townsite, now Henderson, Nevada. In addition, the Army Air Gunnery Range, now Nellis Air Force Base, was constructed in Las Vegas. Thousands of blacks migrated to Las Vegas to work at BMI during WWII and were forced to live on the Westside, with some living in segregated housing at BMI and in camps along Boulder Highway between Las Vegas and the Basic Townsite.

The construction and operation of these military endeavors had an enormous effect on the housing situation in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Army Air Force Gunnery School opened with nearly 2,000 men stationed at the airfield. Over the course of the war, the influx of workers, contractors, business and military personnel nearly doubled the population of Las Vegas which, in 1940, was 8,422. By 1943 approximately 8,000 servicemen were stationed at the airfield, rising to nearly 11,000 by 1946. By July of 1941 BMI was under construction, employing nearly 14,000 workers. Upon completion in 1943, the plant employed more than 6,000 workers, most of whom were housed in company housing at the Basic Townsite. When BMI closed in 1944 as many as 13,000 employees had to search for work and housing elsewhere, many of whom moved into Las Vegas for this purpose. A U.S.O. was opened in the Westside Grammar School on Washington Avenue and D Street, and functioned as a hostelry for soldiers, sleeping over 1,000 soldiers every month.<sup>35</sup>

According to a June 1942 article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the black population of the Westside grew by 2,000 in the previous few weeks. Plans were being discussed by the city board to “assist the local colored people in assimilating the growing population of their race arriving here daily to work at the magnesium plant”. Recreation and business establishments located in the center of the Westside were discussed at this meeting.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Jackson Street had long been



Monroe Avenue, 1943

<sup>35</sup> Tackett, Karen. *McWilliams Townsite: 1905-1980*. Las Vegas: Department of Funds Coordination, City of Las Vegas, 1980.

<sup>36</sup> “Growing Colored Population Cited”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 17, 1942.

the commercial strip for the Westside, with several small cafes and shops, and was now home to many small jazz and social clubs. As blacks were not welcome in white-owned businesses anywhere in Las Vegas, this formed a “captive audience” so to speak, and black-owned businesses thrived during this time such as the former Harlem Club, Ebony Club and the Brown Derby. There was still a lack of accommodations for black travelers and performers who were beginning to perform on the Strip, but weren’t allowed to stay in the Strip hotels. Some residents opened their houses as boarding houses such as Mrs. Harrison’s on F Street (no longer extant).

In July 1942, it was noted in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that the housing conditions were “deplorable”, declaring that, “tents, shacks and sometimes nothing at all except beds are being placed in the vacant property on the Westside”.<sup>37</sup> Families with five and six members were living in one-room shacks made of cardboard, some still without running water and sewer. When the city building inspector was asked to review the area for code enforcement, R.S. Norton replied that he had no jurisdiction unless a permit was issued. Norton was subsequently given jurisdiction by the city board and was ordered to determine the best way to halt the shack building. One solution was to construct a trailer camp facility for black war workers. The federal government approved \$29,000 to construct the trailers, as well as two utility buildings, four garbage platforms, a sewage disposal area and water system.<sup>38</sup> Public housing was discussed, and the American Federation of Labor organized efforts to provide sanitary services to the Westside. The former U.S.O, no longer held at the Westside Grammar School, was converted into a community shower and bath house with toilets, wash bowls and laundry facilities. In addition, women could attend classes about parenting and homemaking where they would learn to sew and cook.

The overcrowded conditions were not only unsafe, but unsanitary. Throughout the 1940s several articles appeared in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* describing the unbelievable living conditions. Many residents had failed to supply connections from their houses to the city sewer lines, and were still using outhouses, or privies. The health department demanded that residents make the necessary connections in one weekend, and if they did not have the means (indoor fixtures), then they were given approved plans for “fly-proof privies” to help reduce the risk of spreading contagious diseases.<sup>39 40</sup> Although not attributed to the privies, Polio and venereal disease were becoming serious problems. In 1945 the city held a “health roundup” of women on the Westside who were repeat offenders.<sup>41</sup>

As WWII came to an end, the excuse for allowing the appalling conditions to continue on the Westside was over and the city decided that the best way to handle the situation was to do a mass slum clearance. Between September 1944 and April 1945 roughly 375 substandard shacks and cabins, and 50 privies were demolished or burned with no plans by the city to replace the housing. The Westside petitioned again for street improvements in August 1945, but was told

<sup>37</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Westiders Will Receive Relief From City Dads”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 7, 1942.

<sup>38</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Trailer Camp in Vegas Okehed”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 22, 1942.

<sup>39</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Westside People Called to Hear Talk on Sanitation”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 29, 1942.

<sup>40</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Sewer Lines in Westside Finished”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, January 13, 1943.

<sup>41</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Health Roundup”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 6, 1945.

again that Westside assessed valuations were too low. A dust oil was applied to the streets, and fire hydrants and street lights began to be installed.



#### Post World War II

**C Street, D Street and  
Monroe Avenue, 1943**

Development on the Westside, within the survey boundaries, has seen little change since the early 1950s, despite thousands of military employees and their families desperately seeking housing with the end of WWII and the closing of the BMI plant, among other factors. Several public and private housing developments were planned for the areas immediately adjacent to the surveyed area during the late 1940s and early 1950s, but few were realized. Construction of housing developments directly adjacent to the surveyed areas are typically from the mid-1950s to early 1960s, and on into the 1970s. There were a few exceptions, such as the government housing unit Marble Manor, comprised of 20 acres of 100 rental units in 1950 (no longer extant), ten acres of public housing south of Washington Avenue in 1952, and Berkley Square, built by Pardee Phillips (now Pardee homes) at D Street and Owens Avenue in 1954. Bonanza Village, located several blocks west of the surveyed area, was comprised of white residents who would protest any black-owned housing developments directly east of their homes. Their protests almost aborted the construction of the 100 rental units until the city promised a 100-foot-wide buffer highway, now Martin Luther King Blvd.

In 1947 construction of 93 two-bedroom homes was approved. The houses would be sold for \$7,500 each with large lots, water and sewer connections, and veterans would have first choice of the homes. The project was made possible through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and the city-county planning commission. Floyd Anderson and Horace Shidler, who were the developers for the Mayfair neighborhood at Charleston Boulevard and S. 15<sup>th</sup> Street in

Las Vegas, were the developers for this project.<sup>42</sup> The housing project was to be called Westside Park, located at the north terminus of F Street. In a *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article dated December 14, 1949 it was announced that after four years of planning, designing and negotiating with government officials, the development could finally begin construction. Anderson and Shidler were no longer the developers and instead the job went to Phil Shipley and Associates, Inc. with Curlett Construction Co., and Clem Malone, the owner of the site. The amount of homes to be built had increased to 155 and the homes were to be designed by Paul R. Williams, a member of the American Institute of Architects and internationally-known, award-winning black architect in the field of residential construction. Williams was famous for designing small homes that were spacious and “ahead of their time”.<sup>43</sup> The homes were to be built of concrete block with a “Tropicool” roof, steel casement windows, steel kitchen cabinets, air-conditioning, and all-electric heat.<sup>44</sup>

The 1950s-through the 1970s were tumultuous decades for residents of the Westside. Segregation continued unabashedly until the 1960s, when it subsided with the advent of civil rights legislation. In 1955 Nevada’s black population rose to approximately 16,000 with most living in the Westside. The city finally began paving the streets and in 1951 the Westside received phone service, 45 years after the first telephone was installed in the Hotel Nevada (now the Golden Gate Hotel), at the corner of Fremont and Main Streets on the east side of the railroad tracks. Large hotels and casinos began to open such as the infamous Moulin Rouge, the former Carver House and Mardi Gras Hotel-Casinos, and the still open Town Tavern on Jackson Street.



Town Tavern, c. 1950s

In 1958, Nevada Governor Grant Sawyer pushed for laws to integrate hotels and casinos. He established the Gaming Control Board to enforce professional management practices and regulations and conduct license background checks. In 1960, the NAACP sponsored a successful civil rights event at the Moulin Rouge in March to desegregate casino resorts and hotels. Their focus was The Strip, since smaller casinos would follow their lead. With the 1960s Civil Rights Movement gaining momentum and publicity, national

publications began mentioning Las Vegas segregation in the same breath as Southern segregation. With so much federal,

<sup>42</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “223 Homes to be Built in Las Vegas”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 7, 1947.

<sup>43</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Famed Architect Designs Homes for Westside Park”, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 14, 1949.

<sup>44</sup> This development would be out of the survey area for this report, and it is not known if these houses were ever constructed. Clark County Assessor’s information lists the area where the homes were to have been built as Berkley Square, with construction dates beginning in 1954.

state, media, entertainment and NAACP pressure, the Strip and downtown casino resorts and hotels desegregated. In 1968 several skirmishes broke out all over the city, with several stand-offs on the Westside. Several people were hurt as groups of black and white youths attacked each other and innocent bystanders. Discrimination in hotels, casinos and housing was officially ended by Nevada statute in 1971, although segregation continued in the schools until 1972.<sup>45</sup>

### Conclusion

Little has changed within the survey boundaries since the 1950s when the last significant building activity occurred, most of which is housing. Roughly one-third of the 475 lots are vacant, presumably from the slum clearance of substandard housing during the 1940s. Jackson Avenue remains as the commercial strip, with some commercial spilling over onto side streets, but there is little in the way of community services such as a market, shops, barber, etc., however, there are a few small cafes and restaurants. The most notable feature of the survey area is the number of religious properties. This contributes to a vital social scene on Sundays, as opposed to the relatively vacant streets during the rest of the week.

It is the recommendation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation that the historic resource survey of West Las Vegas continue, beginning with the remaining historic buildings within the survey boundaries where the oldest and most valuable resources exist. As with any survey, gems were discovered such as the Christiensen House at 500 W. Van Buren, but it is the opinion of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation that the surface was only scratched and a more in-depth survey must be done. First priority should be given to the old McWilliams townsite, which still contains what appear to be some of the original shacks from before the 1940s when most were demolished during the slum clearance effort. Most of these buildings face the alleys and can be difficult to get to or photograph, albeit worth the effort. These buildings have much to tell us about the early development of West Las Vegas, who lived there, and how they lived because so much of it simply has not changed.

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<sup>45</sup> Moehring, Eugene P. *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-2000*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2000.

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\_\_\_\_\_ "Trailer Camp in Vegas Okehed", Las Vegas Review-Journal, December 22, 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Sewer Lines in Westside Finished", Las Vegas Review-Journal, January 13, 1943.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Health Roundup", Las Vegas Review-Journal, December 6, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_ "223 Homes to be Built in Las Vegas", Las Vegas Review-Journal, November 7, 1947.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Famed Architect Designs Homes for Westside Park", Las Vegas Review-Journal,  
December 14, 1949.

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## LIST OF SURVEYED BUILDINGS

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### McWilliams Townsite

704 W. Wilson Avenue  
  
514 W. McWilliams Avenue  
520 W. McWilliams Avenue  
602 W. McWilliams Avenue  
604 W. McWilliams Avenue  
622 W. McWilliams Avenue  
631 W. McWilliams Avenue  
633 W. McWilliams Avenue  
  
817 E Street  
  
717 F Street  
719 F Street  
810 F Street  
811 F Street  
814 F Street  
816 F Street

### Valley View Tract

330 W. Washington, Westside Grammar  
School  
  
200 Jefferson Avenue  
203 Jefferson Avenue  
211 Jefferson Avenue  
220 Jefferson Avenue  
308 Jefferson Avenue  
  
209 Madison Avenue  
311 Madison Avenue  
317 Madison Avenue  
  
200 W. Monroe Avenue  
304 W. Monroe Avenue  
  
200 Jackson Avenue  
206 Jackson Avenue  
214 Jackson Avenue  
216 Jackson Avenue

### Valley View Tract, continued

222 Jackson Avenue  
304 Jackson Avenue  
310 Jackson Avenue  
  
313 W. Van Buren Avenue  
321 W. Van Buren Avenue  
  
1300 C Street  
1318 C Street  
1323 C Street  
  
1218 D Street  
1308 D Street  
1402 D Street  
1412-1416 D Street

### H.F.M & M. Tract

602 W. Washington Avenue  
604 W. Washington Avenue  
708 W. Washington Avenue  
710 W. Washington Avenue  
  
400 W. Adams Avenue  
405 W. Adams Avenue  
603 W. Adams Avenue  
615 W. Adams Avenue  
618 W. Adams Avenue  
704 W. Adams Avenue  
705 W. Adams Avenue  
715 W. Adams Avenue  
  
400 Jefferson Avenue  
412 Jefferson Avenue  
422 Jefferson Avenue  
617 Jefferson Avenue  
714 Jefferson Avenue  
  
404 Madison Avenue  
411 Madison Avenue  
621 Madison Avenue

H.F.M & M. Tract, continued

700 Madison Avenue  
716 Madison Avenue

500 W. Monroe Avenue  
612 W. Monroe Avenue  
616 W. Monroe Avenue  
709 W. Monroe Avenue

407 Jackson Avenue  
413 Jackson Avenue  
418 Jackson Avenue  
500 Jackson Avenue  
504 Jackson Avenue  
512 Jackson Avenue  
516 Jackson Avenue  
600 Jackson Avenue  
612 Jackson Avenue  
709 Jackson Avenue

500 W. Van Buren Avenue  
508 W. Van Buren Avenue  
510 W. Van Buren Avenue  
700 W. Van Buren Avenue  
704 W. Van Buren Avenue  
710 W. Van Buren Avenue

1201 D Street  
1203 D Street  
1205 D Street  
1515 D Street

1006 E Street  
1400 E Street

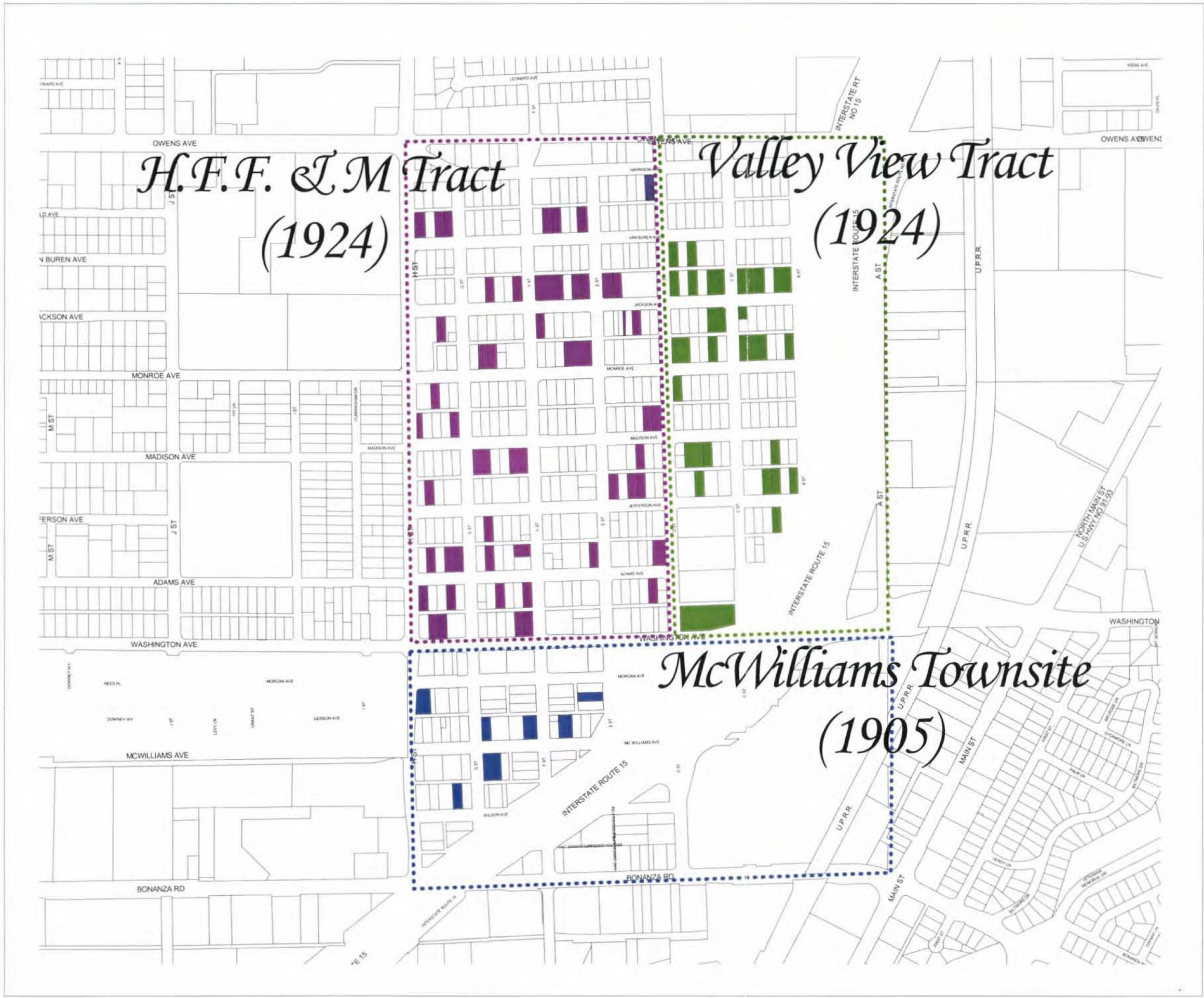
1001 F Street  
1117 F Street  
1312 F Street

820 H Street  
914 H Street

# West Las Vegas

## Historic Resource Survey

-  McWilliams Townsite Surveyed properties
-  Valley View Tract Surveyed properties
-  H.F.F. & M. Surveyed properties



*H.F.F. & M. Tract*  
(1924)

*Valley View Tract*  
(1924)


*McWilliams Townsite*  
(1905)

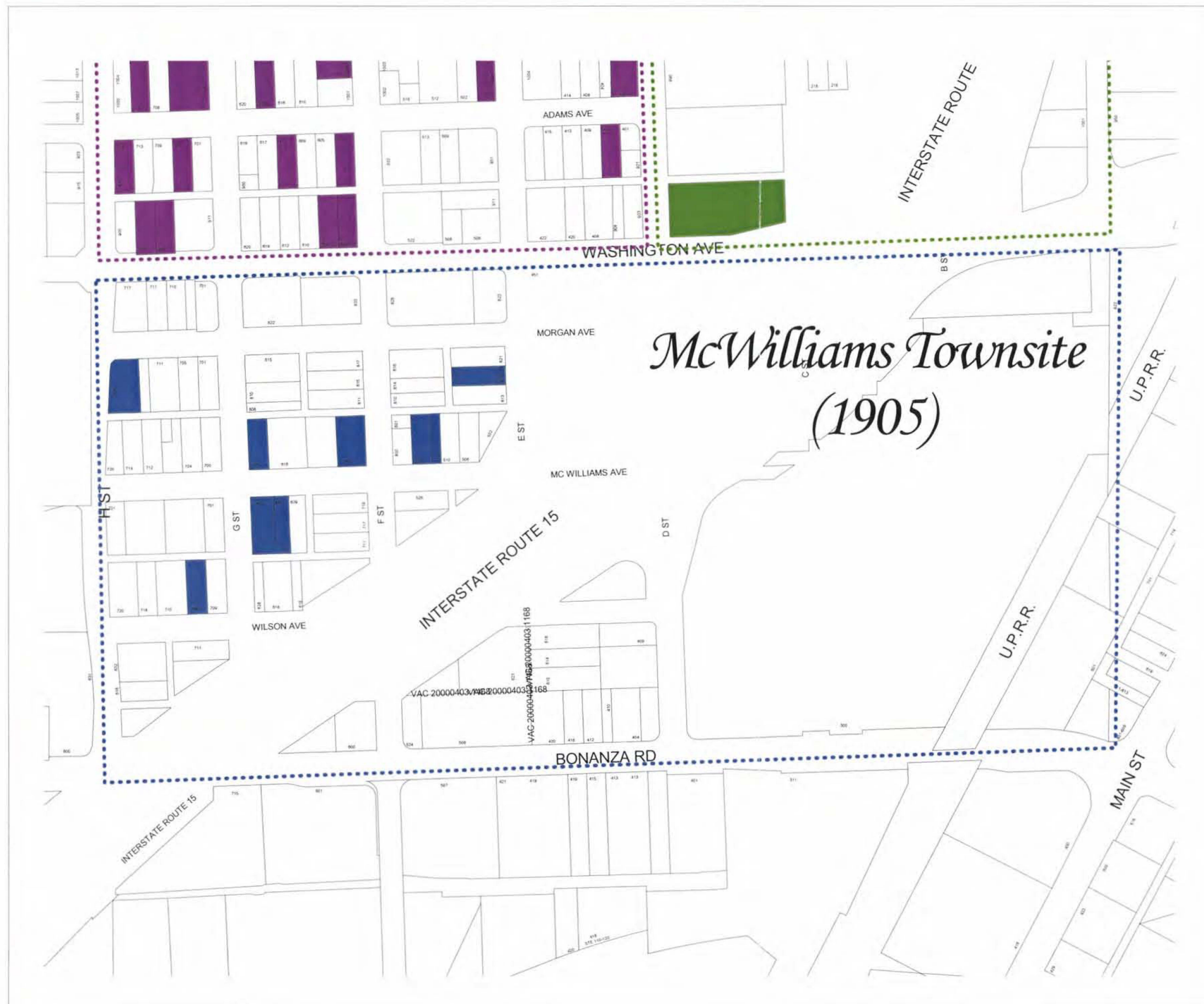


# West Las Vegas

Historic Resource Survey

## McWilliams Townsite (1905)

 McWilliams Townsite  
Surveyed properties



# West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey

## Valley View Tract and H.F.F. & M. Tract (1924)

-  Valley View Tract  
Surveyed properties
-  H.F.F. & M.  
Surveyed properties



**INDEXES TO ATTACHED PHOTOGRAPHS—McWilliams Townsite**

- W. Wilson Avenue
- W. McWilliams Avenue
- E Street
- F Street

RECORDED NOTE VACATION  
 NRS 116.100 SEE BOOK 146  
 INSTRUMENT # 120167  
 1957 D.C. DEPUTY  
 BK 537 446356 DC  
 L-1737 BE 752 # 71/630 CL

**AMENDED  
 ORIGINAL PLAT OF  
 LAS VEGAS TOWNSITE  
 LINCOLN CO., NEVADA**

Embracing the  
 N.E. 1/4 of S.W. 1/4 SEC. 27  
 T. 20 S., R. 61 E., N.M. DUDLEY PARK & MENARDY  
 as surveyed by J.T.M. WILLIAMS, C.E.

*Book 1, Page 17 B*



City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Wilson Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#3-704-10	North	South (front) facade

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. McWilliams Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#1-514-2	North	South (front) facade
#1-520-1	North	South (front) facade
#3-602-5	Northwest	South (front) façade
#3-604-6	North	South (front) facade
#3-622-2	Northeast	South (front) facade
#3-631-3	Southwest	North (front) façade
#3-633-4	Southeast	North (front) façade

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: E Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

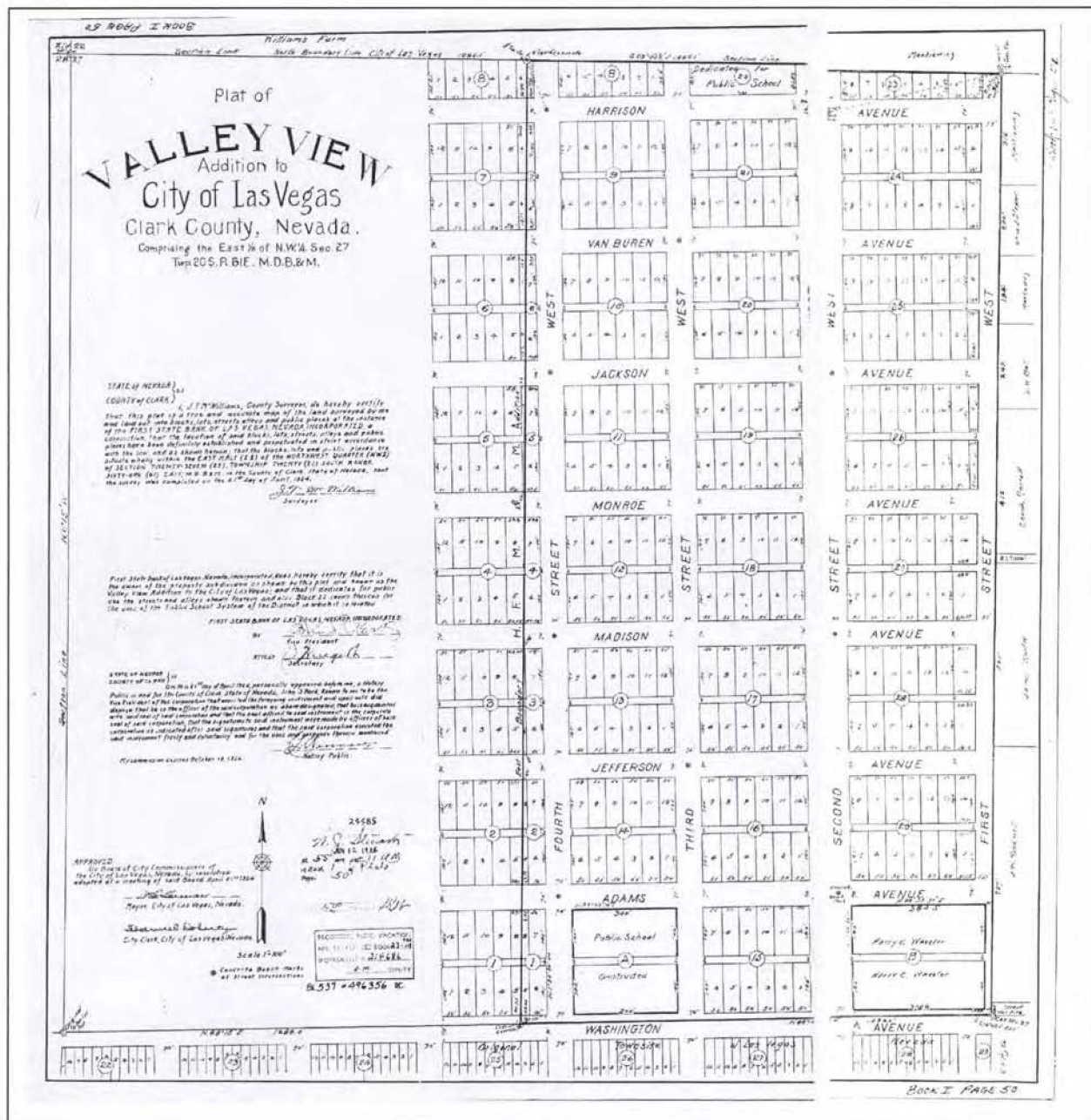
Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#3-817-17	Northwest	East (front) façade
#3-817-18	Southwest	East (front) facade

**INDECS TO ATTACHED PHOTOGRAPHS—Valley View Tract**

- W. Washington
- Jefferson Avenue
- Madison Avenue
- W. Monroe Avenue
- Jackson Avenue
- W. Van Buren Avenue
- C Street
- D Street



**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Washington Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#4-330-7	North	South (front) façade
#4-330-11	N/A	Mosaic on south facade
#4-330-12	N/A	Mosaic on south façade
#4-330-13	N/A	Mosaic on south façade
#4-330-14	N/A	Mosaic on south facade
#4-330-10	Northwest	South (front) façade

**Index to Attached Photographs: Jefferson Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#4-200-18	North	South (front) façade
#4-203-17	South	North (front) façade
#4-211-19	Southwest	North (front) and east facades with rear buildings
#4-220-16	North	South (front) façade
#4-308-15	Northwest	South (front) façade

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: Madison Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-209-5	Southwest	North (front) façade
#5-311-6	Southwest	North (front) and east facades
#5-317-7	Southwest	North (front) and east facades

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Monroe Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-200-15	North	South (front) facade
#5-304-13	North	South (front) facade



**Index to Attached Photographs: Jackson Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#2-200-1	North	South (front) facade
#2-206-2	Northwest	South (front) facade
#2-214-3	Northwest	East (front) and south facades
#2-216-4	Northeast	South (front) façade
#2-222-5	Northwest	South (front) façade
#2-304-6	Northwest	East (front) and south facades
#6-304-6A	Northwest	East (front) facade
#6-304-7A	Northwest	South (front) facade
#2-310-33	Northwest	South (front) façade

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Van Buren Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#6-313-8A	Southeast	North (front) façade
#1-321-36	South	North (front) façade

**Index to Attached Photographs: C Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph # (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)</b>	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-1300-14	Northeast	West (front) facade
#5-1318-18	Southeast	West (front) facade
#5-1318AS-19	Northeast	Associated structure
#2-1323-7	Southwest	East (front) and north facades
#2-1323-8	Southeast	North façade and rear buildings
#2-1323-9	West	East (front) façade of rear building

**Index to Attached Photographs: D Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

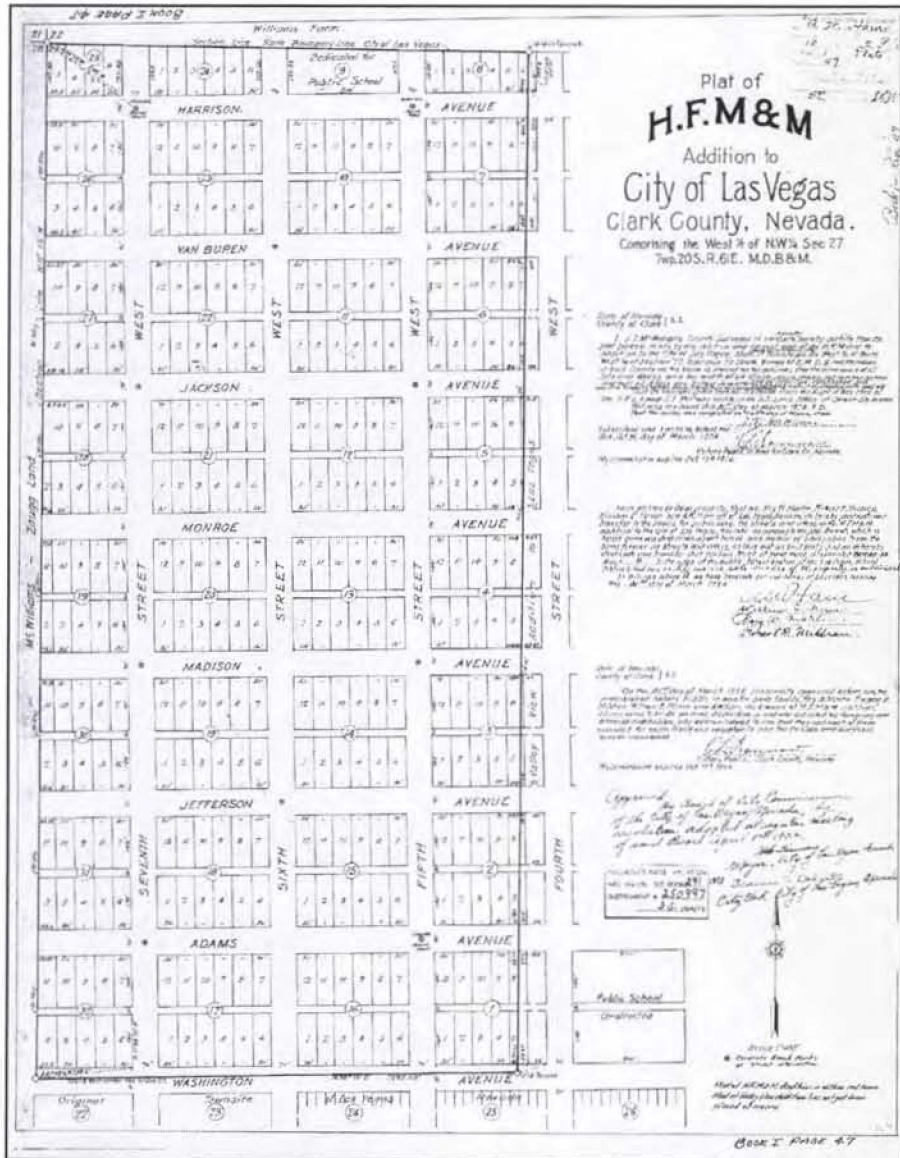
Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-1218-17	Northeast	West (front) facade
#5-1308-12	Northeast	West (front) facade
#2-1402-32	Northeast	West (front) facade
#1-1412-37	East	West (front) facade

**INDECES TO ATTACHED PHOTOGRAPHS—H.F.F. & M. Tract**

- W. Washington
- W. Adams Avenue
- Jefferson Avenue
- Madison Avenue
- W. Monroe Avenue
- Jackson Avenue
- W. Van Buren Avenue
- D Street
- E Street
- F Street
- H Street



City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Washington Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#3-602-22	Northwest	South (front) facade
#3-604-23	Northwest	East (front) facade
#3-708-21	Northeast	South (front) and west facades
#3-710-20	North	South (front) facade

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Adams Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph # (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)</b>	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#1-400-10	Northwest	South (front) facade
#3-405-25	Southwest	East (front) facade
#1-603-14	Southwest	North (front) façade
#1-615-16	South	North (front) facade
#1-618-13	North	South (front) facade
#1-704-20	Northwest	East (front) façade
#1-705-17	Southeast	North (front) façade
#1-715-18	South	North (front) façade

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: Jefferson Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#1-410-8	Northwest	South (front) facade
#1-412-7	Northwest	South (front) facade
#1-422-6	North	South (front) facade
#4-617-21	Southeast	North (front) facade
#1-714-4	Northeast	South (front) facade



**Index to Attached Photographs: Madison Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#4-404-25	Northwest	South (front) facade
#5-411-8	Southwest	North (front) facade
#4-621-24	Southeast	North (front) and west facades
#4-700-23	Northwest	East (front) and south facades
#4-716-22	Northeast	South (front) facade

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Monroe Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-500-10	Northwest	South (front) facade
#5-500-9	Northwest	South (front) and east facades
#5-500-11	Northeast	South (front) facade
#1-612-25	Northwest	South (front) facade
#1-616-24	Northwest	South (front) facade
#1-709-23	Southwest	North (front) facade

**Index to Attached Photographs: Jackson Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#2-407-10	Southwest	North (front) facade
#2-413-11	Southwest	North (front) facade
#2-418-29	Northwest	South (front) and east facades
#2-418AS-30	Northwest	South (front) and east facades
#2-418AS-31	Northwest	South (front) and east facades
#2-500-24	Northwest	South (front) facade
#2-504-23	Northeast	South (front) facade
#2-512-20	Northeast	South (front) facade
#2-516-22	Northeast	South (front) and west facades
#2-600-19	Northwest	South and east facades
#2-600-17	Northwest	South and east facades
#2-612-16	Northwest	East (front) and south facades
#2-709-15	Southwest	North (front) and east facades

**Index to Attached Photographs: W. Van Buren Avenue**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph # (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)</b>	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#1-500-34	North	South (front) facade
#1-500-32	Northwest	South (front) facade and sign
#1-508-30	Northeast	South (front) facade
#1-510-29	North	South (front) facade
#1-700-28	North	South (front) facade
#1-704-27	Northwest	South (front) facade
#1-710-26	North	South (front) facade

**Index to Attached Photographs: D Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#5-1201-1	Northwest	East (front) facade
#5-1203-2	Northwest	East (front) facade
#5-1205-3	Northwest	East (front) facade
#6-1515-16	Northwest	East (front) façade
#6-1515AS-18	Southwest	Associated Structure A
#6-1515AS-17	Southwest	Associated Structure B

**Index to Attached Photographs: E Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#2-1400-25	Northeast	West (front) facade
#2-1400-28	N/A	Gas pump
#2-1400-26	N/A	Sign
#2-1400-27	Northeast	West (front) façade Shares lot with gas station
#1-1006-12	Northwest	East (front) facade

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: F Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#3-1001-24	Northwest	East (front) facade
#2-1117-35	Southwest	East (front) and north facades
#2-1312-21	Southeast	West (front) and north facades

City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory  
West Las Vegas  
September 2003

**Index to Attached Photographs: H Street**

B & W

ASA 125

Taken: May 2003

Negatives located at: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney

<b>Photograph #</b> (Roll # - Street No. - Neg #)	<b>Direction Facing</b>	<b>View Description</b>
#3-820-11	East	West (front) facade
#3-820-12	East	West (front) facade
#3-914-19	East	West (front) facade











West Las Vegas - Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Volume (Sept. 2003)

#	Address Street	Townsite/ Addition	Eligible	Not Eligible	Uneval.	Vacant	Address #	APN	Acreege	Built	Associated Structures (#, C, NC)	Eligibility (consultant)	Eligibility (SHPO)	Notes
274	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			102		613	139-27-110-134	0.17	1953	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
275	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			103		615	139-27-110-135	0.16	1965	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
276	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				98	821	139-27-110-136	0.17	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
277	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			104		700	139-27-110-108	0.18	1955	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
278	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				99	704	139-27-110-107	0.17	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
279	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			105		705	139-27-110-138	0.17	1970	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
280	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		53			709	139-27-110-139	0.16	1950	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form.
281	Monroe Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				100	710	139-27-110-145	0.71	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
282	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			106		713	139-27-110-140	0.25	1958	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
283	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		54			313	139-27-111-033	0.17	1945	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form.
284	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.	24				321	139-27-111-035	0.18	1945	1-NC	Eligible-B	Eligible-B	Filed out ASFS form; see HRIF for 1412-1416 D St. for data.
285	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.	25				500	139-27-110-044	0.19	1932	1-NC	Eligible-A&C	Eligible-A&C	Filed out ASFS form.
286	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			107		501	139-27-110-146	0.16	1953	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
287	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			108		502	139-27-110-043	0.13	2005	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
288	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		55			508	139-27-110-041	0.16	1949	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form; buildings have been demolished since survey was completed (see Clark County Assessor's aerial photo dated 9/5/2005).
289	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		56			510	139-27-110-040	0.17	1939	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form.
290	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			109		517	139-27-110-056	0.16	1950	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Unknown as to why the property was not surveyed at the time.
291	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				101	519	139-27-110-057	0.16	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
292	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				102	520	139-27-110-039	0.17	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
293	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				103	600	139-27-110-038	0.18	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
294	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			110		610	139-27-110-144	0.16	1959	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
295	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			111		614	139-27-110-143	0.16	1959	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
296	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			112		615	139-27-110-060	0.17	1954	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
297	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			113		618	139-27-110-142	0.17	1999	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
298	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				104	619	139-27-110-061	0.33	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
299	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			114		622	139-27-110-141	0.17	1999	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
300	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		57			700	139-27-110-035	0.16	1943	None	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	
301	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				105	701	139-27-110-063	0.12	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
302	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		58			704	139-27-110-034	0.16	1945	None	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	
303	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.			115		705	139-27-110-064	0.12	1953	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
304	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				106	708	139-27-110-033	0.17	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
305	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.	26				710	139-27-110-032	0.20	1953	1-NC	Not Eligible	Eligible-C	Filed out ASFS form; treat as eligible until re-evaluated.
306	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				107	1417	139-27-110-059	0.48	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
307	Van Buren Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.				108	No # listed	139-27-110-147	0.16	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
308	Van Buren Ave., West	Valley View				109	No # listed	139-27-110-042	0.16	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
309	Washington Ave., W.	Valley View				110	No # listed	139-27-110-066	0.16	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
310	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.	27				330	139-27-211-058	0.92	1949	1-C	Eligible-A&C	Eligible-A&C	Filed out ASFS form.
311	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.			115		406	139-27-211-056	0.09	1947	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Unknown as to why the property was not surveyed at the time.
312	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.			117		408	139-27-210-140	0.24	1941	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Unknown as to why the property was not surveyed at the time.
313	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.			118		420	139-27-210-139	0.16	1941	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Unknown as to why the property was not surveyed at the time.
314	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.			119		422	139-27-210-138	0.32	1959	None	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Not surveyed due to age at the time the survey was completed.
315	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.			120		602	139-27-210-133	0.16	1951	Unknown	Not Surveyed	Unevaluated	Also known as 900 F Street.
316	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.		59			604	139-27-210-132	0.16	1955	None	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	
317	Washington Ave., W.	H.F.M. & M.		60			708	139-27-210-126	0.16	1943	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form.
318	Washington Ave., W.	McWilliams		61			710	139-27-210-125	0.16	1945	None	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	
319	Wilson Ave., West	H.F.M. & M.		62			704	139-27-310-061	0.17	1949	1-NC	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Filed out ASFS form.

	Eligible	Not Elig.	Uneval.	Vacant
TOTALS	319	27	62	110
Intensive (HRIFs)	89	27	62	0
Reconnaissance (No HRIFs)	230	0	0	110
Acreege	59.55	6.30	10.91	20.41

TOTAL ACREEGE 59.55

**NEVADA CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER NOMINATION  
REVIEW REPORT FORM**

Property Name: Harrison's Guest House

Address: 1001 F. Street, Las Vegas, Nevada

Certified Local Government: City of Las Vegas

Date of public meeting at which nomination was reviewed: Oct. 22, 2014

Please check which Register this review is for:

- State Register       National Register

National Register Eligibility Criteria: (Check applicable boxes)

- Criterion A       Criterion C  
 Criterion B       Criterion D

Please check the boxes below appropriate to the nomination review:

**Commission/Board**

- The commission/board recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.  
 The commission/board recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.  
 The commission/board chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

**Chief Elected Official**

- The chief elected official recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.  
 The chief elected official recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.  
 The chief elected official chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Attach an additional sheet to make any further comments.

**Certify this report with both signatures below**

**CLG Commission/Board Chair or Representative**

Print name: ROBERT STOLOAL

Signature:  Date 10-22-14

**Chief Elected Official or Designee**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NEVADA CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER NOMINATION  
REVIEW REPORT FORM**

Property Name: Harrison's Guest House

Address: 1001 F. Street, Las Vegas, Nevada

Certified Local Government: City of Las Vegas

Date of public meeting at which nomination was reviewed: Oct. 22, 2014

Please check which Register this review is for:

- State Register       National Register

National Register Eligibility Criteria: (Check applicable boxes)

- Criterion A                       Criterion C  
 Criterion B                       Criterion D

Please check the boxes below appropriate to the nomination review:

**Commission/Board**

- The commission/board recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.  
 The commission/board recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.  
 The commission/board chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

**Chief Elected Official**

- The chief elected official recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.  
 The chief elected official recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.  
 The chief elected official chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Attach an additional sheet to make any further comments.

**Certify this report with both signatures below**

**CLG Commission/Board Chair or Representative**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Elected Official or Designee**

Print name: CAROLYN G. GOODMAN - Mayor

Signature: Carolyn Goodman Date 10-22-14



RECEIVED

NOV 21 2014

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

November 17, 2014

CAROLYN G. GOODMAN  
MAYOR

Ms. Rebecca L. Palmer  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
901 Stewart Street, Suite 5004  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5248

Dear Ms. Palmer:

As Mayor of the great City of Las Vegas, I strongly support the nomination of the Harrison Guest House for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Las Vegas continues to capture the world's imagination as the city where anything is possible. With world-class hotels, award-winning restaurants, luxurious spas, fantastic shopping, the finest golf courses and spectacular entertainment, Las Vegas remains one of the most electrifying destinations in the world.

Its colorful history, however, is what makes Las Vegas truly unique. This nomination is compatible with the City's commitment and efforts to preserve its heritage, and your consideration is very much appreciated.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you for this opportunity.

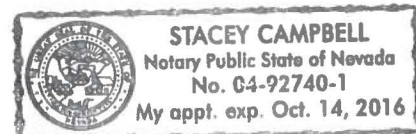
Sincerely,

Carolyn G. Goodman  
Mayor, City of Las Vegas

CGG:lk

State of Nevada )  
County of Clark )

Before me, on this 17th day of November, 2014, personally appeared Carolyn G. Goodman, personally known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to this instrument and acknowledge that she executed it.

  
NOTARY PUBLIC

2014 WINNER OF THE  
U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS  
CLIMATE PROTECTION AWARD

CITY OF LAS VEGAS  
495 S. MAIN STREET  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89101

VOICE 702.229.6241  
FAX 702.385.7960  
TTY 7-1-1

EMAIL [cgoodman@lasvegasnevada.gov](mailto:cgoodman@lasvegasnevada.gov)  
WEBSITE [www.lasvegasnevada.gov](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov)





LEO M. DROZDOFF, P.E.  
*Director*  
Department of Conservation and  
National Resources

REBECCA L PALMER  
*State Historic Preservation Officer*

BRIAN SANDOVAL  
*Governor*

STATE OF NEVADA



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

December 23, 2014

*Address Reply to:*  
901 S. Stewart St, Suite 5004  
Carson City, NV 89701-5248  
Phone: (775) 684-3448  
Fax: (775) 684-3442

[shpo.nv.gov](http://shpo.nv.gov)



Barbara Wyatt, ASLA  
National Register/NHL Programs  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005

RE: National Register Nomination, Harrison Guest House, Las Vegas, NV

Ms. Wyatt,

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Harrison Guest House to the National Register of Historic Places. If you have questions regarding this nomination, please contact Jim Bertolini, National Register Coordinator, at (775) 684-3436 or [jbortolini@nps.gov](mailto:jbortolini@nps.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Palmer".

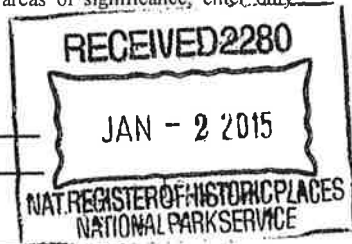
Rebecca Palmer  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
(775) 684-3443  
[rlpalmer@nv.shpo.gov](mailto:rlpalmer@nv.shpo.gov)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

9

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Harrison's Guest House

Other names/site number: Harrison House

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1001 F. Street

City or town: Las Vegas State: NV County: Clark

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

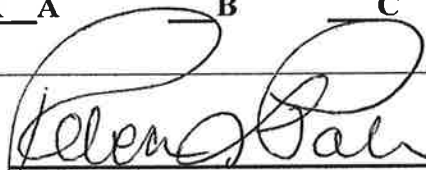
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

Returned

    national     statewide X local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A     B     C     D

	SHPO	12/23/14
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Nevada State Historic Preservation Office</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

---

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Returned

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Boarding house

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Returned

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Cultural Center, Non-profit offices

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman  
OTHER

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STUCCO, BRICK

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

---

#### Summary Paragraph

# Returned

Harrison's Guest House sits on a 0.15-acre lot on the corner of Adams Avenue and F Street in the H. F. M. & M. Addition in Las Vegas, Nevada, frequently referred to as the Westside neighborhood. The house faces east with the entrance on F Street. The Clark County Assessor's records indicate the house, a modest bungalow, was built in 1942, although Craftsman-style elements on the south-east portion of the building suggest that it was built earlier. The house achieved significance as a boarding house catering to black performers, divorce-seekers, and others in 1942.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Genevieve Harrison built several additions to the guest house between 1942 and her death in 1955. Currently, the house encompasses 1,716 square feet in an irregular L plan on what appears to be a concrete perimeter foundation, with a gable-roofed carport, added in the 1970s or 80s, extending off the north end of the front elevation. The earlier massing and the additions are covered by medium-pitched gable roofs sheathed in composition shingles. The exterior walls are a combination of brick and stucco over wood framing. Despite some changes made to the building in the 1970s and 80s, the physical features and characteristics of the building still convey the significance of the guest house.

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#### Narrative Description

Harrison's Guest House sits on a 0.15-acre lot on the corner of Adams Avenue and F Street in the H. F. M. & M. Addition in Las Vegas, Nevada. It sits within the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas, also referred to by longtime residents as "Old Westside," and by the City of Las

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<sup>1</sup> Knight-Preddy interview 20 December 2013.

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Vegas as "West Las Vegas." It will be referred to as "The Westside" in the remainder of the document. The neighborhood was historically bounded by Bonanza Road on the south, A Street on the East, Harrison Avenue on the north, and H Street on the west.

The house faces east with the entrance on F Street. Though records indicate the modest bungalow was built in 1942, features such as bracketed eaves suggest construction during the Craftsman period sometime in the early twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Harrison built several additions to the guest house between 1942 and her death in 1955. Currently, the house encompasses 1,716 square feet in an irregular U-plan on what appears to be a concrete perimeter foundation. The primary bungalow has a medium-pitched, front gabled roof with boxed eaves. It follows a center hall plan on the interior, with two bedrooms and a bathroom on the north, and the living room, dining room, and kitchen on the south (see attached floor plan). The L addition to the north house is also gabled, facing north. The exterior walls are covered in modern stucco, mostly over wood frame. An attached Guest House extends this portion of the building to the west, creating a small courtyard area between the original house and the Guest House addition. Fenestration is varied throughout, dominated by one-over-one wood sash windows. Nearly all windows are covered with decorative wrought iron grates.

According to building permit records, Mrs. Harrison constructed five additions between 1946 and 1955 to facilitate her boarding house business. These spaces added bedrooms and bathrooms to accommodate Mrs. Harrison's boarding house business. The latest, built in 1955, is a separate building, referred to as the ~~Guest House~~ **Returned** which is connected to one of the 1954 additions by a shed added at an unknown time. While the City of Las Vegas issued building permits for these additions, it appears Harrison did not use professional contractors to complete the work. Once completed, the building floor plan created an irregular U-shape with a small courtyard in the rear.

The east façade is dominated by a hipped-roof porch on a concrete foundation, with iron bars and a gate enclosing its entirety. The four square porch posts are covered by stucco and have decorative imprints on the front. There is an entryway roughly centered, flanked by a picture window to the south with a decorative wrought iron guard. Above the porch roof in the gable end are undecorated brackets at the eave and roof crest. There is a window port that is covered with particle board. The ell addition to the north has a roughly centered entryway flanked by another picture window to the north with a matching wrought iron guard. The façade of the ell addition is almost completely covered by a carport, presumably added in 1975, with square posts and a medium-pitched, front gable roof of a slightly lower pitch than the rest of the house.

The south elevation is anchored by a blonde brick chimney with a tin chimney cap towards the southeast corner of the building. To the east of the chimney is a boxed bay window with aluminum windows. Extending along the elevation to the west is a one-over-one wooden sash window, an aluminum slider window, and a modern panel door entry with a compatible wrought-iron storm door.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Sarann Knight-Preddy, interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013, at the Harrison Guest House. Dr. Knight-Preddy is a long-time resident of Westside and was involved in the operation of the Moulin Rouge.

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The west elevation is mostly unadorned, dominated by an addition made of painted brick. A door in the back wall has been filled in. There are three wooden one-over-one sash windows of varying sizes, as well as a small light in the gable.

The north elevation of the property most aptly represents the periodic additions made by Mrs. Harrison. There are almost no windows, but several wall breaks where Mrs. Harrison made additions onto this portion of the building. There is a single one-over-one wood sash window on the Guest House.

The Guest House portion, toward the northwest corner of the property, is a modest, symmetrical, saltbox-style side-gabled attachment with a south-facing façade. It has a centered, front-gabled porch with square posts and a concrete foundation. There is a new panel door at the entry. As with the remainder of the property, the walls are stucco. There are two windows on the façade flanking the entry. They are wood, one-over-one sash windows. The north elevation is unadorned except one window.

Gwen Walker, director of the Walker African American Museum and Research Center, described some of the features of Harrison's Guest House that existed while in operation by Genevieve Harrison:

The interior of the house had a cozy Persian rug and patterned wallpaper complemented a roomy sofa and assorted chairs. There was an array of pictures and mementos. A desk was tucked conveniently in a corner between two windows, thus permitting a writer to have sunlight on either side of him. Guests, including Sammy Davis, Jr.—then part of the Will Mastin Trio, Lena Horne, and Arthur Lee Simpkins, would often relax in this room and either take a nap on the roomy sofa or engage in lively conversations. One of the extras of the Harrison Guest House was a small, comfortable guest house situated at the back of the main house used by the likes of Pearl Bailey and her family.<sup>3</sup>

The property appeared to remain as left by Ms. Harrison after her death in 1957, until 1975 when Harrison's sister, Agatha Wilson, received a building permit for "exterior remodel" in October of that year. The inspection record signed off for framing, and may have referred to the carport structure. It may also have been at this time that the current stucco layer was applied.

In 1983, the City of Las Vegas issued to owners Leandrew and Lounell McDaniel a "Notice and Order to Demolish, Remove, or Repair" the building. The order claimed the building, which apparently was unoccupied at the time, had been vandalized to the point that building was substandard. The City gave the owners less than a month to remedy the problems or face demolition. How the situation was resolved is not known, but in 1985, a new owner, Andrew Bowie, undertook an interior rehabilitation, including electrical and plumbing upgrades. In 1987, Mr. Bowie replaced the roof; and between 1993 and 1998, he installed the concrete block and iron fence surrounding the property.

<sup>3</sup> Gwen Walker, *History of West Las Vegas*, Unpublished manuscript, Walker African American Museum and Research Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2.

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Harrison's Guest House sits on the corner of F and Adams streets. In addition to the building, there is a storage container on the parcel. This is considered to be a temporary element, which does not relate to the significance of the building. Historically, the blocks surrounding the Harrison Guest House comprised a mix of residential and commercial buildings. Currently, there are few remaining houses from the early period, scattered modern apartment houses, numerous churches, and many vacant lots that reflect loss from fires and demolition over the past few decades. Harrison's Guest House is the last remaining resource of its type in Las Vegas.

The Harrison's Guest House retains sufficient integrity of setting, feeling, association, location, design, materials, and workmanship to convey its significance as a boarding house run by a single black woman during a period of racial segregation in Las Vegas. The primary modifications to the house that date after the period of significance are the addition of a car port to the façade of the house in 1975, the addition of a bay window on the south elevation in 1985, and the construction of concrete block walls and iron fencing on the façade of the property between 1993 and 1998. The 1985 bay window is of compatible design and is on a secondary elevation, not detracting from the overall integrity of the site. The mid-1990s stone and iron fence around the front yard is of compatible design and materials, and though it slightly alters the relationship of the house to the public street, the low profile and spacing of the fence preserves clear views between the street and the house. The most significant alteration to the property is the addition of a gable-roof carport to the façade's north half in 1975. Although it is on a primary elevation, the addition is compatible with the Gable Ell plan of the house. The pitch of the carport's gable roof matches that of the Ell to which it is attached, and it is compatible in scale and massing to the original building. Taken together, these modifications have only a moderate and compatible impact on the overall integrity of the building and its landscape, and do not hinder the property's ability to convey its significance.

### Work in Progress

Since 1960, buildings in the Westside have been demolished or have burned under suspicious circumstances. Harrison's Guest House is the last known boarding house that catered to the black entertainers. The current owners of Harrison's Guest House, the Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce, and others are working to develop a plan for the Westside. Harrison's Guest House will play a significant role in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

Harrison's Guest House, which serves as the headquarters for the Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce, will be undergoing some modifications in order to maximize its use as cultural center. Although the final plans have not yet been completed, the work, which will mostly be interior remodeling, will be directed by Rick Van Diepen, executive director of Green Chips, with a goal to become a state-of-the-art, net-zero energy, LEED-certified model demonstration home as well as a cultural and community resource center. The Harrison Guest House is currently listed in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places, as well as the City of Las Vegas Historic Property Register. Due to its local



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historic designation, the project must be approved by the City of Las Vegas' Historic Preservation Commission (a Certified Local Government) to ensure compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Returned

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

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ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black  
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1960  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942, 1946, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1960  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown/Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Harrison's Guest House is significant under Criterion A in Ethnic Heritage as one of the few remaining African American boarding houses in the western United States. It is also significant in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with Las Vegas' early entertainment history. Like in other cities in the west, African Americans who moved to Las Vegas during and after the Second World War faced racial segregation, especially within the gaming industry. Boarding houses became one of the few options available for African Americans who were new arrivals to a community or were traveling through the region. In Las Vegas, a section of the town

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developed as a distinctly African American neighborhood, referred to as the Westside, roughly bounded by Bonanza Avenue and U.S. Interstate 15 on the south, B Street on the east, Van Buren Avenue on the north, and H Street on the west. In 1942, Genevieve Harrison moved into the bungalow at the corner of F Street and West Adams Avenue in the Westside. She began renting rooms to African Americans for a variety of purposes. She accommodated black men and women seeking divorce under Nevada's relatively loose divorce laws. More famously, she provided lodgings for performers who played the Las Vegas showrooms where they were themselves forbidden to stay.<sup>4</sup> The 1960 Moulin Rouge Agreement, named after a famous, albeit short-lived African American casino in Las Vegas, forced the beginning of integration in Las Vegas and effectively put an end to the need for boarding houses for blacks. The Harrison House reflects this history of racial segregation, and the history of the civil rights movement for African Americans in Las Vegas from 1942 to 1960.<sup>5</sup>

Other places associated with the Westside are the Berkeley Square Historic District (NRIS 09000846) listed in 2009, the Westside School (NRIS 79001460), listed in the National Register of Historic places in 1979, the Clark Avenue Railroad Underpass (NRIS 03001509) listed in 2003, and the Moulin Rouge Hotel (NRIS 92001701) listed in 1992 but burned in 2009 and demolished in 2010.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

### African Americans in the West and Las Vegas

# Returned

Like many communities in the interior American West, Las Vegas experienced a tremendous amount of growth during and following the Second World War. Prior to the war, opportunities for blacks in the west were extremely limited. Although some groups of settlers used the Homestead Act to acquire land, or banded together in all-black settlement towns throughout the west, the lack of opportunity, and persistent segregation in western communities limited the presence of African Americans in the region.<sup>6</sup>

In the late-nineteenth century, it appears that the attitude of most whites towards the few blacks in the mining and ranching towns of Nevada was fairly ambivalent. However, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, and the results of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court case, significantly altered the experiences of African Americans in Nevada. It appears that between 1890 and the 1920s, there was a general exodus of African Americans, especially professionals, from the state due to segregation, open racism in government leadership, and general exclusion of blacks from most meaningful employment opportunities. Though racial tensions appear to have eased by the

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<sup>4</sup> Knight-Predy interview, Dec. 20, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this nomination, the terms "black" and "African American" are used interchangeably. As of 2014, this is common academic practice in historical writing.

<sup>6</sup> Elmer R. Rusco, "African Americans in Nevada, 1860s-1920s," in *Peoples of Color in the American West*, Sucheng Chan, Douglas Henry Daniels, Mario T. Garcia, and Terry P. Wilson, eds., (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1994), 323-328.

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1920s, most communities such as Las Vegas still practiced relaxed, de-facto segregation.<sup>7</sup>

Though it would become an almost exclusively black neighborhood, the Westside neighborhood actually began as a mostly white area of the city. The original, or McWilliams, Townsite attracted settlers until May 1905, when Senator Clark upstaged McWilliams with his own Clark's Las Vegas Townsite on the opposite side of the railroad tracks. Senator Clark held the auction for lots in Clark's Townsite on May 15, 1905.<sup>8</sup> The success of Clark's Townsite overtook McWilliams's Townsite, which became known as West Las Vegas or the Westside.

Accounts regarding Las Vegas in the 1920s indicate that racial tensions were generally subdued, though most residents practiced de-facto segregation. The black population was small; in 1925, there were only 25 blacks in town. Most of the men worked for the railroad, while the women worked as housekeepers and maids for white families. Most Las Vegas blacks lived downtown, in Block 17 of the Las Vegas Townsite, roughly bounded by First, Fifth, Ogden, and Stewart Streets.<sup>9</sup> They owned businesses, and frequently acquired homes that they rented out, mostly to other blacks, either temporary laborers or travelers.<sup>10</sup>

The relative peace regarding race relations recollected by some in the 1920s changed in the 1930s as a result of various federal projects, such as Hoover Dam, that attracted scores of workers from across the country. Including whites and blacks, a significant number of these newcomers arrived from the American South, where racial segregation and discrimination had been a matter of course for generations. The influx shifted the segregated landscape in Las Vegas from one of ambivalence to one of overt policy, as many federal job supervisors either refused to hire blacks, or limited their presence in the workplace. It appears that local business owners soon followed suit.<sup>11</sup> The legalization of gambling in Nevada in 1931 contributed to the overt segregation begun in the Hoover Dam work camps. The popularity of Nevada's gambling meant that national attitudes on racism began to dictate the social strata of Las Vegas. In 1942, El Rancho Vegas began offering stage shows featuring big-name entertainers, many of whom were black. While downtown casino owners frequently headlined black entertainers, they also refused them lodgings.

Gradually, blacks began to leave downtown Las Vegas in favor of the Westside neighborhood, historically bounded approximately by A Street on the east, Bonanza Road on the south, H Street on the west, and Harrison Avenue on the north. Accounts differ as to whether this movement was voluntary or forced. Considering the timing of this transition in the 1930s and 40s, it is very likely that both economic opportunity and increasing discrimination compelled black Las Vegans into the Westside. Recollections by Clarence Ray and George Ullom indicate that many African Americans began purchasing real estate in the Westside as early as the 1920s or 30s. While Clarence Ray, an early resident of Las Vegas, rejects the idea that white town leaders forced

<sup>7</sup> Rusco, "African Americans in Nevada," 326-327.

<sup>8</sup> Moehring 1995:4.

<sup>9</sup> Moehring, 1995, p174

<sup>10</sup> Clarence Ray, *Black Politics and Gaming in Las Vegas, 1920s-1980s*, Helen M. Blue and Jamie Coughtry, eds., (Reno, NV: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1991), 22-24.

<sup>11</sup> Walker, n.d.; Ray, *Black Politics*, 48-53.

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blacks into the Westside, the increasing segregation in downtown businesses, and at some of the major employers near the city very likely began contributing to the de facto segregation of blacks into the Westside neighborhood.<sup>12</sup> Other accounts indicate that as segregation became more overt, Las Vegas city officials accelerated the process by refusing to renew business licenses to black business owners in the downtown area.<sup>13</sup>

The Second World War brought a significant change to many western communities including Las Vegas. Wartime industries with high paying jobs encouraged many minority ethnic groups, including African Americans, to move to production centers. Though the social atmosphere was rarely more welcoming than the southern towns and cities they left behind, many African American families experienced improved working conditions in wartime industry as a result of a federal employment policy that encouraged the elimination of the color line.

Wartime production and the federal efforts to end segregation in wartime industry precipitated a massive increase in Las Vegas' African American population during and after the war years. While in 1940, there were only 178 blacks living in Clark County, by 1955, over 16,000 blacks lived in the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas alone. The influx of African Americans beginning in the 1940s constituted a targeted migration from certain locales in the American South into the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas. As a result of the social networks that enticed African American job seekers out of the south, a significant percentage of new arrivals in Las Vegas came from Fordyce, Arkansas, and Tallulah, Louisiana. Fordyce was a segregated, albeit generally harmonious, community, but one that offered few job opportunities. Quite the opposite, Tallulah was notorious for its racial violence, dubbed by some black residents as the "lynching capital of the South." The recruitment of employees for the Basic Magnesium Corporation (BMI) facility in nearby Henderson, along with President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 forbidding discrimination in the defense industries, encouraged many to settle in the quickly expanding western town. Blacks also sought employment in nearby casinos and entertainment venues, connecting with informal social networks that communicated housing and job availability.<sup>14</sup>

Alongside defense-related development, Las Vegas developed a new entertainment concept in the gambling resort, a venue that offered a wide array of entertainment from gambling, dining, and shopping to a showroom with top-name performers. Thomas Hull, who had developed resorts in other cities, launched such a property outside of town in 1941—he called it El Rancho Vegas. Soon to follow in the same vein was the Last Frontier, in 1942.<sup>15</sup> Despite the popularity

<sup>12</sup> Ray, *Black Politics*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Claytee White, interview by Mella Harmon, December 21, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Albert S. Broussard, *Expectations of Equality: A History of Black Westerners*, (Wheeling, Illinois and Cody, Wyoming: Harlan Davidson, Inc., and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2012), xiii-xiv, 102; Claytee D. White, "'Eight Dollars a Day and Working in the Shade': An Oral History of African American Migrant Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry," in *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*, Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 277; Claytee D. White, "The Roles of African American Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry, 1940-1980," Master's thesis, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1995), 44-51.

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of black performers in Las Vegas venues, segregationist practices generally compelled casino and resort owners to refuse them accommodation. Many entertainers stayed in boarding houses in the Westside neighborhood that catered to black entertainers, travelers, and temporary workers. Among these tenants and lodgers were those taking advantage of Nevada's migratory divorce trade. Due to a shorter residency period compared to other states, Nevada became a popular locale in which to facilitate short-term divorces. With blacks unable to find housing in other parts of the city, it fell to the Westside hotels and boarding houses to provide the necessary housing and the resident witness who testified in court on behalf of the divorcee.<sup>16</sup>

The Westside neighborhood that greeted these short-term residents was one of increasingly limited economic opportunity by the 1940s. Real estate lending practices known as redlining, limited the availability of mortgage loans in what were considered high-risk zones, usually areas where racial minorities lived. Coupled with increasing discrimination in the private workforce, red-lining limited the housing options for many Westside residents. It was not uncommon for black service workers to rent small, often substandard houses in the neighborhood. Conditions became poor enough in the Westside, that the City of Las Vegas razed 375 buildings between September 1944 and April 1945, though the City made no efforts to house dislocated residents.<sup>17</sup>

With Las Vegas' black population still on the rise, growing to over 5,000 people by 1950, housing continued to be a primary concern for the neighborhood. Through activism and lobbying efforts, federal housing programs took the first actions. In 1952, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) developed *Maple Manor* on the Westside, a 40-acre housing tract of 154 two-bedroom houses "for colored people." Private investors followed suit, building the Berkley Square neighborhood to the north in 1955, as well as the Highland Square project in 1956. Berkeley Square became another predominantly African American neighborhood in Las Vegas.<sup>18</sup>

Though the city experienced modest successes in housing, racial discrimination persisted in Las Vegas' commercial venues. In 1949, Stanley Hunter attempted to turn the Biltmore Hotel into an all-black establishment, leading to the revocation of the hotel's liquor and gaming license by the City. However, the opening of the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino in the Westside on May 24, 1955 had a profound impact on the lives of African American residents and visitors in Las Vegas. The Moulin Rouge was the brainchild of several white businessmen who billed it as "America's First Interracial Hotel." Possibly encouraged by national civil rights successes such as the desegregation of the U. S. military by President Truman in 1948, and the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, the Moulin Rouge hired black waiters, waitresses, and dealers. The former heavy-weight boxing champion Joe Lewis was given a small share of the ownership to serve as the Moulin Rouge's official greeter. Both whites and blacks patronized the Moulin Rouge and thrilled to the three nightly stage

<sup>16</sup> Mella Rothwell Harmon, "'500 Black Divorces Annually': The African American Divorce Trade in Reno, Nevada," *Society for Commercial Archaeology Journal* 23 (Fall 2005): 20-23.

<sup>17</sup> Knight-Predy interview 20 December 2013; National Register of Historic Places, Berkeley Square, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 09000846, 8-4.

<sup>18</sup> NRHP, Berkeley Square, 8-6.

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shows. The brilliant experiment lasted only five months. Its closure in October of 1955 was a shock and a disappointment to employees and patrons alike. Though most sources point to lack of profit leading the owners to close the Moulin Rouge, the precise reason for the sudden end is unknown. Professor Michael Green suspects it was a mix of bad management, bad location, bad timing, and bad luck. Though the hotel-casino re-opened in 1957, controversy plagued its subsequent management.<sup>19</sup>

Despite its short life, the Moulin Rouge encouraged the civil-rights movement in Las Vegas, ultimately providing the impetus to end segregation in downtown Las Vegas and the Strip. In 1960, under threat of a downtown protest march against racial discrimination by Las Vegas casinos, Nevada's governor, Grant Sawyer, called a meeting between hotel owners, city and state officials, and local black leaders, including Dr. James McMillan, the president of the Las Vegas chapter of the NAACP. Mediated by local newspaper owner Hank Greenspun, the group held the meeting on March 26 at the closed Moulin Rouge. The outcome of the meeting was the Moulin Rouge Agreement, which called for the desegregation of Las Vegas' casinos. The Department of the Interior listed the Moulin Rouge in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 (NRIS 92001701) in recognition of its significance in Las Vegas' civil rights history. A fire severely damaged the property in 2009.

### Harrison Guest House and African American Boarding Houses

Returned

Boarding houses like that of Genevieve Harrison's arose out of nation-wide need for housing for traveling African Americans. In cities across the country, segregation in public accommodations required the creation of separate facilities and social networks to inform travelers of those facilities. Despite the need, accommodations were notoriously limited throughout the country into the 1950s, and continued to be limited until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Throughout the western United States, boarding houses such as the Harrison Guest House were often in low-income areas that suffered from neglect. Many of these neighborhoods have since been redeveloped and boarding houses such as these have been demolished. The Harrison Guest House stands as one of the few remaining resources of its type in the American West.<sup>20</sup>

Due to the rigid segregation of Las Vegas' housing and public accommodations in the 1940s and 50s, and the massive growth of the city's African American population during and after the Second World War, only a few hotels and boarding houses in Las Vegas' Westside neighborhood provided housing to temporary visitors and travelers. Las Vegas' boarding houses provided housing to newly arrived blacks who hoped to work in the city's wartime industries, as well as entertainment venues in the city's downtown. New arrivals to Las Vegas discovered a

<sup>19</sup> Cook 2013:1-7; National Register of Historic Places, Moulin Rouge Hotel, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 92001701, 8-4; Earnest N. Bracey, *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2008), 56-58.

<sup>20</sup> At the time of this nomination, there is only one other African American boarding house known to be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the Swindall Tourist Inn in Phoenix, Arizona (NR# 95001081); Lyell Henry, Accommodations 'For Colored,'" *SCA Journal*, 23 (No. 2) Fall 2005, 5.



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generally inadequate housing market for African Americans, forcing many into temporary housing until home production caught up with demand.<sup>21</sup>

Genevieve Harrison established one such guest house when she purchased the property at 1001 F. Street in the Westside neighborhood. Harrison was born on March 28, 1902 in Marshall, Harrison County, Texas.<sup>22</sup> Genevieve Harrison and others like her, who had themselves relocated to the Westside, took advantage of the economic opportunity and offered housing to the wartime laborers as well as black entertainers performing at the nearby casinos and resorts. These Westside boarding houses also catered to black divorce-seekers establishing residency in Nevada.

At its peak, between the 1940s and 60s, there were several rooming houses on the Westside, including Harrison's Guest House, Mrs. Shaw's, and Mrs. Cartwright's.<sup>23</sup> In his autobiography *Yes I Can*, Sammy Davis, Jr. described his encounters with the policies of the Las Vegas resorts and what motivated him to eventually stay at Harrison's Guest House. The first time the Will Mastin Trio booked into the El Rancho Vegas, Sammy Davis asked the stage manager if rooms came with the deal. The manager replied, "Sorry. We can't let you have rooms here. House rules. You'll have to find a place in the—uh, on the other side of town [Westside]." Once in a cab on their way from the El Rancho, the cab driver said, "There's a woman named Cartwright over in Westside takes in you people."<sup>24</sup> The cab pulled up in front of what Davis described as one of the few decent houses in the neighborhood. The proprietor, presumably Mrs. Cartwright, greeted the trio, assuring them she had three nice rooms for them, but adding insult to injury with the price: at least twice what they would have paid had they been able to stay at the El Rancho. Due to neglect and redevelopment efforts mentioned previously, Harrison Guest House is the only example remaining of these once-renowned boarding houses.<sup>25</sup>

It is not clear what percentage of Mrs. Harrison's business came from the divorce trade, but divorce-seekers were a portion of her income. Dee Dee Jasmin's sister, Aida Smith, along with her young daughter, stayed at Harrison's Guest House for six weeks in 1949, while awaiting her divorce. She found the guest house to be a lovely place, and Sammy Davis, Jr., who was there at the time, would play with the child. Mr. Davis stayed at the house frequently into the 1960s.<sup>26</sup>

From all accounts, Harrison's Guest House was a popular place to stay. Probably the most

<sup>21</sup> Brenda Williams, interview by Claytee White, May 24, 2013, transcript, p280, Las Vegas Oral History Program, University of Nevada – Las Vegas.

<sup>22</sup> "Genevieve Harrison," obituary, *Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 18, 1957.

<sup>23</sup> Moehring 1995:182.

<sup>24</sup> Davis et al 2012:90.

<sup>25</sup> Davis et al 2012:90; Moehring 1995:182.

<sup>26</sup> Dee Dee Jasmin, telephone interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013. Rolando Larraz, telephone interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013. Mrs. Jasmin was the former actress Harriette Young. Her sister, Aida Smith stayed at Harrison's Guest House in 1949 while waiting for a divorce. Sammy Davis, Jr. was staying there at the same time. Mr. Larraz is the founder and publisher of the *Las Vegas Tribune* and was friends with Sammy Davis, Jr. He recalled dropping him off at Harrison's Guest House after a night of clubbing following one of Sammy Davis's performances around Thanksgiving 1960.

Harrison's Guest House

Name of Property

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endearing story of Harrison's Guest House and its famous occupants comes from Hanna Brown, the prominent businesswoman and community activist who grew up on the Westside. She tells of being a young girl when the stars stayed at Harrison's Guest House. She was especially enamored of Nat King Cole, who would sit on the porch and smoke. The local children, Hannah included, would do all they could to get his attention. He would speak to them and ask how they were doing in school. Hannah, who was a star student, was ready and eager to answer that question, presenting Cole with her latest report card. These exchanges went on until Hannah went off to high school and got a job at a local record store, Larry's Music Bar. Larry's was also popular with entertainers, who would come in and buy records. One day, several years after Hannah had visited with Nat Cole at Harrison's Guest House, she saw Cole getting a haircut in the barbershop next to Larry's Music Bar. Finding an excuse to cross paths with Nat Cole, Hannah greeted him and to her utter delight he recognized her and remembered her name and her stellar academic accomplishments.<sup>27</sup>

The local newspapers provided some coverage of the Westside and its residents, providing a filtered vignette into the social life of Harrison's Guest House:

How would you like to nonchalantly have Clark Gable, Gregory Peck, Betty Hutton, and maybe Sophie Tucker as dinner guests some evening? (And some smelling salts for yourself?)

Mrs. G. Harrison, 1001 North "F" Street in the Westside, can boast the counterpart of such notables, having hosted last week the top Negro performers in the entertainment world all at one time!

The interesting array of guests came to pass as Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Bob Parrish, the Edwards Sisters, the Jubalaires, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee Simpkins all chanced to be in town at one time.

Mrs. Harrison, resident of Las Vegas for 15 years, maintains a boarding house, which is comfortably claimed by many noted Negro entertainers whenever any of them happens to be in town.

"We're just one big happy family," Mrs. Harrison declares as she reported that her guests dine together and later gather in her ample living room to swap entertainment gossip and stories.

Anderson, who concluded a week's engagement at the Thunderbird hotel, planned to return to Los Angeles to join Jack Benny again as "Rochester" over the radio show, which begins October 8.

Parrish, a well-known singer, performed at Club Bingo and en route to Europe, while the Edwards Sisters arrived in Las Vegas for a nightclub engagement. The Jubalaires were Flamingo hotel headliners.

Rounding out the list of notables was Arthur Lee Simpkins and his wife, who stopped here overnight en route to New York for a fall engagement.

Mrs. Harrison disclosed that her musical household this time was without a piano and thus no song fests materialized.

"Arthur Lee usually brings his piano with him, but he didn't this time," she added.

<sup>27</sup> Hannah Brown, interview by Claytee White, September 27, 2012, transcript, Las Vegas Oral History Program, University of Nevada – Las Vegas. Hannah Brown, interview by Mella Harmon, December 20, 2013, at Harrison Guest House. Ms. Brown grew up on the Westside and knew Mrs. Harrison and her illustrious guests personally.

Harrison's Guest House

Name of Property

(Traveling light, eh?)<sup>28</sup>

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The Moulin Rouge Agreement of 1960 effectively put an end to the need for places such as Harrison's Guest House. Black entertainers, tourists, and divorce-seekers were free to stay where they wished. However, racial discrimination continued well into the 1970s, in particular in education and employment. The divorce trade also came to an end by 1970, due to the establishment of liberalized divorce laws in other states.

Even the Harrison Guest House's namesake, Genevieve Harrison, was suffering from a malignant disease and was unable to make the trip to court for her divorce. Instead the judge, her attorney, the court clerk, and a court reporter came to her bedside to grant her divorce. The May 10, 1957 *Las Vegas Sun* article explained that such service was warranted because Mrs. Harrison had long been a "friend, counselor, and housemother to visiting Las Vegas entertainers." Harrison's Guest House had been a second home to the entertainers for 15 years. The importance of this fact was acknowledged by this unusual judicial service. Genevieve's sister, Mrs. Henry (Agatha) Wilson, lived at 24 Stewart Avenue in Las Vegas, and it was she who inherited Harrison's Guest House and operated it for several years after Mrs. Harrison's death. According to building permit records, Agatha Wilson was the owner of record of the house as late as 1975.<sup>29</sup>

The Harrison Guest House provided housing for African Americans during the developmental period of both Las Vegas' casino and resort economy, but also of its civil rights movement for blacks in the 1950s and 60s. Harrison's Guest House is recognized locally as an important historic site. It is stop No. 8 on the Las Vegas Pioneer Trail, which "celebrates the early history of Las Vegas by offering glimpses of the people and places that made Las Vegas thrive." It is also the only known remaining boarding house in Las Vegas relating to the civil rights-era need for housing in Las Vegas' African American communities. At present, the only other known boarding house existing in the American West is the Swindall Tourist Inn in Phoenix, Arizona.<sup>30</sup>

### Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to the following people who provided information, assistance, and support for this nomination: Katherine Duncan and Stanton Wilkerson of the Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce; Claytee White, UNLV Oral History Program; Courtney Mooney, City of Las Vegas; Bob Stoldal, City of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission; and Dr. Sarann Knight-Predy, Hannah Brown, Trish Geran, Dee Dee Jasmin, and Rolando Larraz, who shared their personal experiences relating to Genevieve Harrison and Harrison's Guest House.

<sup>28</sup> Verna Suesov, "Top Negro Performers Entertained in Vegas," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, September 28, 1948, 5:1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Obituary of Genevieve Harrison, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 17, 1957, 2:2; "G. Harrison Services Set for Wednesday," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 18, 1957, 2:5.

<sup>30</sup> See: National Register of Historic Places, Swindall Tourist Inn, Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona, 95001081.

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Harrison's Guest House

Clark, Nevada

Name of Property

County and State

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92001701.

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95001081.

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--- . "The Roles of African American Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry, 1940 – 1980." Master's thesis, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, 1997.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Harrison's Guest House  
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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_ B5886 (NV SHPO) \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** \_\_\_\_\_ 0.15 acre \_\_\_\_\_

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

**Returned**

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: 11 Easting: 666385.93 Northing: 4005732.78

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of Harrison's Guest House National Register nomination encompasses the legal boundaries of Clark County Assessor's Parcel Number 139-27-210-091 as depicted on the attached Assessor's Parcel Map. The parcel comprises portions of both lots 5 and 6 on Block 18 of the H. F. M. & M. Addition to the City of Las Vegas, Section 27, Township 20, Range 61.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary selected for Harrison's Guest House nomination is the historical legal boundary of Clark County APN 139-27-210-091.

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mella Rothwell Harmon, M.S., with additions made by Jim Bertolini (SHPO)  
organization: n/a  
street & number: 2042 Meritage Court  
city or town: Sparks state: NV zip code: 89434  
e-mail mellaharmon@gmail.com  
telephone: 775-322-2850  
date: 03/01/14

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (1:50,000 or 1:25,000 scale series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
- **Floor plan showing dates of additions**
- **Assessor's Parcel Map**

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Harrison's Guest House  
Name of Property

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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Harrison's Guest House

City or Vicinity: Las Vegas

County: Clark State: Nevada

Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon

Date Photographed: December 19, 2013

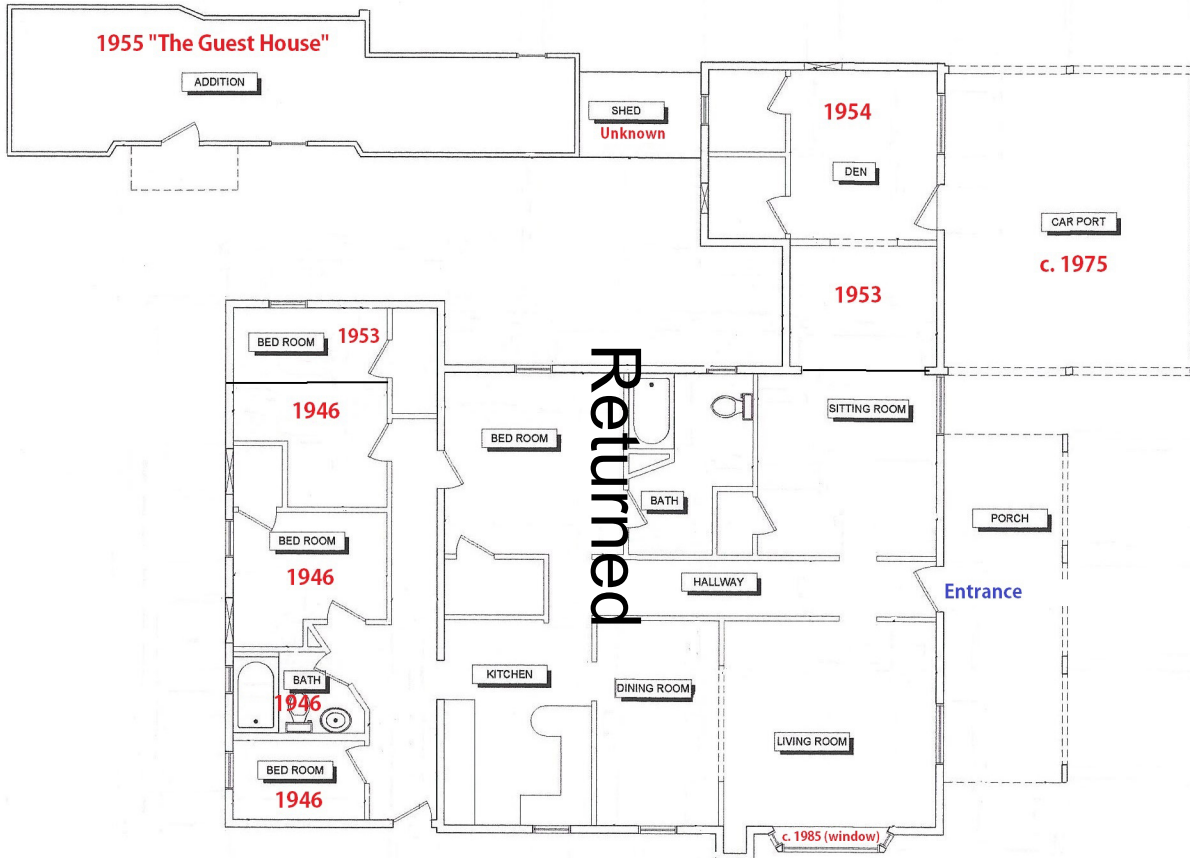
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 6: East façade of Harrison's Guest House, looking west. NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0001.
- 2 of 6: Front and north elevations, facing southwest. Multiple additions are visible in the right view. NV-Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0002
- 3 of 6: Close-up of additions along south elevation of the boarding house, facing west. At the far end is the "Guest House." NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0003.
- 4 of 6: South elevation and street context of Harrison's Guest House, looking northwest. NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0004.
- 5 of 6: The addition onto the west elevation, looking northeast. This addition was appended to the original enclosed porch. NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0005.
- 6 of 6: Entry to the "Guest House," south elevation, looking north. NV\_Clark County\_Harrison's Guest House\_0006.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





Returned

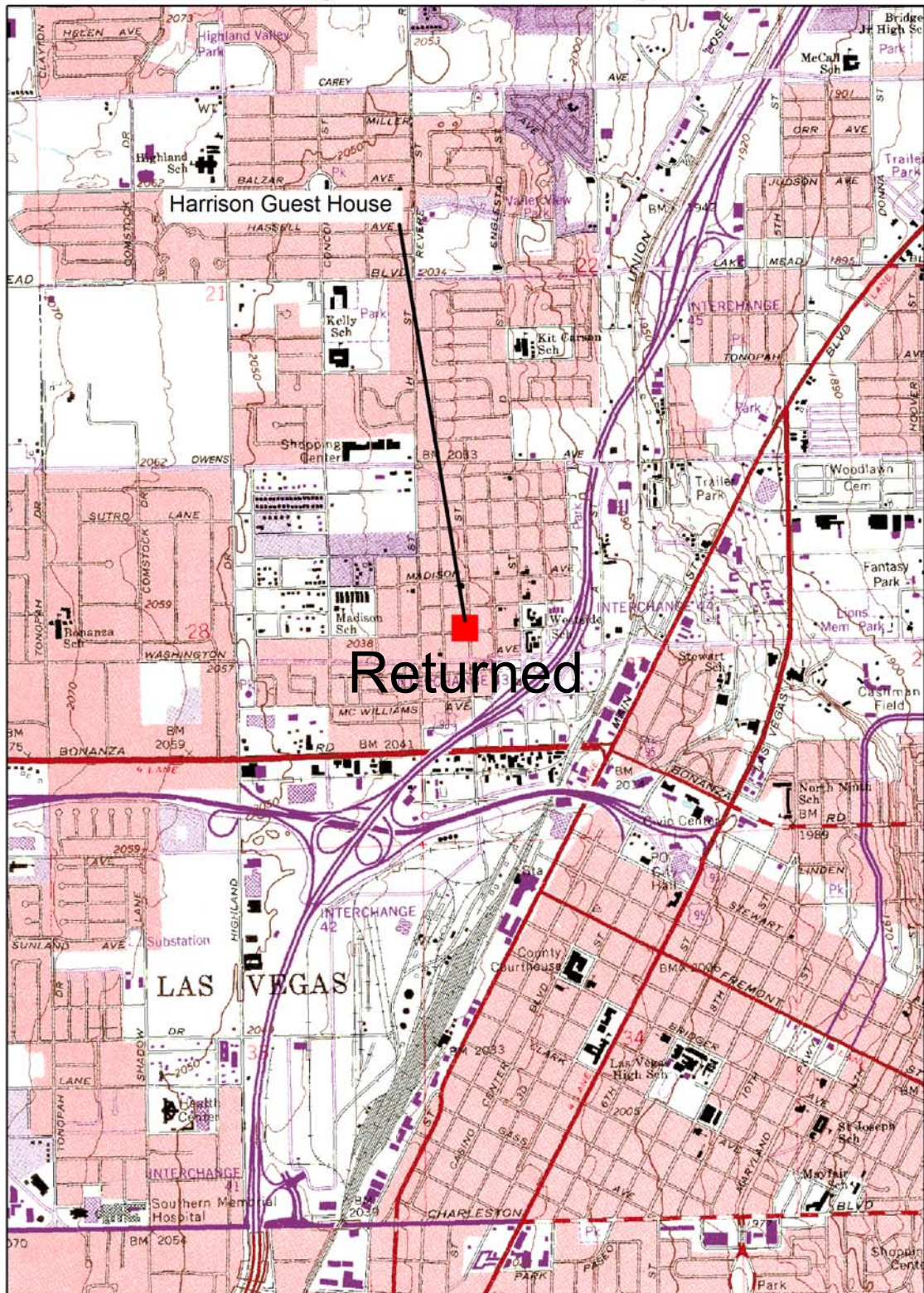
Harrison's Guest House, 1001 F Street, Las Vegas, NV

Dates of additions indicated in red

Original house built 1942 or earlier



# Harrison Guest House - Small Scale Las Vegas NW Quadrangle

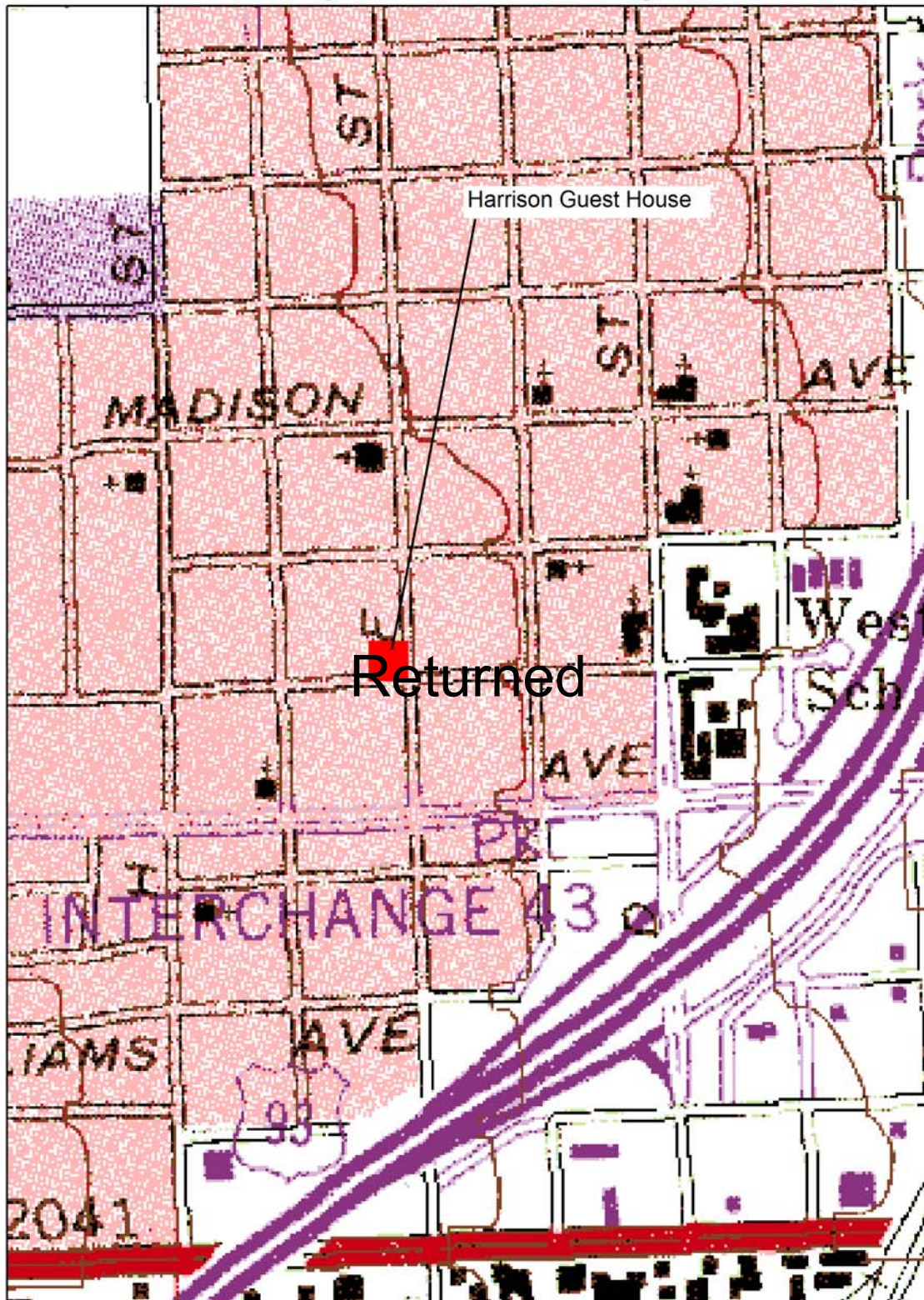


0 375 750 1,500  
Meters



Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: October 30, 2014

# Harrison Guest House - Large Scale Las Vegas NW Quadrangle



0 75 150 300  
Meters



Datum: NAD 83, Zone 11 North  
Author: Jim Bertolini  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office  
Date: October 30, 2014

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Harrison's Guest House  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Clark

DATE RECEIVED: 1/02/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/17/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000009

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Return:**  
**Please see the attached**  
**National Register Evaluation/Return Sheet**  
**for an explanation.**

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER Barbara Coyall DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE 2-17-15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places

### Comments Evaluation/Return Sheet

**Property Name:** Harrison's Guest House

**Property Location:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**Reference Number:** 15000009

**Date of Return:** 2-17-15

#### **Reason for Return**

This nomination is being returned for additional information, primarily regarding the integrity of the property and for clarification regarding its significance.

#### **Background**

The Harrison Guest House is nominated under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Entertainment/Recreation. The house served as a boarding house for African American visitors to Las Vegas during the years of segregated housing and accommodation. The period of significance reflects the earliest use of the house as a boarding house (1942) to the year of the Moulin Rouge Agreement (1960), an ordinance that eliminated the need for segregated accommodation.

#### **Section 7/Description**

Section 7 of the nomination omits some key details that are important in assessing the integrity of the property. If the nomination is re-submitted, please address the following points:

1. Page 5, first paragraph. The wood frame house is covered in "modern stucco." What was the original sheathing?
2. Page 5, second paragraph. Please provide a more complete verbal description of the "shed addition." From the photos, it appears to be a shed roof that spans the space between the original house and the 1954 addition. Please include a description of the floor, walls, and openings, and the attachment to the adjacent buildings. Should the 1954 construction be considered a separate building? The "shed" seems extremely ephemeral.

## National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Harrison's Guest House

Reference Number: 15000009

3. Page 5, third paragraph. When were the iron bars on the windows and porch installed? If during the period of significance, these would be contributing features. What is the "window port" covered in particle board and is the window intact behind the board?
4. Page 7, first full paragraph. The bay window may be on a "secondary elevation" but this elevation is facing the street, so its existence is more consequential. The design of the wall around the property may be somewhat compatible, as stated in this paragraph, due to its painted block finish that somewhat resembles the stucco finish on the house. The metal pickets may be compatible with the enclosure around the porch and the barred windows, but do these changes date from the period of significance? Being compatible with construction outside the period of significance is not noteworthy.
5. Page 7, also first full paragraph. The carport, of course, has the biggest impact on the integrity of the guest house. This element, as well as other modifications that detract from integrity from the period of significance, should be clearly identified as noncontributing components of the house. This includes the carport, the wall/fence that surrounds the yard, the bay window, and other elements whose date of installation or construction have not been identified (such as the ironwork on the windows).
6. Is it certain that the front porch on the original house reflects the size, shape, and dimensions of the original porch? The materials exhibit obvious remodeling, but the description should include an explanation of what is considered original about the porch.

In general, the question of integrity should be addressed in a straightforward way, without too much emphasis on subjective evaluations. For example, on page 7 it is stated that "Taken together, these modifications have only a moderate and compatible impact on the overall integrity of the building and its landscape, and do not hinder the property's ability convey its significance." This could be disputed. Instead, it might be acknowledged that these are unfortunate changes, but given the important contribution the building makes to African American history in Las Vegas, sufficient integrity is evident to convey the property's history and historic appearance. It might be noted that the house retains integrity in its general massing, in the existence of most original openings, and by virtue of the placement of later wings on the back of the house (except the carport).

### Section 8. Statement of Significance

The statement of significance includes some provocative statements that lack source citations. For example, on page 10 in the summary paragraph it is stated that Harrison's Guest House is "one of the few remaining African American boarding houses in the western United States." From other nominations submitted to the National Park Service, this point is very difficult to prove. An African American hotel in Colorado recently listed in the National Register cited examples of African American accommodation listed in historic tour guides. The Harrison nomination does not document the statement regarding the rarity of African American rooming houses, although where the statement is repeated on page 15, the footnote explains that a tourist inn in Phoenix is the only other African American boarding house known to be listed in the National Register. The National Register is not a definitive or comprehensive tool for assessing the incidence of any kind of resource. Representation in the National Register is only meaningful in the context of listings; it is not a comprehensive tool for assessing the incidence of a property

## National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Harrison's Guest House

Reference Number: 15000009

type or a reflection of research efforts by scholars. Please eliminate or greatly qualify the statements on pages 10 and 15 regarding the rarity of this resource type.

On page 7, at the top of the page, the building is said to be the "last remaining resource of its type in Las Vegas." This statement seems more realistic and perhaps was informed by city directory, census, and other research. The research effort that led to this conclusion should be described in Section 8 (perhaps on page 16 where the point is repeated), with some indication of the number of rooming houses that may have existed for African Americans in Las Vegas at the peak.

Other points that require clarification in Section 8:

1. The short paragraph on page 11, at the end of the summary paragraph, mentions other places associated with the Westside that are listed in the National Register. Please specify if these places are all associated with Las Vegas African American history.
2. On page 16, Westside boarding houses are said to be at their peak, "between the 1940s and 60s" but the period of significance for this nomination ends in 1960. Please reconcile. On page 18, the importance of the African American guest houses in Las Vegas in the 1960s is repeated. Please consider whether 1960 is an appropriate end date for the period of significance. Although the Moulin Rouge Agreement may have taken effect, no doubt there was a delay in the abandonment of the Westside boarding houses. If Mrs. Harrison died in 1957, a few years of her sister's ownership are already reflected in the period of significance. Is there another pivotal date in the 1960s specifically related to the Harrison Guest House? This would be better than the passage of a particular law, even though this law may have ultimately led to the demise of the guest house. Alternatively, was there a dramatic change in the guest house when Mrs. Harrison died in 1957?
3. What are all the significant dates mentioned on page 10? Do these mostly refer to additions to the house?

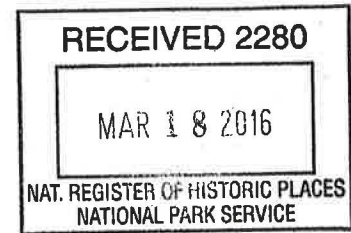
If you would like to discuss this nomination, please call or send me an email. You can reach me at 202-354-2252 or at [barbara\\_wyatt@nps.gov](mailto:barbara_wyatt@nps.gov).

Barbara Wyatt, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
202-354-2252



March 8, 2016

Barbara Wyatt, ASLA  
National Register/NHL Programs  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005



**RE: Re-submittal of National Register Nomination, NRIS# 15000009 – Harrison’s Guest House, Las Vegas, NV**

Ms. Wyatt:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for Harrison’s Guest House to the National Register of Historic Places. This submittal has revised the nomination in response to your request for information from February 17, 2015. A summary of the responses to those requests has been included below. The nomination has been overhauled to better reflect the historical significance, narrative history, and integrity of the resource.

**Section 7/Description**

Section 7 of the nomination omits some key details that are important in assessing the integrity of the property. If the nomination is re-submitted, please address the following points:

1. NPS Comment: Page 5, first paragraph. The wood frame house is covered in “modern stucco.” What was the original sheathing?

*SHPO Response: After further research through City building permit records, it was revealed that the concrete stucco was applied by 1955 during the historic period, and may have been added as early as the 1930s, prior to the building’s operation as a boarding house. The description has been corrected with appropriate citation.*

2. Page 5, second paragraph. Please provide a more complete verbal description of the “shed addition.” From the photos, it appears to be a shed roof that spans the space between the original house and the 1954 addition. Please include a description of the floor, walls, and openings, and the attachment to the adjacent buildings. Should the 1954 construction be considered a separate building? The “shed” seems extremely ephemeral.

*SHPO Response: After a SHPO site visit on September 10, 2015, the “shed” was confirmed to be a minor hyphen between the main house and the separate Guest House. The Guest House has been re-seated as an individual building rather than an addition, and the “Shed” more clearly described as a non-contributing structure. Based on the afore-mentioned site visit, this resource does not appear*



*to date from the period of significance, most likely constructed in 1975. It is not structurally attached to either the main house or the Guest House.*

3. Page 5, third paragraph. When were the iron bars on the windows and porch installed? If during the period of significance, these would be contributing features. What is the “window port” covered in particle board and is the window intact behind the board?

*SHPO Response: Neither the oral histories or building permit records indicate when the metal bars were added, but it seems likely that they were added after the period of significance, most likely in 1975. The building permit for that year is the only permit issued until 1993 that deals with exterior work, and the fences do not appear to date from the 1970s upon inspection. The SHPO was unable to confirm the design or materials of the window hidden by the particle board on the façade. This has been clarified in the nomination.*

4. Page 7, first full paragraph. The bay window may be on a “secondary elevation” but this elevation is facing the street, so its existence is more consequential. The design of the wall around the property may be somewhat compatible, as stated in this paragraph, due to its painted block finish that somewhat resembles the stucco finish on the house. The metal pickets may be compatible with the enclosure around the porch and the barred windows, but do these changes date from the period of significance? Being compatible with construction outside the period of significance is not noteworthy.

*SHPO Response: As clarified above, research indicates that the majority of these elements do not appear to date to the period of significance. This has been clarified in the nomination.*

5. Page 7, also first full paragraph. The carport, of course, has the biggest impact on the integrity of the guest house. This element, as well as other modifications that detract from integrity from the period of significance, should be clearly identified as noncontributing components of the house. This includes the carport, the wall/fence that surrounds the yard, the bay window, and other elements whose date of installation or construction have not been identified (such as the ironwork on the windows).

*SHPO Response: The discussion of these modifications has been moved to the “Integrity” subheading to indicate their impact on the historic integrity of the resources. The narrative has also been modified to include the dates of modifications, where known, to clarify if they are contributing or not.*

6. Is it certain that the front porch on the original house reflects the size, shape, and dimensions of the original porch? The materials exhibit obvious remodeling, but the description should include an explanation of what is considered original about the porch.

*SHPO Response: The porch description has been adjusted to clarify which features date to the period of significance and which do not. Specifically, the overall dimensions, the porch posts, and the concrete foundation date to the*

*period of significance while the wrought iron fencing and red tile floor covering do not.*

7. In general, the question of integrity should be addressed in a straightforward way, without too much emphasis on subjective evaluations. For example, on page 7 it is stated that “Taken together, these modifications have only a moderate and compatible impact on the overall integrity of the building and its landscape, and do not hinder the property’s ability convey its significance.” This could be disputed. Instead, it might be acknowledged that these are unfortunate changes, but given the important contribution the building makes to African American history in Las Vegas, sufficient integrity is evident to convey the property’s history and historic appearance. It might be noted that the house retains integrity in its general massing, in the existence of most original openings, and by virtue of the placement of later wings on the back of the house (except the carport).

*SHPO Response: The statement of integrity has been adjusted with the above comments in mind. It is this office’s opinion that, although the integrity of this property is not excellent, the non-historic alterations are not so significant as to outweigh by the historical significance of the property to Las Vegas. The 1946-1955 additions are historic modifications, and therefore contribute to the historic integrity of the property.*

## **Section 8. Statement of Significance**

1. The statement of significance includes some provocative statements that lack source citations. For example, on page 10 in the summary paragraph it is stated that Harrison’s Guest House is “one of the few remaining African American boarding houses in the western United States.” From other nominations submitted to the National Park Service, this point is very difficult to prove. An African American hotel in Colorado recently listed in the National Register cited examples of African American accommodation listed in historic tour guides. The Harrison nomination does not document the statement regarding the rarity of African American rooming houses, although where the statement is repeated on page 15, the footnote explains that a tourist inn in Phoenix is the only other African American boarding house known to be listed in the National Register. The National Register is not a definitive or comprehensive tool for assessing the incidence of any kind of resource. Representation in the National Register is only meaningful in the context of listings; it is not a comprehensive tool for assessing the incidence of a property type or a reflection of research efforts by scholars. Please eliminate or greatly qualify the statements on pages 10 and 15 regarding the rarity of this resource type.

*SHPO Response: Statements have been qualified to state that the Harrison House is the only African American boarding house known to survive in Las Vegas, and potentially the only one remaining in Nevada. The state of Nevada’s survey is not complete enough to confirm this statement outside of Las Vegas, and further research may uncover other examples in northern Nevada, in Reno and Carson City, and in smaller communities along the U.S. 50/Lincoln Highway corridor.*

2. On page 7, at the top of the page, the building is said to be the “last remaining resource of its type in Las Vegas.” This statement seems more realistic and perhaps was informed by city directory, census, and other research. The research effort that led to this conclusion should be described in Section 8 (perhaps on page 16 where the point is repeated), with some indication of the number of rooming houses that may have existed for African Americans in Las Vegas at the peak.

*SHPO Response: As mentioned above, the only known boarding houses to operate in Las Vegas were in the Westside, as defined in the nomination. Red-lining, discriminatory hiring practices, and other institutionalized racism effectively limited African Americans to this area of the city from the 1940s through at least 1972. We know Las Vegas boarding houses operated only in the Westside, but we can only confirm from city directories the presence of three specific boarding houses, the other two of which have been demolished. Thus, with a high degree of confidence, we can say that Harrison's House represent's the only surviving “known” boarding house in Las Vegas.*

Other points that require clarification in Section 8:

3. The short paragraph on page 11, at the end of the summary paragraph, mentions other places associated with the Westside that are listed in the National Register. Please specify if these places are all associated with Las Vegas African American history.

*Adjusted.*

4. On page 16, Westside boarding houses are said to be at their peak, “between the 1940s and 60s” but the period of significance for this nomination ends in 1960. Please reconcile. On page 18, the importance of the African American guest houses in Las Vegas in the 1960s is repeated. Please consider whether 1960 is an appropriate end date for the period of significance. Although the Moulin Rouge Agreement may have taken effect, no doubt there was a delay in the abandonment of the Westside boarding houses. If Mrs. Harrison died in 1957, a few years of her sister’s ownership are already reflected in the period of significance. Is there another pivotal date in the 1960s specifically related to the Harrison Guest House? This would be better than the passage of a particular law, even though this law may have ultimately led to the demise of the guest house. Alternatively, was there a dramatic change in the guest house when Mrs. Harrison died in 1957?

*SHPO Response: Upon receiving the nomination in late 2014, this office's initial contention was to adjust the period of significance to 1942-1957 to reflect Genevieve Harrison's operation of the boarding house. The property still operated as a boarding house until an undetermined time in the mid-to-late 1960s, but the market for such an accommodation steadily declined, not only as both downtown Las Vegas and Strip businesses opened to African Americans, but as African American businesses in the Westside, both on Jackson and Bonanza Avenues, opened and provided more traditional motel/hotel accommodations, best represented by the short-lived and now partially demolished Moulin Rouge Hotel*

*(NRIS #92001701). The latest documented use of the property as a boarding house under the ownership of Harrison's sister, Agatha Wilson, was 1960. That date, reinforced by the establishment of the Moulin Rouge Agreement in the same year, compelled us to close the period of significance in 1960.*

5. What are all the significant dates mentioned on page 10? Do these mostly refer to additions to the house?

*SHPO Response: The dates identified major additions to the house during the submitted period of significance (1942-1960). They have been removed as the plethora of dates confuses the Criterion A significance of the resource.*

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my National Register Coordinator, Jim Bertolini, at (775) 684-3436 or [jbortolini@shpo.nv.gov](mailto:jbortolini@shpo.nv.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Palmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Rebecca Palmer  
Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer





