

*Becoming Las Vegas:
Opportunity and Challenge
with the Building of Boulder Dam*

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On the mild winter day of December 21, 1928, the warm rays of fortune shone down on southern Nevada. Excited Las Vegans filled the streets of their small railroad town in a celebration that extended into the night. The Boulder Canyon Project Act had passed in the United States Congress, authorizing the damming of the Colorado River just thirty miles from Las Vegas. One local resident recalled the party and how "bootleg liquor just flowed like water."¹ Leon Rockwell's memory adds to the image: "There was people that got lit that never had taken a drink before."² Amid this merriment, the *Las Vegas Age* reported the following day, more than two hundred Las Vegans made a prayerful pilgrimage to the dam site and "knelt on the sands by the muddy waters of the Colorado, in silent prayer" and "gave thanks for the blessings vouchsafed to them and to the community."³ The coming of Boulder Dam,

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He would like to thank Professor Don Worster and his fellow students in the historical research seminar at the University of Kansas in which this project began. They helped the author to develop a wider methodological perspective as a budding historical geographer. He would also like to recognize Rachel Rowley for her consistent editorial advice on all his work, and thank editors and anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

later to be renamed Hoover Dam,⁴ gave plentiful reason for rejoicing. The golden egg of the largest public works program in United States history (apart from the Panama Canal) had just been dropped in their lap.

As plans moved toward actual construction, the celebration in Las Vegas turned into blind optimism. With the help of the two community newspapers, both big boosters of the town—the *Las Vegas Age* and the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*—Las Vegans expected nothing but greatness from Boulder Dam. With a population of only 5,165 reported from the 1930 census, the town optimistically (and somewhat naïvely) anticipated an explosion to between 25,000 and 100,000 people during and directly following dam construction.⁵ Las Vegans also expected that cheap power afforded by the dam would bring millions of dollars in economic development, elevating their city to one of the great industrial centers of the West.⁶ One booster, for example, saw Las Vegas becoming a “second Denver.”⁷ Las Vegas was “the ‘magic city,’ where millions in wealth [would be] constantly invested—where wealth—health and happiness await.”⁸ Las Vegans expected Boulder Dam to catapult their city into a grand future.

In general, the high expectations of Las Vegans were unrealistic. The census count five years after President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1935 dedication of Boulder Dam, for example, showed Las Vegas with only 8,422 people. Southern Nevada did not actually breach the 25,000 mark until the latter half of the 1940s, and it was a post-war boom that brought Clark County’s population to 48,289 by 1950.⁹ Las Vegans saw no growth in industry, either. That would come in the days leading up to World War II.

The dam did, however, mark a turning point in the fate of Las Vegas. Since 1905, it had eked out a meager railroad-town existence as an important division point on the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad.¹⁰ During the 1920s the small town was in the midst of a mild local depression following the removal of repair shops from the city’s railroad lifeline. “While much of urban America prospered during the roaring twenties,” wrote the historian Eric Nystrom, “Las Vegas drifted into a period of stagnation.”¹¹ Such economic doldrums worried Las Vegans, but the dam promised an end to those fears and salvation for their struggling town.

In addition, less than a year after the passage of the Boulder Canyon Project Act, the stock market crashed, plunging the United States into the Great Depression of the 1930s. Most historians agree that, because of construction work at the dam, Las Vegas sailed through that tumultuous storm with relatively few damaging effects.¹² It is of interest that the local newspapers gave the stock market crash scant coverage despite its dark nationwide implications.¹³ While other western communities coped with economic challenges in the early years of the Depression, Las Vegas experienced relative prosperity; businesses reported increases over previous years, new neighborhoods sprung up away from the town center amid a real-estate boom, and several infrastructure improvements were completed as the city gained new status as the “Gateway to the Boulder Dam” (Figure 1).¹⁴



Figure 1. A view of Fremont Street looking east in 1930, hints at the relative prosperity in Las Vegas during the early years of Great Depression, thanks to Boulder Dam construction activity nearby. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

What economic difficulties Las Vegas did face in the Depression, particularly between late 1931 and the summer of 1932, were mild compared to other places, thanks to growing visitation to the new gateway town. The consistent payroll at the dam and its workers who spent their free time and wages in Las Vegas were two important infusions into the economy.¹⁵ By the end of 1932, around twenty four hundred Boulder City residents daily made the short drive to Las Vegas for everything from buying milk, to seeing a movie at the El Portal, to patronizing the brothels on Block 16.¹⁶ Hundreds of thousands of tourists from outside the region also passed through Las Vegas in the 1930s on their way to see Boulder Dam under construction, three hundred thousand in 1934 alone (Figure 2).¹⁷ Indeed, Las Vegas had become almost wholly dependent on the dam for its survival. Al Cahlan, then editor of the *Review-Journal*, put it into perspective. Without the dam, he wrote: "Las Vegas would be in a Hell of a fix."¹⁸ The historian Hal Rothman added that without the Boulder Dam project, "the whistle-stop easily could have become a ghost town."¹⁹

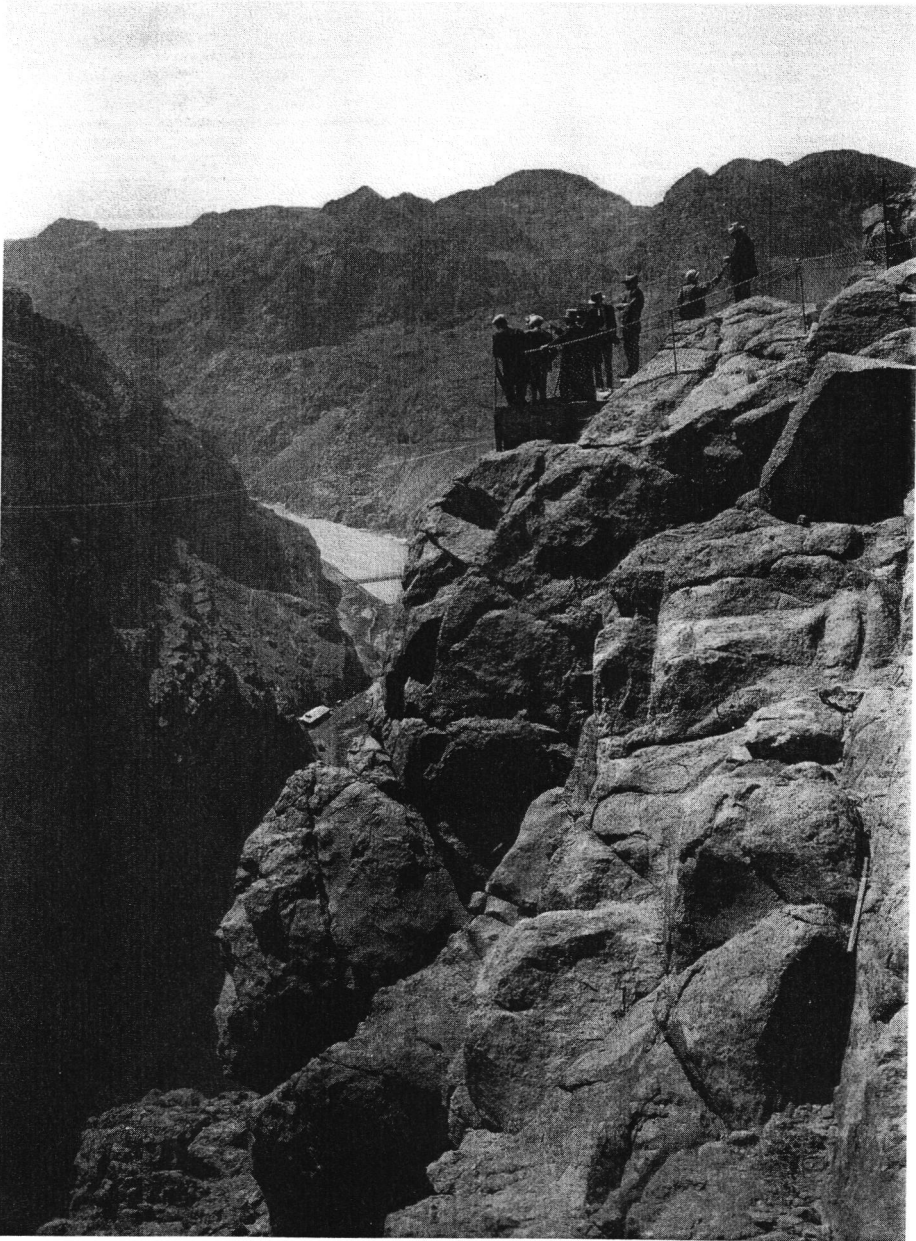


Figure 2. Visitors to the Boulder Dam construction site view Black Canyon from Lookout Point in April 1932. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

The newfound gateway city faced struggles of a different sort. Thousands of jobless men and families, poor and hopeless in the depressed economy, came to the city in search of the “greatest single payroll in the country.”²⁰ Las Vegans undoubtedly expected workers to come; indeed, they had hoped to become the home for the construction force. And any public works project of the dam’s magnitude would certainly draw workers from all over the country. But the expected influx of job seekers was magnified to an unexpected degree as a result of the unique combination of local prosperity and national, Depression-wrought blight. A November 1930 report in the *Review-Journal* highlighted this phenomenon when it noted, “Las Vegas had the longest bread line in the United States according to its population.”²¹ In short, Las Vegas residents were forced to respond to a much larger influx than anyone would have expected prior to the stock market crash, along with the crime, hunger, and sickness that followed.²²

During the period between 1929 and 1933, Las Vegas lay at the nexus of opportunity and challenge as a result of the opposing forces of a new tourism market and a depression. This crucial period in the city’s evolution, however, has received scant attention in the historical literature,²³ but it was during these early years of the Great Depression, that Las Vegas *began* its transformation into the city it is today. Presently, for example, locals still encounter the dual forces of opportunity in the powerful economic engines of gaming and tourism, as well as challenge in dealing with explosive growth as a result of the boom driven by tourism forces. More recently such challenges have been placed in sharp focus during the so-called Great Recession. The local character that has developed in response to such forces is one of the most evident in the city’s current sense of local identity.²⁴ Whereas historians often point to the post-dam era as the roots of the tourism industry, it was the coming of Boulder Dam and its workers—both the project’s gainfully employed who spent their salaries in the city and the unemployed who were in need of assistance—fostered a lasting trait in the city’s character as being a place shaped by outside forces.²⁵ Indeed, the title of Joan Burkhart Whitely’s portrait of Las Vegas prior to the transition time of Boulder Dam construction is telling and accurate: *Young Las Vegas, 1905-1931: Before the Future Found Us*.²⁶

How did Las Vegans respond when their naïvely anticipated future did not pan out as they had hoped? How did Las Vegans, moving through the Depression in relative prosperity, cope with the thousands of unemployed and poverty stricken men and families seeking work at the dam who arrived before New Deal money would help ease this burden placed on the town?²⁷ In general, the response in Las Vegas was one of ambivalence. The townspeople had no desire to bear the responsibility of caring for a population of outsiders who landed on their doorstep; the town saw this burden as taxing on the community, its resources, and its present and future goals. At the same time, locals did not ignore the problem, but confronted it, meeting the needs of many unemployed people.²⁸

The first half of the Boulder Dam construction period provides a unique perspective in answering these questions. Even though actual work on the

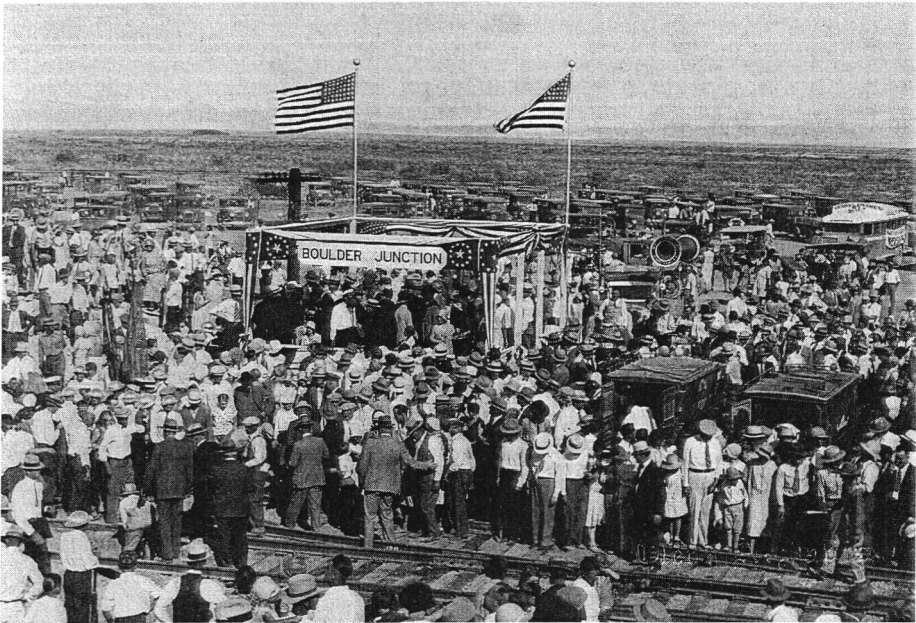


Figure 3. More than 10,000 people gathered around what was then a remote part of the Las Vegas Valley, some seven miles from Fremont Street, to celebrate the driving of the silver spike that would initiate construction on a spur of the Union Pacific Railroad to the Boulder Dam site. The September 17, 1930, event signaled the beginning of the Boulder Canyon Project even though actual work on the dam would not begin for several months. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

diversion tunnels and cofferdams began in the early spring of 1931, congressional appropriations in July of 1930 and the start of a railroad spur to the dam site from the mainline in Las Vegas later in September had signaled the beginning of construction on the project (Figure 3). That was when, a year following the stock market crash, hordes of unemployed persons seeking a job at the dam began to arrive in southern Nevada.²⁹ This article will focus on Las Vegans' actions from the beginning of this influx through March of 1933, the inauguration of President Franklin Roosevelt. The city continued to face related difficulties after Roosevelt took office and beyond the 1935 dedication of the dam, but understanding the situation in Las Vegas in the deepest throes of the Depression before the compounding influence of the New Deal's effects is particularly illuminating.³⁰

THE INCOMING HORDE

Even though Boulder City was chosen as the home for the construction force, Las Vegas still became the focal point for the waves of unemployed people who began to flock to the region late in the summer of 1930. First, as a gateway town, Las Vegas's name was firmly associated with the nationally known project. In addition, the employment office for the project was established in Las Vegas in November 1930 under the direction of Leonard Blood. The employment office remained there throughout construction, except for a short stint in Boulder City.³¹ Also, construction on Boulder City would not begin until April 1931, and so the job seekers needed a place to live. Even after the government town came into existence, it was closed off to all those who did not have business there. Finally, Las Vegas had both relative prosperity and an informal infrastructure to care for a needy population. In other words, many of the unemployed persons who came to southern Nevada and did not find immediate work at the dam could potentially receive assistance through charity organizations at work in the Las Vegas Valley.³²

Las Vegas were eager to remain intimately connected with the work at the dam, but as the Depression deepened and work on the dam began, they realized the impact of a potentially large migration of jobless people into their community. As a result, starting in June 1930, Las Vegas newspapers, later to be joined by national-level employment officials, including Blood's Las Vegas employment office, warned the nation's jobless against flocking to Las Vegas without a promise of employment or the financial wherewithal to support themselves for several months until work became available.³³ Despite the warnings, by the late summer of 1930, flock they did. Some were duped into thinking there would be jobs immediately available upon arrival in Las Vegas. Others, apparently, saw no alternative other than to go to the town and wait for potential work. For many Americans affected by the Depression, the dam project seemed the only place in the country to get a job.³⁴

It is difficult to determine exactly how many job seekers came to Las Vegas. The initial influx of unemployed came after the United States Census Bureau completed its official 1930 tally in Las Vegas. We do know, however, that the Boulder Dam project employed more than five thousand workers at its peak, so it is easy to infer that at least thousands came through the region in search for employment. John Cahlan, the brother and employee of Al Cahlan at the *Review-Journal*, recalled: "a good 10,000 to 20,000 people [were] dumped on it all at one time." That volume is difficult to believe, however, as is especially Cahlan's claim that it occurred "all at one time," considering that such an event would surely have been highlighted in the newspaper, which it was not. But, by early 1933, Blood's employment office reported having processed twenty-two thousand applications. Even if that total included some duplicates—the office required those who were still looking for work after their initial filing earlier to

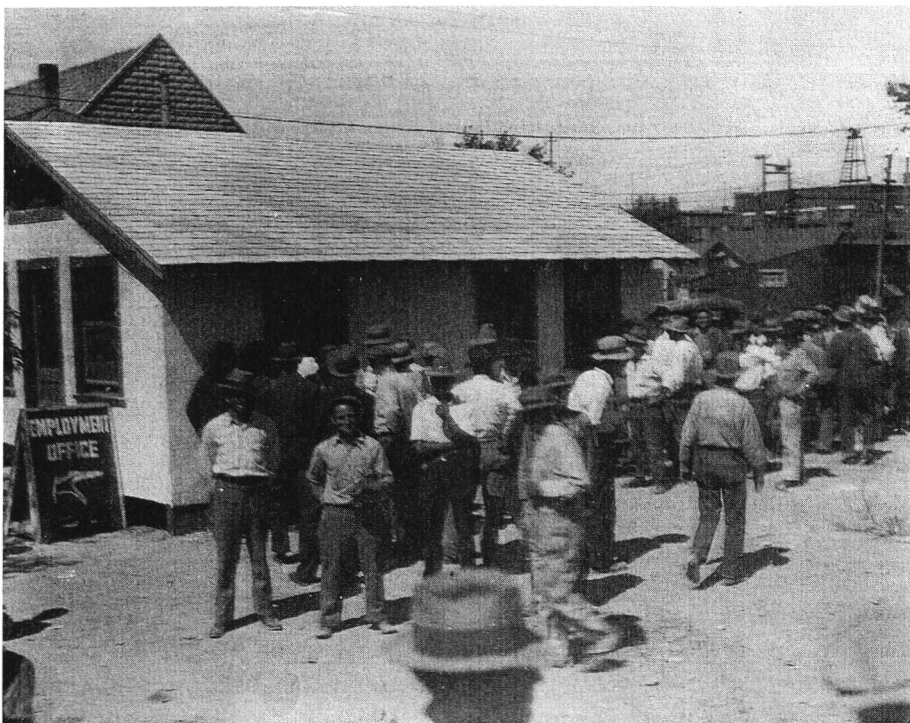


Figure 4. Men stand in front of the federal employment agency in Las Vegas, hopeful for a job at Boulder Dam. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

re-register—this more verifiable total confirms that John Cahlan's estimate may have been accurate over the long term. As another indication that the incoming volume of job seekers was considerable for the small town, Thomas Wilson, who came to work for the *Age* early in the dam construction period, gave the following vivid description of his observation of the mass of men waiting for employment at the dam when he arrived in the town: "the streets [were] just black with people standing on the sidewalk" (Figure 4).³⁵

Local newspapers generally divided the unemployed horde into two groups.³⁶ The first consisted of those jobless persons considered "undesirables." They were usually profiled as single men who begged for sustenance, refused to work, or survived by questionable or criminal means. The local press attached various labels to this group: vagrants, undesirables, hoboies, hangers-on, floaters, moochers, panhandlers, bums, and tramps. Individuals described in this manner were considered criminals and officials generally dealt with them through local police and judicial action. As will be apparent in the

stories below, acts that police, judges, and newspaper editors considered to be punishable crimes seem somewhat innocuous and the rulings unjust. In fact, some of what was considered criminal was simply the *potential* of crime, such as loitering in a district of the town where panhandlers were known to bother out-of-town visitors, or sleeping in a public square. In general, the newspaper record reveals no evidence of blatant discrimination against jobless migrants to the city. Of course, the more obvious prejudice against the "Okies" in California may explain some of the seemingly harsh actions by Las Vegas officials toward vagrants and hoboes. More apparent in this analysis, however, were actions on the part of locals that reflected their goal of maintaining a clean, friendly atmosphere for their visitors.

The second group, usually referred to as indigents, were people in the town who were basically "down on their luck" and victims of the Depression. They were actively looking or waiting for jobs, often had a family, and were likely living in a tent city on the outskirts of town. They were not criminalized, but were generally treated well and provided for through kind acts of Las Vegans or various local charitable and service organizations. What follows is a description of the local response toward each of these groups.

THE VAGRANT CRIMINAL

A sampling of anecdotes demonstrates how some unemployed persons in Las Vegas resorted to criminal behavior. On an autumn evening in 1930, Mrs. J. S. Walton, a West Las Vegas resident, hung a purple blanket, a woman's overcoat, and a quilt out to dry in the breeze. When she looked out fifteen minutes later, they were gone and the culprit was nowhere to be found. A little more than a month later another local home was burgled: The loot this time was just a coat. In January 1931, a man was caught after hours in a grocery store eating food that he did not pay for. His alibi: he saw the door open, was hungry, and so he entered and started to eat. He took no money, but the "yegg" was nonetheless charged with burglary. In March, two men "of transient habits" ordered and ate two porterhouse steaks in a local cafe. They started to walk out without paying when the cafe owner confronted them, escorted them to the kitchen, showed them a large cleaver knife, and took their shoes in lieu of payment. They were charged with vagrancy and spent five days "in the jailhouse...in their stocking feet."³⁷

On a Saturday night later that year, another resident reported a break-in, but no crime committed. The homeowner was convinced that the only thing "his visitor" wanted was something to eat. Unfortunately for the looter, the refrigerator was empty. "He then proceeded to go thru [*sic*] the entire house," it was reported. "Clothing was removed from hangars, and instead of being thrown on the floor, was carefully laid over a chair, and pole extending thru [*sic*]

the clothes closet. The bag of the housewife, left on the dresser was ransacked, but everything replaced instead of being dumped out on the floor or dresser top. Drawers were gone thru [*sic*], but the contents carefully replaced."³⁸

These stories not only illustrate the terrible circumstances surrounding the Depression, but also typify the criminal portion of the influx of people seeking salvation in Las Vegas. They are examples of criminal acts with one motivation: survival. As a trans-shipment point for one of the West's major railroads, Las Vegas was a common destination for vagrants and hoboes. And crime in the town had been on the rise since the initial speculative boom in 1929 that followed the announcement of the dam.³⁹ But the intensity of the spurt of crime beginning in the fall of 1930 was, according to the *Age*, "greater than ever."⁴⁰

As the unemployed population expanded, Las Vegas law enforcement adjusted to the challenge. By November 1930, the small local police force was giving the "once over" to up to forty men a day. A few of the men were just down on their luck and were released, while the police drove others out of town for their crimes. Police and newspaper editors admonished the local population to assist in the situation by locking their homes, businesses, and vehicles, and reporting crimes immediately. In addition, they asked locals to refer beggars or panhandlers to the Salvation Army, rather than provide assistance directly, and thereby potentially contributing to the cause of what one editor termed the "professional 'gimme' artist."⁴¹ However, none of the tactics seems to have been a fully effective deterrent for the lawless population. Making matters worse, newspapers from around the country branded Las Vegas a "wide-open community" full of opportunity, and a "mecca for many a 'bum' thruout the country."⁴²

By the summer of 1931, "petty crimes" became so great that Las Vegas police officials changed tactics. On July 2, Chief of Police Clay Williams announced plans to round up all suspicious people and place them in jail. Williams made the argument that he had counted a hundred and thirty-six men sleeping in the park one particular night and that the way to put a stop to petty crimes was "to get rid of the type of men responsible." He further announced: "Within ten days or two weeks we'll have a chain gang working and a stockade to keep the men in nights. We're going to make this town an unpleasant one for bums!"⁴³

Williams kept his word. Twelve days later the *Review-Journal* reported that a newly formed chain gang was assisting the street department in street and alley cleaning. Construction of the stockade was completed by October 1931.⁴⁴ The new structure was built on a barbed-wire-enclosed, one-acre tract of land. The building's main room measured fifty by forty feet and consisted of walls made from three hundred railroad ties cemented together and allowing for several windows. The walls and roof were lined with sheet metal, and the floor was made from an asphalt-like surface. It contained "sanitary toilets, with washing facilities throughout—shower baths, hot and cold water," plus a kitchen and large table for feeding inmates. Its stated purpose: "To take care of those who violate the lesser city ordinances, as well as those who desire to

work for a free feed." The stockade cost less than \$1,200 and was built largely with prisoner labor.⁴⁵ On October 23, 1931, "seven 'guests' were housed in the new city stockade . . . at the 'house warming' staged by city police."⁴⁶

Some locals disagreed with the police force's plan of action. Mrs. Joe Liston was one such opponent. She wrote to the editor of the *Review-Journal* and criticized the city for being in such a hurry to put men in the stockade or on a chain gang. After all, she argued, the city had advertised the town and the need for dam workers. She recommended that instead of locking up the "working men," the city should place "an arch over every highway leading into [the] city saying: 'Welcome stranger!'" She summed up her feelings: "All Las Vegas should be ashamed."⁴⁷

From another perspective Mrs. Liston's condemnation was unfair and ignored the relief given to hundreds of jobless in Las Vegas. Al Cahlan confronted such criticism in his daily editorial column by urging his readers to visit the stockade building to see what type of place the inmates would be living in. He cited many of its comforts and deemed it preferable to the situation in the overcrowded jail. He stated that such a visitor would see an effective solution to the vagrancy problem faced by the city. Furthermore, Cahlan addressed the unconventional name given to the place; prisoners would not be herded like cattle, despite the building's label. As one supporting example of Cahlan's argument, city police provided a Thanksgiving lunch there for a hundred and ninety men.⁴⁸

Criticism of the stockade, however, heightened in the following months when, in March 1932, the police faced cruelty charges over their handling of inmates at the new facilities. The American Civil Liberties Union asked Nevada Governor Fred Balzar to investigate the charges after the organization received a letter from a former stockade prisoner who claimed terrible conditions and maltreatment of inmates who did not work as ordered by police. District Attorney Harley A. Harmon found the allegations exaggerated and reported to the governor that many inmates he interviewed found the stockade better than other jails they had experienced. In response to the inquiry's findings, Al Cahlan wondered "whether we aren't treating the prisoners too well."⁴⁹

In addition to the chain gang and stockade, the police force under Williams also focused attention on cleaning up the "jungles" and "tent cities" that had sprung up within the city. In July 1931, police broke up a camp of African Americans living on the city dump, raided several other smaller camps, and ordered the inhabitants to leave Las Vegas. That October, police ramped up efforts and moved to clear out a larger camp along Las Vegas Creek north of downtown. More than two hundred individuals inhabited the latter jungles, finding homes in thick underbrush or in makeshift huts of old boards and boxes. Chief Williams ordered the area cleared of all squatters, citing poor sanitation and the "danger of contagion" for the whole of Las Vegas; he gave jungles residents twenty-four hours to comply with the order, after which the police would take all wood left in the area to the stockade to be used, and then



Figure 5. A man walks through a tent city for unemployed people living in Las Vegas, 1931. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

burn the remaining brush and shacks. On Halloween, ironically, the “jungle clean-up campaign” yielded the partially decomposed body of a well-dressed man from Spokane, Washington, who had apparently been murdered. Police suspected that the killer had thrown the man in the brush of the jungles after robbing him, and left poison by his body to make it look like a suicide; yet they found no conclusive evidence and the death remained a mystery⁵⁰ (Figure 5).

In early 1932, Las Vegas police attacked the vagrancy problem with increased fervor, but this time with a different motive. Dam workers complained that hordes of vagrant moochers “harassed” them as they cashed their paychecks and spent their money and off time relaxing in Las Vegas. City leaders recognized the need for the steady stream of tourist dollars from dam workers, and so police began a renewed “drive” in mid January. Those convicted were typically given the option of a suspended sentence if they would leave town immediately. If the panhandlers refused to leave or simply left and then came back to town, they went to jail.⁵¹

By March 1932, with the stockade overcrowded and petty crimes at a low point (relative to the large numbers of "idle men" in town) Las Vegas police work seemed effective. The governor of Nevada lauded and supported them (after the investigation noted above was completed) and their bread-and-water-only treatment of prisoners unwilling to leave town or do labor in the stockade. Editors at the *Tonopah Times-Bonanza* (owned by the *Review-Journal's* co-owner, Frank Garside) added their support for Las Vegas's treatment of the vagrants, noting that Las Vegas had successfully moved from being the "mecca" for bums appearing on their "black list."⁵²

The fight to keep the streets clear of vagrants, moochers, and hangers-on, however, went on. On March 14, 1932, dam workers "declared war" on hangers-on, this time focusing on those who begged money from them as they visited the "party houses" on Block 16. Once again afraid to lose the steady stream of income from Boulder City visitors, Las Vegas officials immediately clamped down on the vagrant problem. A little over a week later, Block 16 had been cleared of hangers-on, and, in a statement pointed at the district's clientele, the police announced that any undesirables who came back after the "heat is gone," would again be promptly removed from the city.⁵³

Police continued rounding up the "vags" throughout 1932 and into 1933. Reports surfaced in local papers of police sending upwards of twenty-three people to the courts in a single day. And local judges stiffened their sentencing for seemingly benign offenses such as vagrancy and panhandling. Instead of being more lenient in offering the alleged criminal an opportunity to leave town, judges punished many with hard labor and sent some of the obstinate offenders into solitary confinement.⁵⁴ The story of the itinerant James Watson is both amusing and representative. In November 1932, Watson approached Frank McNamee, a municipal judge, who bought him lunch and instructed him to leave town, a condition that Watson ignored. Ten days later, Watson approached McNamee again and asked for money. He was arrested, apparently for mooching and failure to leave town as instructed. In the courtroom, Judge McNamee stepped down from his usual place on the bench to testify against Watson. Another judge sentenced Watson to ninety days hard labor for the city.⁵⁵ Adding to this experience, the *Review-Journal* ran a series of front-page articles in the first part of 1933 that kept tabs on who was Las Vegas's "most arrested" vagrant.⁵⁶

Reviewing Watson's specific experience and how Las Vegas responded to the vagrancy problem through these years reveals a sense of ambivalence. Their treatment of such people seems unusually harsh. Forcing a man to perform hard labor for sixty or ninety days for simply begging for a meal or for stealing a blanket, especially during a depression, is over-punishment for his crime. Echoing this sentiment, Al Cahlan opined: "It is hard to condemn any one for stealing food if he's hungry."⁵⁷ Yet Cahlan also supported the stockade as a way to keep the undesirables off local streets. This dichotomy of opinion

highlights the desire of local officials to keep the city clean, ostensibly for the benefit of a visitor population, as well as for the image portrayed beyond the region of Boulder Dam's gateway city. Given city officials' early tactics of forcing vagrants out of town, it also seems that Las Vegans were trying to ignore a problem they did not expect (at least with such magnitude) as a result of the Depression. Later, as the severity of punishment increased, the desire of local officials to keep the city attractive for dam workers who spent their salaries in Las Vegas became apparent. At the same time, the Watson/McNamee experience shows that vagrants approached both visitors and residents, and many in the latter group were willing to help. Indeed, many locals offered to personally help those in need without questioning whether or not they were vagrants or merely needy people.⁵⁸

INDIGENT RELIEF

Some of the inconsistency evident in Las Vegans' disdain for vagrants extended to their treatment of that part of the jobless population termed "indigents." Whereas drawing a line between "vagrants" and "indigents" is a difficult task at best, writings in the newspapers—and by implication feelings in the community—made the differentiation seem simple. Absent an indicator of crime, the jobless were regarded as indigent. If a person broke the law, however, whether through stealing, mooching, or living in a hut made of mesquite-tree scrub within city limits, that person was considered a vagrant or hobo. All others were simply down-on-their-luck indigents.

In the Depression years preceding implementation of Roosevelt's New Deal, the burden for providing relief to the needy lay largely with the local community. In Las Vegas, much of the weight of indigent relief in the community rested on the shoulders of Clark County. This arrangement was, in part, based on the structure of the county, which maintained a taxpayer-supported indigent fund as a standing budget line item.⁵⁹ Another ostensible reason for the county's role in indigent relief may be, at least in the early days of the dam construction period, the desire of Las Vegas city officials to pass on to their county commission counterparts the responsibility for maintaining the city's clean image as the gateway town to Boulder Dam.

One of the first examples to underscore the latter point occurred during the summer of 1931, when Las Vegas police cleared squatter settlements within Las Vegas city limits.⁶⁰ The *Review-Journal* had reported in April that the building inspector was going to push tent-dwellers out of Las Vegas for violating city code. What remained was a tent city—similar to the jungles described previously—just outside the city limits and adjacent to Woodlawn Cemetery, a few blocks north of downtown Las Vegas. Dubbed "Hoover City," it was named, like many of the



Figure 6. A man hangs clothes to dry outside his tent while waiting for work at Boulder Dam, 1931. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

Hooverilles throughout the country during the Depression, after then President Herbert Hoover. In Las Vegas it was where many of the men and families settled in tents or other quarters made of materials (boxes, bushes, trees, etc.) available to the homeless (Figure 6). Hundreds of people eked out an existence here with the help of charitable groups while they waited for jobs at the dam.⁶¹

Even though moving the homeless outside of city boundaries may have solved some of the city's concerns, in June 1931 Las Vegas recognized other potential problems in Hoover City. First, no sanitation facilities existed there, and the only source of water for the squatters was a well that served the nearby cemetery. This situation brought with it the threat of disease and epidemics that would affect not only the indigent population, but also Las Vegas as a whole. A plan (debated by county commissioners) to remove the squalid settlement apparently did not come to fruition, but the concern over sanitation never went away.⁶²

Just over a year later, two cases of typhoid fever surfaced among children living in Hoover City, sending a louder warning about potential problems. At this point, however, no one recommended removing the squatters, a position based on a general understanding that the homeless people had nowhere to go and should not be forced to leave. At the same time, some regulation was needed. A short time later, a committee investigated sanitation within Hoover City. The report that followed, published in early 1933, summarized: "The community does not present a serious health problem." At the same time, the report also "determined" that the tent community was "not to the advantage of Las Vegas."⁶³

Medical care for the indigents was another burden the county assumed. Prior to July 1931, the county handled all indigent cases of medical need through local hospitals. The costs, however, grew too great, resulting in a county-sponsored renovation of its medical facility to increase patient capacity. Leaders charged a nurse, Ruth James, with handling all indigent medical situations, excepting emergencies, which were sent to hospitals. But as the local population of indigents grew, so did the number needing medical attention. By January 1932, that number exceeded the capacity of the improved facilities, and patients were being placed in all available "nooks and crannies" of the building. The Red Cross assisted with minor cases, but additional funding and space were desperately needed. Whereas county leaders understood that they could not dodge this burden and continued support by placing some of the "overflow" cases in private hospitals and paying the bill with public funds, a sense of apprehension remained. In the words of the *Review-Journal's* editor: "This type of indigent relief hits the pocketbook of the taxpayers . . . it is costing plenty of money and there is a limit to the ability of the county to pay. Just where it will end time alone will tell."⁶⁴

Whereas Las Vegans may have relegated to the county the responsibility for indigent relief, the newspaper archive holds several examples of locals who personally assisted the needy within their community. The following letter to the editor of the *Review-Journal* is one pointed example that represents such empathy:

Tramps? A Few. Hoboes? Yes, some; but for the most part just folks—even as you and I—Americans out of work. Husbands, wives with their children, single men, all eager to pay their way in some manner until that job at Hoover dam materializes. Hungry? Yes. Starving? Not yet.

When they offer to do your laundry, clean your yard, fix your watch, sell you something you may not even want—listen, and help, if you can. You may go broke sometime yourself.

Have a heart!⁶⁵

Other Las Vegans exhibited similar compassion. The *Review-Journal* reported how one single woman brought her two children and ailing mother to the area in hopes that the dryer climate would help her mother's condition while she looked for work in the prosperous town. But without immediate prospects for a job, she waited, leaning on the Salvation Army and the charity of the owners of a tourist auto court who provided them with a place to live. Seeing the report, a local woman offered the destitute mother a job as housekeeper.⁶⁶

The Houck family, consisting of a father unable to find work, a mother with heart troubles, a girl, age eleven, and a boy of eight, also fell on hard times. While the family attended a doctor's appointment for the mother, thieves stole their tent and only shelter. With no more than the two children's income from selling papers, the family badly needed help. Again responding to the family's story in the newspaper, Mrs. H. C. Qunitard and Mrs. Leo A. McNamee (the municipal judge's sister-in-law) gathered clothing from their own homes and solicited their friends to do the same, while C. J. Addie, a local rancher, contributed a quart of milk every day to the family. The father eventually found work and later expressed his thanks in a letter to the newspaper:

"Dear Sir: We wish to thank you and all the people that have been so kind as to help us during our sickness and hard luck. Also the people who have furnished me work, making it possible for me to take care of my family and keep. Very Truly, JAMES HOUCK."⁶⁷

Not all individual efforts to help unfortunate people, however, prompted such genuine gratitude. In many cases, the response was the opposite. Ernest Eden, a local Union Pacific employee, gave money to a beggar once; when Eden refused to do so a second time, the beggar struck him in the nose with a beer bottle. Several other Las Vegans opened their hearts and homes to provide food and a place to sleep in return for some labor around the house or yard. Some of the needy, after receiving such help and moving on, claimed unjust treatment in their informal employment, filing "labor claims" with the employment office "against their benefactors, in many instances running as high as \$150." Such claims, upon investigation, were thrown out, but the ingratitude left a sting on generous local families. One Las Vegas man "swore off" his daily giving after one of those he had been helping allegedly stole a "new suit of clothes" from his car. William Dowder joined the ranks of duped locals in February 1933 when he had sixteen dollars, two blankets, two suits, a jeweled watch, and a Colt .32 automatic stolen from his home while he slept. Dowder claimed that the culprit was surely the man he had befriended.⁶⁸

Individual generosity should not be overshadowed, but Las Vegans also performed admirable work through charitable organizations. Local business and individual donations, taxpayer-funded indigent relief from the county, or local service groups like the Elks, Rotary, and the American Legion and

its Auxiliary supported such work. In fact, as noted earlier, Las Vegans were encouraged numerous times to contribute what they might normally give to someone on the street to one or more of the various relief organizations. That way, editors argued, locals might avoid the fate of the hoodwinked individuals they read about in the paper. And since relief workers at such organizations were trained to interview and understand the *real* need of those seeking aid (e.g., they would not give help to professional beggars who might use the aid to support their alcohol or gambling tendencies), locals could also avoid supporting those who might squander their benefactor's generosity.⁶⁹ In sum, relief organizations were a crucial part of managing and administering assistance to the victims of the Depression within the Las Vegas Valley.

The Salvation Army's role in this effort was particularly significant. As the incoming flood of unemployed people intensified in the fall of 1930, Captain R. M. Griffin set up a local branch of the organization to handle the needs of the hungry and destitute. Griffin's efforts complemented the county-run indigent fund, which began to dwindle despite having been increased several times to cope with growing need. Adding to the Salvation Army's importance, county officials lacked the training and resources to discern between the needy and the beggar, especially considering the immense volume of applicants for aid. Furthermore, Captain Griffin's group was able to stretch "dimes into dollars"; based on its administrative organization and the professional training it provided its workers, it was able to do more than the county could with the same amount of money. Finally, with the demand for donations overwhelming local businesses and individuals, the nationally sponsored organization's arrival was welcome.⁷⁰

Examples of the Salvation Army's success became apparent soon after it began work, and continued through the winter. In early October 1930, its workers found and aided two elderly women, nearly dead from starvation. One, who had been in Las Vegas for some time, was unable to find work, and neither had eaten in several days. Both were too weak to leave their tent in Hoover City. The women had tears in their eyes as they ate the food the relief workers gave them.⁷¹ They were not alone. By the end of November 1930, after five weeks of service, the Salvation Army had recorded over 10,745 applications for aid, and responded to 7,089 of them. They provided 6,162 meals, 393 in private restaurants; distributed clothing to 114 people; supplied groceries to 54 families and 293 individuals; offered medical aid to 30 people; provided transportation for 442 transients; and placed 37 people into jobs, 12 of them permanent.⁷²

By the end of 1930, Las Vegans had joined hands with the Salvation Army in an outpouring of holiday giving to the needy. "All of Las Vegas Joins in 1930 Thanksgiving, Rich, Poor Alike," read a Thanksgiving Day headline. Several churches joined in a "Union Thanksgiving" service, the offering from which was donated to the Salvation Army. In addition, several local organizations, including the Elks, the Methodist church, the American Legion, the Union Pa-

cific, the General Construction company, and the S. and L. Cafe, worked with the Salvation Army to provide a full Thanksgiving dinner spread for nearly 300 "less fortunate persons . . . about half of them to women and children." Several individuals donated time and energy for the effort, in particular the local women who baked the forty-nine pies and nine "big, juicy turkeys."⁷³

Like many small towns, Las Vegas had a tradition of celebrating Christmas as a community. In 1928, the community celebration was charged with the enthusiasm and elation that was maintained following the December 21 announcement of the Boulder Canyon Project Act. The 1929 Christmas continued that tradition with a community tree, sponsored by Rotary, and a visit from Santa Claus, who handed out presents to local children.⁷⁴ Las Vegas once again observed Christmas as a community in 1930, but, with a growing indigent population, that year's celebrations took on a new and different character.

Las Vegas spread the 1930 holiday joy throughout the valley, once again to both rich and poor. On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus visited more than three hundred area children at the Elks' hall and gave gifts of fruit and toys. J. C. Penney donated many of the toys; others came through the generosity of local residents. Four boy scouts gathered and repaired several broken toys. In addition, prominent Las Vegas from church, civic, and service organizations filled forty-two food baskets with all the fixings for a large Christmas dinner, along with some extra supplies, and distributed them to needy families. On Christmas Day, nearly three hundred less fortunate people were treated to a turkey dinner served by local girls and complete with piano music to set a festive tone (Figure 7).⁷⁵

Whereas the Salvation Army did excellent and needed work, even going beyond expectations during the holidays, it seems that after their initial warm welcome for the charity, Las Vegas became complacent. The newspaper record implies a feeling within the community that Captain Griffin, his organization, and the county money that supported its work were doing all that needed to be done for the indigent population. More than two hundred and thirty people received grocery assistance from the Salvation Army in December 1930. But throughout January 1931, the organization did little more than operate its soup kitchen that catered mainly to hungry men. Indeed, the funds under which the Salvation Army operated, including the mere \$350 provided from the county indigent fund, barely allowed it to operate the bread line itself. But with women and children starving (and the latter unable to attend school for lack of proper clothing), and the county hesitant to increase the fund because of its own budget pressures, the *Review-Journal* encouraged all of Las Vegas to give what they could to remedy the situation. The newspaper noted that Las Vegas had "never failed to meet a situation of this character yet," and the charity provided during the Christmas season was "freely dispensed," but "here is an opportunity for REAL charity." Finally, the editors called for creating a locally based, centralized organization to see to it that no need was left unanswered.⁷⁶



Figure 7. A mother with her three children live in a tent shelter near Las Vegas while her husband waits for work at Boulder Dam, 1931. Children like these were recipients of holiday giving from residents in Las Vegas. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

The day after the newspaper's call, Captain Griffin announced that the Salvation Army would discontinue the soup kitchen, citing criticism of how the program operated and a general lack of support from the county and the local population. One of the county commissioners lent weight to Griffin's argument, saying, "The unaided support of the soup kitchen and other similar institutions here have become too great a burden for the county to handle, from a financial standpoint, so we're washing our hands of the matter entirely." This harsh remark pushed the burden from the county to the city, as the *Review-Journal* editor had suggested a day earlier. Las Vegas faced a true test of its ability to provide for its needy population.⁷⁷

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce called a meeting the next day and reached a temporary solution. The special assembly determined that the Salva-

tion Army should continue to handle all cases of charity for the needy population in and around Las Vegas, and decided that the bread line must continue to prevent a horde of hungry men from exacerbating an already difficult crime battle in the city. They recommended continuing public funding of the Army's efforts for the next four months, and rejected a drive for private funds based on the opinion that the burden should be spread evenly throughout the public with a county tax levy. In addition, upon approval of a budget to be submitted by Griffin, the county commissioners provided additional needed funds through an emergency county loan that eventually amounted to \$20,000.⁷⁸ Once again, the city itself dodged taking a direct role (outside of its tax-based support) in the responsibility for care of the indigents.

Recognizing a permanent need for local management, however, Las Vegas civic leaders organized a committee in late 1931 to oversee relief of unemployed in the city. The newly formed group, made up of local citizens under the direction of Nye Wilson of the Chamber of Commerce, requested a \$500-per-month allowance from the county indigent fund, which was approved in October 1931 for the next six months. This would take them halfway toward a proposed \$1000-per-month budget, with a popular fund drive to raise the rest. Under the budget, the city added a soup kitchen to the stockade, where meals were provided for those who worked doing "odd jobs of all types." Leonard Blood's federal employment office assisted the committee by pledging its help to find employment for local jobless.⁷⁹

The committee also decided that after October 1931, most charity work within the community would be handled under the flag of the Red Cross. Reasons for this change are unclear in newspaper accounts, but may have resulted from several factors, including an increased local dissatisfaction with the Salvation Army's handling of the indigent problem in early 1931, and the local relief committee's view that the Red Cross was more capable of achieving goals of local support for the indigent problem. Although the Salvation Army vowed to continue work regardless, and thanked the local population for their efforts and support, the Red Cross assumed the leading role in meeting the needs of the indigent population in Las Vegas.⁸⁰

Further local contributions were made to this new relief effort. The city, through the police department, provided the salaries for the two aid workers—a man to handle the transient male population, and a woman to work with needy women and children. Funds donated by individuals and businesses in Las Vegas were to remain in the city, along with the already pledged amount from the county. The Red Cross called on the help of volunteers, and invited all of Las Vegas to join the relief group by paying a membership fee of one dollar per year.⁸¹ After a year of floundering, Las Vegas was, it seems, finally taking local responsibility for the burden of providing for the unemployed and indigent living in and around their city.

The immense weight of this responsibility became apparent in short order. In October 1931, the *Review-Journal* reported that word had spread about Las

Vegas's willingness to assist the needy. An editorial announced: "There have been more itinerants drift into this city in the last two or three days, than have arrived during all of the four months preceding." The paper further advised taking extreme care to meet needs, but not to "undertake the feeding of all the itinerants in the west." In the initial plans, the relief committee decided to feed the "floating population" only when absolutely necessary and not for a prolonged period.⁸² The Red Cross undoubtedly faced a formidable task in determining the difference between the truly needy and the freeloader. By the end of November 1931, however, relief workers with the organization reported success in placing the people who were willing to work in jobs cleaning up the jungles and the local streets. They also requested that locals report to the Red Cross any odd jobs that the jobless could do, rather than independently offering work to an unemployed person. This, like the Salvation Army's previous efforts, would mitigate against the undesired support of the beggar. Such a move would also limit the number of people receiving public support by removing the nonworking vagrant from the pool of aid requesters, thus lessening the burden on the community.⁸³

Soon after arriving in Las Vegas, the Red Cross called on Las Vegans to assist in providing clothing and funds for the winter months. The initial mail-in drive for donations was reported to be rather successful, the relief committee collecting "scores of checks for amounts both large and small." It seemed that Las Vegans were, in the words of the committee treasurer Ed W. Clark, "fully cognizant of the duty they owe to those less fortunate than themselves." Clark's early observations would, however, prove inaccurate. A few weeks later, the goal of \$400 in community Red Cross membership was far from being met. In fact, several of the local volunteers who scoured the community soliciting donations door to door were unsuccessful. Al Cahlan pleaded with locals to donate to this "worthy cause." He cited a man who asked for aid at the Red Cross. All the needy man desired was gas money to get him and his half-ton truck to Utah for work at a freight-hauling job. The relief agency gave him what he needed, whereupon he willingly offered to donate all he had in his possession, aside from his truck, a total of fifty cents.⁸⁴

It is difficult to conclude why Las Vegans were not more supportive of the fund drive. Less than two months after his own admonitions, Cahlan commented that possibly 85 percent of "REAL residents of Las Vegas, those who were citizens of the community before the Hoover dam employment hysteria began are happily engaged in the business of making a living and are doing a good job of it." Surely this relative prosperity meant that Las Vegans had the wherewithal to give even a little money to aid those without any work.⁸⁵ It could have been a case of donation fatigue: Because the Salvation Army was concurrently running a fund drive, the ability of Las Vegans to support both *and* the Red Cross was "placing an undue burden on the community as a whole."⁸⁶ Perhaps the Depression had affected southern Nevadans more than

the newspapers optimistically portrayed. The answer may never be found, but, as Las Vegas approached the holidays in 1931, the community's increased spirit of giving became apparent once more.

Las Vegans provided Thanksgiving for hundreds of less fortunate individuals who surrounded their small desert city. The Elks lodge, Lions Club, and Red Cross, with further donations from local businesses, fed more than three hundred and fifty people a Thanksgiving dinner. Even a hundred and ninety men at the stockade enjoyed a turkey feast. Hundreds of locals once again put together Thanksgiving packages to give to families in "straightened circumstances." But perhaps the most touching of Las Vegas's holiday endeavors was the fete held at the Rainbow Club. The manager, K. H. Fong, put together a turkey and cranberry dinner for seventy-five needy children "as carefully as if he were feeding royalty" in hopes of giving the "kiddies a treat they'll not forget for many a day." Cahlan praised the citywide effort: "Las Vegas can look with pride at its observance of Thanksgiving . . . and should take its hat of [sic] to the Lions Club, the Red Cross, employees of the Rainbow, and the Elks lodge."⁸⁷ Children were again treated to a special event on Christmas Eve. The community tree was once again the site of a Rotary-sponsored visit from Santa to twenty-two hundred children of all races, rich and poor.⁸⁸

The Red Cross continued to feed and clothe unemployed men and families through April 1932, but seemed doomed to the same fate as the Salvation Army a year earlier. The six months of \$500 per month promised the organization through the county indigent fund had expired, and the Red Cross faced an uncertain future. While promising to evaluate the budget to find some way to continue the fund, county leaders lacked the money to continue it. The uneasy prospect of taking out another emergency loan appeared to be the only option.⁸⁹

Some Las Vegans placed a portion of the responsibility for taking care of the unemployed on the Boulder Dam contractor Six Companies. They claimed that their city had taken on the indigent burden that should have been placed on the companies' shoulders. On these grounds, Clark County's commissioners requested that Six Companies support relief efforts with a monthly donation. The contractors responded with a one-time \$300 contribution, a small sum when compared with their huge (net) profits from the project, estimated at between \$10.5 million and \$18 million by the end of construction. At the same time, other local business donations that earlier had matched the \$500 from the county's indigent fund dwindled. The summer of 1932 was particularly difficult for the city's businesses as the number of dam workers decreased significantly. By June 2, unable to cover its expenses from the past two months, the Red Cross decided "to give up the ghost and cease activity immediately"; the hundred and twenty-three families and more than a hundred men the relief group had assisted in May were left with nowhere to turn for aid.⁹⁰

To continue helping homeless and hungry people, Las Vegas officials sought federal aid. Indeed, a *Review-Journal* editorial the day after the Red Cross was to close reiterated what had been discussed for several months: Hoover's plan for

leaving relief or the unemployed to the state and local authorities was unsuccessful. Even with the huge public works project at their doorstep, Las Vegans still believed federal aid was required. On June 7, 1932, the Red Cross announced that its national headquarters would cover the salaries of workers and some of the foodstuffs to be given to families in Las Vegas, and that the county could continue support with whatever funding officials were able to offer.⁹¹

Several months later additional assistance arrived from Washington D.C. through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). Although the RFC typically provided loans to businesses, and not direct aid to indigent individuals, Clark County was able to secure from Nevada's allotment a \$14,000 loan to assist with relief work in the valley for the remainder of the year. The RFC money specifically allowed the Red Cross to administer direct relief to needy individuals and families. The relief agency was also able to provide wages for various civic improvement projects, allowing it to continue efforts to pay able-bodied homeless individuals for work rather than simply providing handouts. Not only did several of the jobless, including some "old-time residents," benefit from the new funds, but the city was able to improve its streets, its courthouse, and the county medical facilities.⁹²

Even with RFC contributions, Red Cross volunteers again needed to solicit donations from Las Vegans in the fall of 1932, so as to carry their work through the winter and into 1933. The plea went out in the newspaper: "Enroll as a member of the greatest friend of the downtrodden and the needy. It is not only your duty, but your pleasure to do so." Further encouragement came from news columns describing specific examples of the success of the Red Cross in helping the needy. But locals, in a pattern similar to the year before, gave only \$100 in the first three days of donation drives.⁹³ Based on the difficulty in eliciting local donations from private parties in 1931 and 1932, it seems logical that southern Nevadans may have indeed been feeling the effects of the Depression more than the newspapers let on. For local officials to have sought assistance in caring for the needy in the community both from Six Companies and the federal government (through the RFC) suggests a similar conclusion as the community, in a sense, seemed to cry out for help.

As the focus of the 1932 Red Cross fund drive shifted to local business owners, however, their spirit of giving became evident once again. Volunteers asked each local company to make a goal of 100 percent membership in the Red Cross, meaning that all employees in a particular establishment would donate his or her one-dollar membership fee to the relief organization; school leaders were asked to do the same with their staffs. As an additional incentive, *The Review-Journal* promised that the businesses in this "100% club" would have their names printed in the newspaper. The tactic worked. Two days later more than \$800 had been collected. Several local businesses had reached the 100 percent goal, as did the school district. All local teachers contributed their share and half of the students at the high school added their dollar apiece.⁹⁴

The giving spirit that finally brought life to the fund drive carried over into the holidays in 1932. The Red Cross, together with the Pair O' Dice (a local nightclub), sponsored a fine Thanksgiving dinner for sixty needy families, and Christmas giving for the indigent population once again was extended by the entire community. Plans for a "White Christmas"—ironically named, since Las Vegas rarely experiences a true white Christmas—went into effect: All service organizations, following the lead of the local schools, were to promote giving throughout Las Vegas. High school students contributed to the affair by preparing hundreds of white-wrapped food items to be given to poor families. Over the course of three evenings, a series of events at the high school added to this store. During the first two, students performed in benefit concerts at which additional food items were gathered, and at the third, the faculty attended a Christmas party, each member bringing a contribution to the growing food bank.⁹⁵

The El Portal, the local movie theater owned by Las Vegas's mayor, Ernie Cragin, joined the effort by sponsoring several movie showings where a contribution of food to the White Christmas store would provide admittance. In the end, around a thousand food items were collected and assembled into gift baskets that were handed out by the Elks Club on Christmas Eve. With the customary visit from Santa at the community tree, the event was considered the largest Christmas program Las Vegas had ever seen.⁹⁶ Even with the local difficulties apparent from the Depression, Las Vegas showed a willingness to see to the needs of the unemployed and indigent population that since 1930 had become part of their community.

The Red Cross continued its work into 1933, but early that year the American Legion Auxiliary mounted perhaps the most pronounced charitable effort by locals during the dam construction years. Las Vegas had previously recognized that some children came to school hungry, and some arrived barefoot or stayed home for lack of proper shoes. On January 10, 1933, eight women of the American Legion Auxiliary made a concerted effort to remedy both. On that day, they provided, with the help of donations from local companies, a wholesome meal of "rich vegetable soup, rice cooked with raisins, and plenty of milk" to fifty of the most needy children in the elementary school. Many of the kids appeared to be starving, having not eaten in several days. Seeing the meal in front of them, the wide eyes of many children filled with tears. Several had second and even third helpings. With politeness the "innocent young victims of the depression" thanked "members of the committee for 'the fine dinner.'" One child even offered to help clean up the table. She said, "I always do at home.... You see I have a brother that's blind, my mother is sick in bed, and my father hasn't worked in a long time. So you see I'm used to helping with things around the house." Not more than two of the plates had a scrap of food remaining after the meal, and the two that did contained leftovers from second helpings. With the inauguration of the daily lunch program, the Auxiliary also put out requests for donations of money and clothing, particularly shoes, to help with the care of the children.⁹⁷

The entire community, extending to Boulder City, embraced the efforts of the Auxiliary, each person contributing in his or her own way. Harold Anderson of Anderson Brothers in Boulder City donated all of the milk the kids could drink—"Oh, boy! how they do drink!" exclaimed the *Review-Journal*—and Anderson in conjunction with a local ranch provided desserts for the meals. Tower Markets and Mesquite Grocery donated soup and vegetables, and the local five-and-ten-cent store provided utensils. The Ed Von Tobel Lumber Company supplied lumber from which they constructed benches and tables for the lunchroom, and twenty-eight additional individuals and service groups gave a measure of material or volunteer help—from donating an icebox to providing fruits—to the Auxiliary. Local boxing promoters even planned a "benefit fistic card" event. With a ticket containing the fighters Johnny Martinez, Indian Johnny Smith, Dick Schwartz, and Poison Smith, all proceeds from the matches went to the lunch program. By February 1, 1933, the Auxiliary had provided clothing for many needy children and had fed around 96 children "their one REAL meal each day," having filled a total of 1,302 bellies since the program's start.⁹⁸

An overall view of Las Vegas's response to the indigent problem reveals several different faces of charity. The touching work of the American Legion Auxiliary, the various efforts of individuals, businesses, and service organizations to spread holiday cheer, and the individual giving by Las Vegans to their needy neighbors all speak of sharing prosperity with those who were less fortunate. These instances cannot be dismissed, but taken alone give an overly optimistic view of the situation between 1930 and 1933. Several individuals failed to respond when personally asked to give money to the indigent relief cause, and the city as a whole relied on the county's ability to support the charitable organizations, eventually turning to the federal government. While Las Vegas prospered relative to other places in the country, the Depression apparently caused this intermittent failure to share. Las Vegans, it seems, knew how precious their income was and hesitated to give it away for fear of being unable to take care of themselves. Furthermore, the one time the private fund drive was successful during this period came at the hands of volunteers (and the local newspaper) who pressured businesses that, in turn, pressured their employees. Locals may have been willing to give more freely under these circumstances for fear of losing their jobs. In sum, given a specific cause toward which donations and charity were put, Las Vegans were willing to donate, but for general, everyday aspects of charity, the locals felt their tax-based contribution to the indigent fund (local or federal) was enough.

A DEVELOPING PERSONALITY

The Las Vegas of the early 1930s is characterized in the 1933 report of a locally organized committee charged with investigating the sanitary situation in Hoover City as well as the general condition of relief work in Las Vegas

and Clark County. "There seems no doubt that a considerable part of the relief problem facing Clark County has been due to the activities attending the construction of the Boulder canyon project, aggravated [*sic*], of course, by the general condition of unemployment over the country."⁹⁹ This statement easily could be ascribed to the situation Las Vegas have faced as the valley's population has exploded to two million people in recent decades. The chances for success in Las Vegas, largely driven by the success of the tourism and gambling industries, brings thousands of new residents to the region each month, even during the Great Recession of the early twenty-first century. For many new Las Vegas, opportunity lies in a new job; for others, the city represents a new start in life in a town that has plentiful good-wage jobs with lower formal education requirements. And even though unemployment figures comparable to the Depression's are not driving the same numbers of jobless migrants to southern Nevada today, it remains a mecca for many homeless people from around the country. In fact, recent figures show that Nevada has more homeless people by percentage than any other state.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, today's Las Vegas remains subject to influential outside forces. The dam and the tourism it brought enlivened the town in the early 1930s, and tourism drives its economy today. An outsider may see the present changes and challenges simply as a result of the incessantly re-applied face-lift on the Strip, which continually evolves to more fully entice the tourism revenue that has been so central since the 1940s. More important, however, are those changes that the progeny of 1930s residents of Las Vegas confront today. In many ways, the challenges locals face have changed little since Hoover Dam was built. And Las Vegas cope with such struggles in ways similar to those of their forebears. On the one hand, many locals and civic leaders view homelessness with contempt, considering what it might do to the city's tourist image, as documented by the sociologist Kurt Borchard in his book, *The Word on the Street: Homeless Men in Las Vegas*.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, other Las Vegas and local charity groups strive to meet the needs of jobless and homeless residents through a variety of compassionate endeavors, including providing beds or blankets for the homeless and feeding the needy during the holidays.¹⁰² Such a personality, one that may be familiar in other tourist spaces,¹⁰³ developed with the coming of the area's first real tourist crowds, during the dam's construction.

The modern influx of thousands of people per month moving to the desert metropolis also presents the new difficulty of a disintegrating sense of local community.¹⁰⁴ A lack of water to sustain the two million people in the Las Vegas Valley, a growing lack of available affordable housing, and a scrambling to fill the educational needs of children from the growing, and ethnically diverse, population are also new dilemmas for Las Vegas. As in the Las Vegas experience between 1928 and 1933, many of the issues have been anticipated and expected, some of them completely unexpected and unwanted. All of them, however, must be dealt with.

In words still relevant for Las Vegas today, the *Review-Journal's* editor, Al Cahlan, responded in 1930 to a request to stop printing "unfavorable publicity" about the city: "The sooner Las Vegas awakens to the fact that instead of being an ordinary town, it has suddenly become the cynosure of the eyes of the United States, the better we will be able to meet problems facing us at the moment." He criticized the local Chamber of Commerce, and by implication the entirety of Las Vegas, for overly naïve expectations. "The statement was freely made, 'let them come, we'll take the consequences,' and now that they're here we're not willing to take those consequences."¹⁰⁵ It would be well for today's Las Vegas, and citizens from other cities in the West, to heed Cahlan's words from eighty years ago. Before declaring, "we'll take the consequences," any community should re-evaluate whether or not it is willing to face those consequences when they actually arrive.

NOTES

¹Elbert Edwards, in Andrew J. Dunar and Dennis McBride, *Building Hoover Dam: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Twayne, 1993), 16.

²Leon Rockwell, manuscript of oral history, Leon Rockwell Papers, MS13 (Department of Special Collections, Lied Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas), 125-26. See also Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 76.

³*Las Vegas Age* (hereafter cited as *Age*) (22 December 1928), p. 1.

⁴The naming of the dam is a turbulent story. The reclamation bureau had narrowed down potential Colorado River dam sites to Black Canyon and Boulder Canyon. Boulder Canyon was the early winning candidate for the dam, although Black Canyon eventually became the actual location based on its quality of rock and closer proximity to major rail lines. Since Nevadans and the federal government had been so used to calling it Boulder Dam, the name stuck. It took on the name Hoover Dam during the Herbert Hoover administration, but Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes started referring to it as Boulder Dam after taking office as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration in 1933, and when it was dedicated, in September of 1935, Roosevelt called it Boulder Dam. The name was officially changed to Hoover Dam once again by a Republican congress, in 1947. See Ralph J. Roske, *Las Vegas: A Desert Paradise*. (Tulsa, Okla.: Continental Heritage Press, 1986), 72-73, 78. This article will use both names as it was—and still is by many Nevadans today—referred to by both names in the newspapers during the time of its construction.

⁵*Age* (5 September 1929), p. 2; *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* (hereafter cited as *Review-Journal*), (16 September 1929), p. 2; (17 September 1930), sec. I, p. 12. The 16 September 1929, editorial in the *Review-Journal* gives the particularly high estimates.

⁶*Review-Journal* (17 September 1930), sec. IV, pp. 1, 8; (1 January 1931), sec. IV, p. 1.

⁷*Age* (11 May 1929), p. 8. Denver had more than 250,000 people counted in the 1930 census.

⁸*Age* (27 April 1929), sec. II, p. 1.

⁹For further reference on how overly optimistic the estimates were, look at Reno, the largest city in Nevada until Las Vegas took that spot in 1960. Reno had a population of 18,529 in 1930, and 21,317 in 1940.

¹⁰John M. Findlay, *People of Chance: Gambling in American Society from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 111-12.

¹¹Eric Nystrom, "Labor Strife in Las Vegas: The Union Pacific Shopmen's Strike of 1922," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 44:4 (Winter 2001), 330; Findlay, *People of Chance*, 112; Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*, 60; Hal Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 6.

¹²Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*, 14; Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*, 78-79, 91; Roske, *Las Vegas: Desert Paradise*, 85.

¹³The only information in the *Las Vegas Age* regarding the event was found on the fourth page of the October 29 paper. The news was more prominent in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, where it received a front-page mention in an actual news article on the day of the crash. "Stock Prices Collapse Again," *Age* (29 October 1929), p. 4; "Mart Breaks Anew," *Review-Journal* (29 October 1929), p. 1. In the fall of 1932, after Las Vegas went through a relatively slow period, the stock market became the subject of several major front-page headline stories (e.g., "Stock Market in Sensational Rise," *Review-Journal* (2 September 1932), p. 1). It seems that when they finally realized they were somewhat vulnerable after all, Las Vegans paid more attention to the stock market.

¹⁴*Review-Journal* (30 November 1929), p. 2; *Review-Journal* (3 December 1929), p. 2; *Review-Journal* (11 December 1929), p. 1. Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*, 83-84.

¹⁵See *Review-Journal* (26 November 1931), p. 6; (13 April 1932), p. 1; (17 May 1932), p. 1; (8 August 1932), p. 1; (4 August 1932), p. 6; (12 August 1932), p. 8; Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt, Las Vegas, 1930-2000*, 2nd ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 24.

¹⁶Phyllis M. Leavitt, "Depression Pioneers of Boulder City," in *Nevada Official Bicentennial Book*, Stanley W. Paher, ed. (Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1976), 287; Tommy Nelson, interview, "Las Vegas: The Las Vegas I Remember Series," Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, and KNPR Studios, <http://www.knpr.org/LVIR/detail.cfm?FeatureID=2273> (accessed 18 September 2009); *Review-Journal* (23 December 1932), p. 6.

¹⁷Roske, *Las Vegas: Desert Paradise*, 87; Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*, 86.

¹⁸*Review-Journal* (1 January 1932), p. 6.

¹⁹Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*, 6; See also *Review-Journal* (11 February 1930), p. 6. This editorial compares Las Vegas to Needles, California, a short boat trip down the Colorado River from the Boulder Dam site. Both had a railroad line through town, both were near the Colorado (Needles decidedly closer to the river than Las Vegas), but Las Vegas was able to grow, with the dam. Without it, Las Vegas might have had the fate of Needles. Needles still is a small town today with 4,844 people, according to the 2010 census. Las Vegas and its environs had 2,304 people in 1920, and 5,165 in 1930; according to the 2010 census, the City of Las Vegas had a population of 538,756, and the surrounding area, Clark County, a population of 1,951,269. This comparison shows the important influence of geography in the existence of Las Vegas, particularly taking into account Boulder Dam.

²⁰*Review-Journal* (25 September 1930), p. 1; *Age* (2 October 1930), p. 2; Mary Eaton, in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 26; Harry Hall, in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 27; *Review-Journal* (24 November 1932), p. 10.

²¹*Review-Journal* (25 November 1930), pp. 1-2.

²²*Ibid.*; (25 June 1930), p. 6; (13 June 1930), p. 6; *Age* (27 November 1930), p. 2.

²³Moehring, *Resort City*. Chapter 1 in this book, entitled "The Federal Trigger," is the best published description of the challenges that Las Vegas faced during the dam construction period, but such a description is only peripheral to the story of the coming of the dam. Outside of general descriptions of the time in other book-length histories of the city, surprisingly little has been written about the city during the Boulder Dam construction period: Roske, *Desert Paradise*; Findlay, *People of Chance*; Stanley W. Paher, *Las Vegas, As It Began — As It Grew* (Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1971); Gary E. Elliott, *The New Western Frontier: An Illustrated History of Greater Las Vegas* (Carlsbad, Calif: Heritage Media Corp., 1999); Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*; and Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*. Noted exceptions are Roosevelt Fitzgerald, "Blacks and the Boulder Dam Project," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 24:3 (Autumn 1981), 255-60; and Eugene P. Moehring, "Public Works and the New Deal in Las Vegas, 1933-1940," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 24:2 (Summer 1981), 107-29. Finally, refer to Eugene P. Moehring, "Las Vegas History: A Research Agenda," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 47:4 (Winter 2004), 259-82 for a comprehensive review of literature on Las Vegas history and for holes as seen by the article's author.

²⁴As part of a larger ethnographic study about local perceptions of identity, community, and sense of place in Las Vegas, I found that growth, opportunity for success, and the accompanying challenges were among those most frequently identified by residents interviewed. See Rex J. Rowley, "Bright Light City: Sense of Place Beyond the Las Vegas Strip" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2009), 176-226.

²⁵Larry Gragg, "Selling 'Sin City': Successfully Promoting Las Vegas during the Great Depression, 1935-1941," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 49:2 (Summer 2006): 83-106; Moehring, *Resort City*, 28-29; Roske, *Desert Paradise*, 88-89; Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: Centennial History*, 91-92. The impacts of Boulder Dam construction and the Great Depression are part of a long list of externalities that include the railroad, the mob, Wall Street investment, worldwide tourist visitation, and a constant stream of incoming residents. See Joseph E. Stevens, *Hoover Dam: An American Adventure* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 25; Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*, 6-22.

²⁶Joan Burkhart Whitely, *Young Las Vegas, 1905-1931: Before the Future Found Us* (Las Vegas: Stevens Press, 2005).

²⁷Although the building of the dam is often associated with New Deal programs because its construction took place during that time period, the actual construction started several years before the New Deal reached southern Nevada.

²⁸This is contrary to the claim of John Findlay, who wrote that Las Vegans, in their prosperity, overlooked the unemployed who came looking for work at the dam (see *People of Chance*, 113).

²⁹Las Vegas had experienced something of a largely speculative boom in early 1929 following the announcement of the dam, but the influx of people came after the money was appropriated and shovels went in the ground.

³⁰Stevens, *Hoover Dam*, 32-33, 44-46; Roske, *Desert Paradise*, 78; Moehring, *Resort City*, 19; *idem*, "Public Works." In the latter work, Moehring does an excellent job discussing the New

Deal's impact in Las Vegas; but however the community response to the challenges and rewards from the flood of federal monies and projects into the area, and how they affected the job seekers, still needs to be explored further, and would be a good addition to Moehring's work.

³¹*Review-Journal* (23 September 1930), p. 1; (24 September 1930), p. 8; (24 November 1930), p. 1; Stevens, *Hoover Dam*, 125; *Review-Journal* (27 May 1931), p. 1; (1 September 1930), p. 2; (11 September 1931), pp. 1–2.

³²*Review-Journal* (20 October 1931), p. 8.

³³Warnings came initially from newspapers (see *Age*, (5 June 1930), p. 2; (7 June 1930), p. 2; (8 July 1930), p. 2; (10 July 1930), p. 2). Later the president of the American Federation of Labor warned against a sudden migration, *Review-Journal* (3 November 1930), p. 1. Leonard Blood's several warnings followed: *Review-Journal* (25 November 1930), pp. 1–2; (1 January 1931), sec. II, p. 4; (17 February 1931), p. 1.

³⁴*Review-Journal* (25 September 1930), p. 1; *Age* (2 October 1930), p. 2; Mary Eaton, in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 26; Harry Hall, in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 27; Hal G. Curtis, interview. "Las Vegas: The Las Vegas I Remember Series," Nevada State Museum and Historical Society and KNPR Studios, <http://www.knpr.org/LVIR/detail.cfm?FeatureID=2273> (accessed 18 September 2009); *Review-Journal* (24 November 1932), p. 10.

³⁵*Review-Journal* (22 April 1930), p. 1; John Cahlan, in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 28–29; *Review-Journal* (21 October 1931), p. 8; Thomas Wilson in Dunar and McBride, *Building Hoover Dam*, 28.

³⁶These categories and the names I give them are consistent with how the *Review-Journal*, in its news and editorial coverage of the various incidences, classified and described them. Obviously some crossover between the two exists, but within the papers, there is a fairly defined difference that is apparent to the reader as he or she sees them from today.

³⁷*Age* (9 December 1930), p. 1; *Review-Journal*, 30 October 1930, p. 1; (29 January 1931), p. 1; (24 March 1931), p. 1.

³⁸*Review-Journal* (17 June 1931), p. 8.

³⁹*Age* (8 January 1929), p. 1; *Review-Journal* (8 October 1930), p. 8.

⁴⁰*Age* (27 November 1930), p. 1.

⁴¹*Review-Journal* (4 October 1930), p. 8; (7 October 1930), p. 1; (8 October 1930), p. 8; *Age* (27 November 1930), p. 1; *Review-Journal* (9 October 1930), p. 8.

⁴²*Review-Journal* (10 October 1930), p. 10; (7 February 1931), p. 2.

⁴³*Ibid.* (2 July 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* (18 July 1931), p. 1; (23 October 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁵*Ibid.* (21 October 1931), p. 8; (27 November 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* (24 October 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* (6 July 1931), p. 8; (24 July 1931), p. 6.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* (21 October 1931), p. 8; (27 November 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* (2 March 1932), p. 1; (5 March 1932), p. 1; (5 March 1932), p. 6.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* (18 July 1931), p. 1; (21 October 1931), p. 8; (29 October 1931), p. 1; (31 October 1931), p. 1; (2 November 1931), pp. 1, 3.

⁵¹*Ibid.* (14 January 1932), p. 6; (15 January 1932), p. 5; (21 January 1932), p. 1.

⁵²*Ibid.* (26 January 1932), p. 6; (12 February 1932), p. 8; (5 March 1932), p. 1; quotation from *Tonopah Times-Bonanza* in *Review-Journal* (10 March 1932), p. 6.

⁵³*Ibid.* (14 March 1932), p. 1; (16 March 1932), p. 1; (23 March 1932), p. 1.

⁵⁴*Ibid.* (16 September 1932), p. 2; (21 February 1933), p. 1; (26 September 1932), p. 1; (20 February 1933), p. 1.

⁵⁵*Ibid.* (22 November 1932), p. 1.

⁵⁶For example, "Seeking Title of Most Arrested Man," *Review-Journal* (1 March 1933), p. 1.

⁵⁷*Review-Journal* (17 June 1931), p. 8.

⁵⁸See *ibid.* (10 March 1932), p. 6.

⁵⁹See, for example, *ibid.* (12 February 1931), pp. 1–2; (6 April 1932), p. 1.

⁶⁰While it is not totally clear if such efforts were performed strictly on tent cities within city limits, it appears so based on the phrasing used in the handful of articles reporting on the police actions. See *Review-Journal* (21 October 1931), p. 8; (29 October 1931), p. 1; (31 October 1931), p. 1; (2 November 1931), pp. 1, 3.

- ⁶¹*Ibid.* (29 April 1931), p. 4.
- ⁶²*Ibid.* (22 June 1931), p. 8; (24 June 1931), p. 1.
- ⁶³*Ibid.* (9 August 1932), p. 1; (10 August 1932), p. 6; (22 October 1932), p. 1; (16 February 1933), p. 6.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.* (16 July 1931), p. 1; (26 January 1932), pp. 1-2; (26 January 1932), p. 6.
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.* (30 October 1931), p. 2.
- ⁶⁶*Ibid.* (4 February 1931), p. 1; (6 February 1931), p. 2.
- ⁶⁷*Ibid.* (1 September 1931), p. 1; (2 September 1931), p. 1; (22 September 1931), p. 6.
- ⁶⁸*Ibid.* (30 January 1931), p. 1; (10 March 1932), p. 6; (22 September 1932), p. 8; (22 February 1933), p. 1.
- ⁶⁹See *ibid.* (24 September 1930), p. 8; *Age* (2 October 1930), p. 1; *Review-Journal* (9 October 1930), p. 8; (21 November 1931), sec. I, p. 2; (10 March 1932), p. 6.
- ⁷⁰*Review-Journal* (24 September 1930), p. 8;
- ⁷¹*Age* (2 October 1930), p. 1.
- ⁷²*Review-Journal* (24 November 1930), p. 1; (25 November 1930), pp. 1-2.
- ⁷³*Ibid.* (27 November 1930), pp. 1-2. See also *ibid.* (26 November 1930), p. 1; *Age* (29 November 1930), p. 1.
- ⁷⁴*Age* (22 December 1928), p. 2; (25 December 1928), p. 2; (24 December 1929), pp. 1, 2.
- ⁷⁵*Review-Journal* (4 December 1930), p. 8; (24 December 1930), p. 1; (25 December 1930), p. 1.
- ⁷⁶*Ibid.* (9 January 1931), p. 1; (10 February 1931), p. 6; (12 February 1931), pp. 1-2. It would be some time, however, before this final recommendation was actually embraced.
- ⁷⁷*Ibid.* (11 February 1931), p. 1.
- ⁷⁸*Ibid.* (12 February 1931), pp. 1-2, 8; (1 October 1932), p. 8.
- ⁷⁹*Ibid.* (6 October 1931), p. 4; (10 October 1931), pp. 1-2; (12 October 1931), p. 1.
- ⁸⁰It was later discussed that having both agencies would overlap the efforts to provide for the needy in Las Vegas, and that there was some conflict that might have been engendered between the two groups.
- ⁸¹*Review-Journal* (16 October 1931), pp. 1-2.
- ⁸²*Ibid.* (20 October 1931), p. 8; (16 October 1931), pp. 1-2.
- ⁸³*Ibid.* (21 November 1931), sec. I, p. 2.
- ⁸⁴*Ibid.* (21 October 1931), p. 1; (24 October 1931), p. 1; (11 November 1931), p. 1; (16 November 1931), p. 8.
- ⁸⁵*Ibid.* (1 January 1932), p. 6.
- ⁸⁶*Ibid.* (2 November 1931), p. 10.
- ⁸⁷*Ibid.* (28 November 1931), p. 8; (27 November 1931), p. 1; (26 November 1931), p. 6; (26 November 1931), p. 1.
- ⁸⁸*Ibid.* (19 December 1931), p. 1.
- ⁸⁹*Ibid.* (4 February 1932), p. 5; (6 April 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹⁰*Ibid.* (9 April 1932), p. 1; Stevens, *Hoover Dam*, 252; *Review-Journal* (2 June 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹¹*Review-Journal* (2 June 1932), p. 1; (7 June 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹²*Ibid.* (6 October 1932), p. 1; (11 October 1932), p. 1; (22 October 1932), p. 6.
- ⁹³*Ibid.* (11 November 1932), p. 2; (15 November 1932), p. 6; (16 November 1932), p. 2; (17 November 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹⁴*Ibid.* (17 November 1932), p. 1; (19 November 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹⁵*Ibid.* (23 November 1932), p. 5; (6 December 1932), p. 2; (13 December 1932), p. 1; (14 December 1932), p. 1.
- ⁹⁶*Ibid.* (23 December 1932), p. 2.
- ⁹⁷*Ibid.* (12 March 1932), p. 1; (23 November 1932), p. 1; (10 January 1933), pp. 1, 4.
- ⁹⁸*Ibid.* (12 January 1933), p. 8; (23 January 1933), p. 1; (2 February 1933), p. 2; (13 February 1933), p. 4.
- ⁹⁹*Ibid.* (16 February 1933), p. 6.
- ¹⁰⁰Lynnette Curtis, "Report: Nevada Has Highest Percentage of Homeless in U.S.", *Review-Journal* (11 January 2007), http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2007/Jan-11-Thu-2007/11910691.html (accessed 28 April 2008).
- ¹⁰¹Kurt Borchard, *The Word on the Street: Homeless Men in Las Vegas* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005). For examples of how the current homeless situation relates to what I have documented for the early 1930s, see pages xxiii, 6, 8, 19-27, 81, and 130.

¹⁰²John L. Smith, "'Best' People Often Found Helping Others," *Review-Journal*, 2003, no date, <http://www.reviewjournal.com/bestoflv/2003/smith.jsp> (accessed 14 September 2009); Lynnette Curtis, "Jolly Quilters," *Review-Journal*, 6 November 2006, http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2006/Nov-06Mon-2006/news/10577644.html (accessed 23 April 2008); Jane Ann Morrison, "Let's Not Forget 17,000 Kids Counting on Salvation Army's Angel Tree," *Review-Journal*, 10 November 2005, http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2005/Nov-10Thu-2005/news/4235396.html (accessed 9 June 2007); Molly Ball, "Lots To Be Thankful For," *Review-Journal*, 24 November 2006, http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2006/Nov-24Fri-2006/news/11029252.html (accessed 24 April 2008).

¹⁰³See Borchard, *Word on the Street*, 27.

¹⁰⁴Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*, 293.

¹⁰⁵*Review-Journal* (3 December 1930), p. 8.