

World War II Era Residential Housing in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada (1940–1945)



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Prepared for:

The city of Las Vegas Development Services Center
and Historic Preservation Commission

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The archival research and windshield survey of historic properties that is the subject of this historic context on World War II era residential housing in the city of Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada has been financed in whole or part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. 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 U.S. Department of the Interior or the State Historic Preservation Office. This program receives federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Chief, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street, NW (2740), Washington, D.C. 20005.

ABSTRACT AND MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Report Title	World War II Era Residential Housing in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada (1940–1945)
Agencies Involved	The city of Las Vegas (city)
LSD Project No.	145648
Report Date	June 22, 2015
Project Description	The city of Las Vegas Development Services Center requested that Logan Simpson prepare a comprehensive historic context for neighborhoods and subdivisions constructed in suburban Las Vegas during the World War II (WWII) era. The context will serve as a planning tool to be used by the Department of Planning, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as part of their continued effort to document and evaluate the eligibility of neighborhoods within the city for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
Project Location	The incorporated limits of the city of Las Vegas comprise the geographical area covered by the context.
Methods	Archival research and a windshield survey of representative historic properties

Summary

At the request of the city of Las Vegas Development Services Center, Logan Simpson prepared a comprehensive historic context for neighborhoods and subdivisions constructed in suburban Las Vegas during the WWII era (1940–1945).

Residential subdivision development in the United States (U.S.) was generally limited during the period between 1940 and 1945 due to a lack of available funding as well as construction materials reserved for military use, as the Federal government devoted resources to the war effort. Prior to the U.S. housing crisis during WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) under the legislative umbrella of the 1934 National Housing Act (NHA). The agency’s role was to provide an incentive for private developers to construct new subdivisions. Rather than provide loans or subsidies for housing, the FHA provided insurance on two types of mortgage loans—those for the repair, remodeling, and redecorating of existing structures (as identified in Title I of the NHA) and those for the construction of new buildings (as identified in Title II). In 1938, an amendment to Title II of the act was passed in order to encourage the development of “small homes.” The FHA allowed for insurance on mortgages up to 90 percent of the property value for owner-occupied homes, whereas the former Title II guidelines limited insurance to 80 percent. This new Title II program was limited to maximum loan amounts of \$5,400 but it served as a great stimulus to the housing construction sector.

World War II (WWII) began in Europe in 1939 and the U.S. began ramping up production of materials to support allied forces in 1940. Certain areas within the country, such as Las Vegas, became centers for war time production creating population booms and concomitant housing shortages. One of the federal responses to this crisis was enactment of the Title VI amendment to the NHA in 1941. This amendment authorized the FHA to insure mortgages up to 90 percent of the home value on one- to four-unit dwellings for both owner-occupied and builder-owned properties in locations defined as “critical defense areas.” Las Vegas was designated a critical defense area in June 1941 which facilitated the development of new residential subdivisions.

Three Title VI neighborhoods have been previously identified through survey in the city and include the Huntridge, Biltmore, and Mayfair Neighborhoods. The Vega Verde subdivision was also previously identified as a FHA Title II development by the city during preparation of a NRHP nomination for the John S. Park Neighborhood. Logan Simpson identified four additional neighborhoods through archival research, all of which are examples of “built-on-demand” or custom subdivisions developed by private investors during the WWII era. These neighborhoods include the Beckley Subdivision (1941), Sebec Acres (1941), Eastland Heights (1942), and Charleston Square (1945).

This historical overview places custom neighborhoods and Title II and Title VI developments within Las Vegas into a broader local, state, and national context of war-time housing development; examines how race-based housing restrictions impacted African Americans in Las Vegas; and defines the architectural styles and physical infrastructure associated with residential WWII era developments. Property registration requirements for individual properties including single-family and multi-family dwellings and the subdivisions as a whole follow the historic contexts in this document. The overview also identifies geographical boundaries and provides a summary of identification and evaluation methods and references consulted.

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Las Vegas requested that Logan Simpson prepare a comprehensive historic context for neighborhoods and subdivisions constructed in suburban Las Vegas during the World War II (WWII) era. The context will serve as a planning tool to be used by the Department of Planning, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as part of their continued effort to document and evaluate the eligibility of neighborhoods within the city for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

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World War II (WWII) began in Europe in 1939 and the U.S. began ramping up production of materials to support allied forces in 1940. Certain areas within the country, such as Las Vegas, became centers for war time production creating population booms and concomitant housing shortages. One of the federal responses to this crisis was enactment of the Title VI amendment to the NHA in 1941. This amendment authorized the FHA to insure mortgages up to 90 percent of the home value on one- to four-unit dwellings for both owner-occupied and builder-owned properties in locations defined as “critical defense areas.” Las Vegas was designated a critical defense area in June 1941 which facilitated the development of new residential subdivisions.

Three Title VI neighborhoods have been previously identified through survey in the city and include the Huntridge, Biltmore, and Mayfair Neighborhoods. The Vega Verde subdivision was also previously identified as a FHA Title II development by the city during preparation of a NRHP nomination for the John S. Park Neighborhood. Logan Simpson identified four additional neighborhoods through archival research. These neighborhoods include the Beckley Subdivision (1941), Sebec Acres (1941), Eastland Heights (1942), and Charleston Square (1945). With the exception of the Charleston Square Neighborhood, which was initially developed to qualify for FHA Title II financing, the remaining neighborhoods are examples of “built-on-demand” or custom subdivisions developed by private investors during the WWII era. Charleston Square was converted to a custom subdivision as the costs for housing construction outpaced the guidelines set forth by the FHA. The locations of these subdivisions are shown on Figure 1.

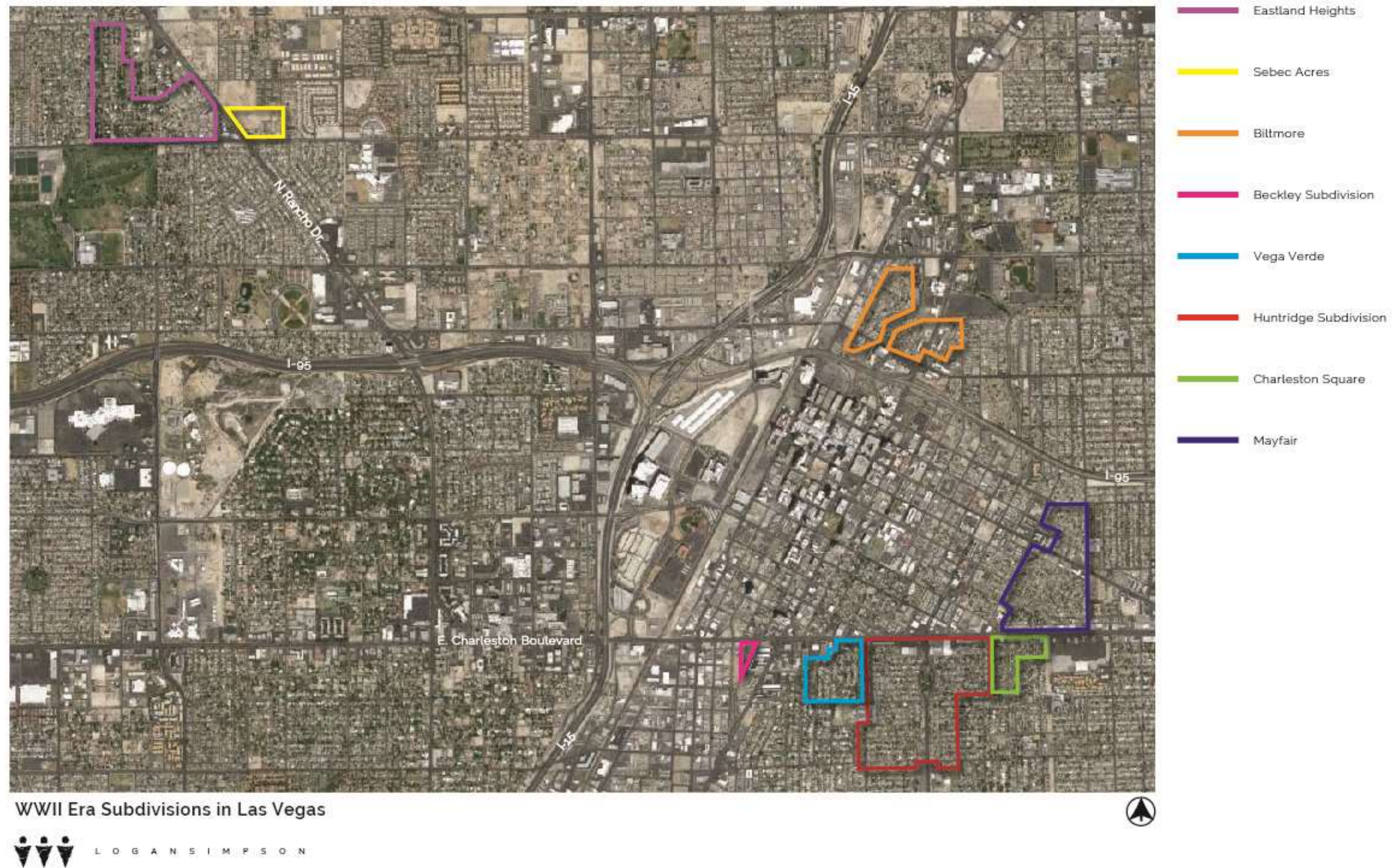


Figure 1. Subdivisions within the city of Las Vegas that were constructed during the WWII era. The subdivision boundaries depicted on this map conform to the historic plat boundaries, which are in some cases slightly different than the boundaries currently recognized by the Clark County Assessor.

This document includes three historic contexts which are used to frame the development of custom neighborhoods and Title II and Title VI developments within Las Vegas during the WWII era. These include:

- 1) Growth of Las Vegas and WWII-era Subdivision Development, which examines the factors which led to population growth in Las Vegas during the war and the resultant response of the government and private developers in supplying housing for the influx of people.
- 2) Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII, which discusses the evolution of concepts of race in Las Vegas and how this evolution impacted housing opportunities for persons of color; and
- 3) Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII – this context examines the type of residential architectural styles which developed at the national level due to broad thematic trends and how these styles manifested in Las Vegas.

Property registration requirements for individual properties including single-family and multi-family dwellings and the subdivisions as a whole follow the historic contexts. Lastly, the report identifies geographical boundaries and provides a summary of identification and evaluation methods and references consulted as part of this project.

SECTION I: RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

According to urbanist Marc Weiss, the elements of what have been ascribed to post-war suburbanization in the U.S. were actually in place before the beginning of WWII. The development of new transportation methods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries facilitated suburbanization, as first railroads—followed by streetcars and automobiles—made transit between city centers and peripheral areas possible (Ames and McClelland 2002). These new peripheral areas could be subdivided to create lower density, single family residences with lawns and green spaces (Ames and McClelland 2002). In the early years of subdivision planning, developers platted streets and individual lots and made limited infrastructure improvements; the task of home building, however, was left to the buyer (Ames and McClelland 2002). As there was no requirement to construct houses within a certain time frame, developers would purchase multiple lots within a subdivision for speculative purposes—a practice that Weiss (1989) argues not only increased real estate prices, but also left areas within neighborhoods vacant.

By the 1920s, many residential developers began to consider the potential for additional revenue through the direct construction of homes within their subdivisions. While initially this movement began with developers constructing model homes, a new era of community building soon dawned in which developers platted large subdivisions, made infrastructure improvements such as streets, sewer systems, and utilities, and collaborated with architects, landscape architects, and engineers to design houses, plan green space and parks, and construct community schools and churches (Ames and McClelland 2002). These “community builders” pressed for uniformity through deed restrictions and zoning (Weiss 1989). As Commerce Secretary in 1920, Herbert Hoover created the Division of Building and Housing within the National Bureau of Standards in an attempt to bring uniformity to suburban development. Appointed under the Division of Building and Housing, in 1921 this committee recommended the establishment of zoning acts which could be

adopted at the local level to regulate the development of lands and buildings (Knack et.al. 1996). Small-scale land developers pushed back against such regulations, however, and a general outcry against the potential power of local zoning boards ensued throughout the U.S. (Knack et.al 1996; Weiss 1989).

In addition to speculative land purchases, the lack of uniformity in subdivision planning and home building practices and the types of available mortgage financing in the early twentieth century also created instability in the American housing industry (Ames and McClelland 2002). Mortgage financing in the decades leading up to the Great Depression consisted primarily of high-interest, short term loans, with many states placing maximum first mortgage loan-to-property value ratios between 50 and 60 percent. These first mortgages had short terms—typically three years—with monthly interest-only payments and a balloon payment due at the end of the term. As most borrowers could not afford to pay the balance due at the end of this period, they relied on the opportunity to refinance their mortgages. Also, as many buyers did not have the funds to cover the additional 40 to 50 percent of the property values required for purchase, they often took on second and third mortgages with interest rates as high as 18 to 20 percent (Semer et.al. 1985; White 2009). Following the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the financial reserves of savings and loan and broader mortgage financing companies dwindled, forcing these companies—when at all possible—to call in their mortgage debts. With unemployment rising in the depressed U.S. economy, many homeowners were unable to meet their mortgage obligations and foreclosures skyrocketed (Mason 1980).

The Response of the Federal Government to the Nation's Housing Crisis

During the Great Depression, Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought to improve the U.S. housing crisis by enacting policies designed to spur individual homeownership and reduce the increasing number of home foreclosures. During his presidency (1929–1933), Hoover worked with industry experts to explore policy changes at the federal level which would stimulate private lending. These changes, involving federal assistance and regulation of residential housing financing were subsequently supported by President Roosevelt and incorporated into his New Deal legislation, thereby dramatically altering development of American housing for the remainder of the twentieth century.

Hoover is credited as the first U.S. President to promote homeownership as an essential American value; however, he took a relatively moderate approach to intervention into the depressed housing market, deferring to private industry to solve the problem (Hoover Institute Archives 1998; Semer et.al. 1985). In 1930, Hoover called for a Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership to study the nation's housing issues (Rome 2001). The following year more than 540 industry professionals volunteered to participate in the conference and broke out into 31 different committees. Twenty-five of the committees were fact-finding in nature and were charged with preparing reports and recommendations on a range of topics—from city planning and zoning to finance and home management. The six additional committees served a coordination function and drew from each of the 25 fact-finding committees' recommendations to develop seven broadly themed reports on technological development, legislation and administration, standards and objectives, research, organizations programs, and education and service (Hoover Institute Archives 1998). The following year, a general conference was held in Washington, D.C., in which more than 3,600 people were invited by the President to review the reports and recommendations of the 31 different committees. The results of this second conference were published in eleven volumes which included: "(1) planning for residential districts,

(2) home finance and taxation, (3) slums, large-scale housing and decentralization, (4) home ownership, income and types of dwellings, (5) house design construction and equipment, (6) negro housing, (7) farm and village housing, (8) housing and the community, home repair remodeling, (9) household management and kitchens, (10) home making, home furnishing and information services, and (11) housing objectives and programs” (Gries and Ford 1932). Many of the suggestions put forth in these volumes were later incorporated into President Roosevelt’s New Deal housing legislation.

The conference also resulted in the enactment of the Federal Home Loan Bank Act of 1932, which operationalized President Hoover’s vision of a system of banks that would function in a similar nature to the modern Federal Reserve. With the support of the Finance and Taxation committee, he introduced the proposed legislation at the second conference of 3,600 attendees. The proposal received unanimous support, thereby ensuring its eventual passage in Congress. In addition to providing low interest loans to mortgage lenders, the legislation created a system of reserve banks under the aegis of the new Federal Home Loan Bank Board which was authorized to lend up to \$125,000,000 to savings and loan companies as well as home financing companies. Although intended to lower the cost of homeownership, the Act and associated Federal Home Loan Bank Board ultimately failed to create any lasting changes to the rapidly declining real estate market, and by 1933, more than 1.5 million homes in the U.S. had either been foreclosed upon or were in default (pre-foreclosure) (Mason 1981; 1982:6).

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933 he sought to reduce the growing number of home foreclosures through providing additional resources to the existing Home Owner’s Loan Corporation (HOLC), an agency created by congressional legislation prior to his presidency in 1933. The HOLC, housed under the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, raised money through the sale of bonds and provided for the refinancing of short term mortgages with fixed rate loans at 3 percent interest, amortized over longer periods of time than traditional loans (Mason 1982). The program proved very successful, and by 1934, the agency had assisted in the refinance of nearly 500,000 home mortgages with another 500,000 in progress (Mason 1982).

Establishment of the NHA and Creation of the FHA

Despite the impressive lending statistics achieved by the HOLC, the passage of the NHA on June 27, 1934 would cast a much broader and lasting impact upon the American housing sector in terms of financing guidelines as well as subdivision planning and home building practice. In the year preceding the passage of the NHA, the number of new homes constructed in the United States had fallen to 93,000 units, roughly one-tenth the number constructed in 1925 during the peak of the nation’s housing boom. The lack of available financing not only resulted in a decline in housing starts, but also a lack of funds for home improvements. Resulting declines in construction activity had a drastic impact upon construction workers as well as those employed in the construction supply trades. President Roosevelt’s push for the passage of housing legislation thus satisfied his short term goal of job creation while achieving the long term goal of stabilizing the housing finance industry (Semer et.al. 1985).

When the NHA passed in 1934, its stated purpose was “to encourage improvement in housing standards and conditions and to provide a system of mutual mortgage insurance” (Coleman 1944:265). In order to carry out this directive, the legislation established the FHA. The FHA sought to stimulate the housing market by

offering loan insurance to lenders on construction and purchase loans, as well as short term home improvement loans. The insurance was to provide the lender confidence that they would be able to recapture a significant portion of their investment if a borrower defaulted on his/her mortgage obligation. This system of mortgage insurance was designed to be self-sustaining, supported by mortgage insurance premiums charged on each loan (Semer et.al. 1985). The agency also sought to standardize lending requirements as well as home construction and neighborhood development standards in order to ensure the stability of home values and the likelihood that buyers would repay their debts. The establishment of mortgage insurance and the standardization of lending requirements for the first time resulted in lending across state lines, as financial institutions now had the assurance that loans made out of state would have commensurate terms with those loans made locally (Semer et.al. 1985).

The headquarters of the FHA was located in Washington, D.C. As it was soon recognized that the administration would need a presence at the local level, the country was divided into 12 regions—each under the management of a regional director—and at least one underwriting office was established within each state. States of a larger size and/or population were typically assigned more than one field office. The State of New York, for example, had three field offices located in Albany, Buffalo, and New York City, while the less populated state of Nevada had one office, located in Reno (Federal Housing Administration 1934). As the program grew, so too did the number of field offices, so that by end of the decade there were FHA offices in 103 cities throughout the U.S. Nevada continued to be served by one office in Reno, however (Federal Housing Administration 1940).

Title I and Title II of the NHA

The imperative of the FHA was to spur growth in the beleaguered construction and home financing industries. In order to stimulate this growth, the agency was endowed with the capital to provide mortgage insurance that would, in effect, protect mortgage lenders against potential losses from foreclosure. Whereas Title I of the act provided insurance on home improvement loans, Title II enabled the agency to provide mortgage insurance for the construction of new single- and multi-family dwellings (Weintraub and Tough 1942). Although the role of the FHA was strictly to insure mortgages and no direct funding was provided, lenders were more willing to extend mortgage credit to new customers with a federal loan guarantee (Weintraub and Tough 1942). The Title I program guaranteed home improvement loans on single family residences up to \$2,500 on 3-year loan terms and up to \$10,000 on multi-family homes with a 7-year term. In comparison, Section 203 of the Title II program insured mortgage loan amounts up to \$16,000 at 80 percent loan-to-value over a 20-year period (United States Congress Senate Committee on Banking and Currency 1948). The FHA was also able to offer “forward commitments” to builders of subdivisions. These commitments assured developers that, with approved subdivision planning, mortgage financing would be available for the buyers of the homes they constructed (Mason 1980). Section 207 of the Title II program insured mortgages on rental housing or group housing projects for low-income persons developed and operated by federal, state, or private limited dividend corporations (Semer et.al 1985). The Section 207 rental housing program, however, never represented a large portion of the FHA program. In 1935, the first full year of the agency’s operation, the FHA provided insurance on roughly \$319,000,000 of mortgage debt. This number was broken down into roughly \$223,000,000 in Title I loans, \$93,000,000 in Section 203 Title II loans, and \$2,000,000 in Section 207 Title II Loans (Federal Housing Administration 1940). While this figure

of \$319,000,000 may seem impressive, this amount represented just 6 percent of the total mortgage market (Grebler 1953). As the program continued to grow in the 1930s, the amount of mortgages insured under the Title II Section 203 program began to far surpass those insured under either the Title I or Title II Section 207 programs, reaching roughly \$434,000,000 in 1937, as compared to \$10,000,000 for Section 207 loans and \$60,000,000 for Title I loans (Federal Housing Administration 1940).

In 1938, Congress amended the Title II Section 203 program to include a “small-home” program to stimulate lending for moderately priced housing. The “small-home” program provided insurance on single-family residences up to a \$5,400 loan amount and a 90 percent loan-to-property value ratio on newly constructed housing, while the original Title II insurance continued to provide insurance on loan amounts up to \$16,000 at 80 percent loan-to-property value ratio. Additionally, the new guidelines extended the maximum loan term to 25 years and relaxed credit rating evaluations for borrowers (Sies and Silver 1996; United States Congress Senate Committee on Banking and Currency 1948). With the easing of these guidelines the amount of FHA insured loans, as a percentage of the total market, markedly increased. In 1937, FHA insured loans totaled roughly 18 percent of all mortgage loans. The following year, the percentage of FHA loans rose to 30 percent and remained at roughly 35 percent in the years leading into the U.S. entry into WWII (Grebler 1953). The popularity of the 1938 amendments as a segment of the Title II Section 203 program is also demonstrated by the increase in the number of loans with longer mortgage terms and higher loan-to-value ratios. In 1938, roughly 30 percent of FHA mortgage-insured loans adopted the new 25-year term; by 1940, this percentage had increased to 64 percent. Additionally, roughly 67 percent of FHA insured Title II mortgages were in the 86 to 90 percent loan-to-value ratio with only 8 percent at less than 76 percent loan-to-value in that year. Because the new FHA 90 percent loan-to-value ratio allowance was restricted to new home construction, the balance of FHA financing as a whole shifted towards new construction. In 1936, new home financing represented just 40 percent of the total mortgage loans insured by FHA. By 1940, however, the percentage of insured mortgages on new home construction had increased to 80 percent. In the state of Nevada, for example, the number of new homes insured by the FHA totaled 222, while the number of existing homes insured totaled just 23 (Federal Housing Administration 1940). Although the FHA did not provide insurance for all home loans, the standards it established with regard to mortgage terms, subdivision planning, and residential construction influenced the entire housing industry.

Design Standards of the FHA's Land Planning Division

In addition to developing mortgage underwriting guidelines, the FHA also created subdivision planning and home construction guidelines to ensure sound economic investments. Initially, this task was relegated to an understaffed technical department; however, following the 1938 amendment to the NHA, the FHA created a formal Land Planning Division to which Seward H. Mott was appointed director (Stabile 2000). Interestingly, the antecedents to the concepts put forth by the FHA Land Planning Division can be found in reports authored by the City Planning and Zoning, Subdivision Layout, Utilities for House, and Landscape and Planning and Planning Committees organized as part of President Hoover's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership. In 1932, these committees collectively published a volume entitled “Planning for Residential Districts,” which emphasized the importance of city planning and called for municipal oversight of subdivision development, as well as an understanding of the relationship between the individual home and the broader community (Gries and Ford 1932). Reports contained within the volume provided detailed

guidance on subdivision design including site planning, layout in terms of curved street patterns and housing, and the need for schools, parks, libraries, and churches in order to avoid what they referred to as the “hasty rectangular,” or gridiron pattern subdivision. These suggested standards formed the basis for later FHA guidelines which emphasized the importance of curvilinear street layouts, open space, and uniformity in housing lots and home setbacks (Gries and Ford 1932; Federal Housing Administration 1938).

The new 1938 Land Planning Division of the FHA was headquartered in Washington D.C. with field offices located in the state FHA underwriting offices (Stabile 2000). The headquarters of the Land Planning Division issued technical bulletins outlining “desirable standards.” One such bulletin published in 1938 and entitled “Planning Profitable Neighborhoods,” outlined guidelines for zoning, infrastructure development, and planning in relationship to accessibility, site topography, street layout, lot size, and building placement (Federal Housing Administration 1938). The guidelines emphasized the need to eliminate sharp corners and dangerous intersections. Additionally, the incorporation of long blocks was promoted in order to avoid superfluous streets. As was recommended in the 1932 “Planning for Residential Districts” report which came out of President Hoover’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, these standards resulted in the promotion of curvilinear rather than rectilinear grid subdivisions. The ubiquity of automobile ownership among suburban households was also codified with the FHA’s favor of wider lot size to accommodate on-site parking (Federal Housing Administration 1938; Ames and McClelland 2002).

The FHA’s regulations were premised on the belief that developers needed to look at their subdivisions as cohesive communities rather than simply individual lots for sale and development (Stabile 2000; Weiss 1989). This type of development required a more comprehensive and long-term approach to neighborhood planning that went beyond subdividing land and providing basic infrastructure, as had often been the case with many small-scale developers in the years before the Great Depression. With the prompting of the FHA, the concept of “community planning” began to take hold in the broader residential development market (Ames and McClelland 2002).

FHA oversight of subdivision planning was implemented at the state field office level. Consultants in the planning office were required to approve all development plans for raw, undeveloped land. The developer was able to get pre-commitments for guarantees of loan insurance for home buyers by submitting an application with the subdivision plan to a mortgage lender. The lender then forwarded the application to the state/local FHA office. Architects, landscape architects, and engineers served as in-house FHA consultants and could make recommendations for alterations to a submitted plan in order to achieve approval (Stabile 2000). Upon approval, the FHA set the appraised value of the homes within the subdivision and gave the mortgage lender notice that credit-eligible buyers could qualify for FHA insurance. FHA consultants also inspected homes upon their completion to ensure they met the agency’s building requirements (Stabile 2000).

The FHA approval process inherently favored large-scale developers who had the staff to work through the necessary steps and could benefit from larger economies of scale. Urbanist Marc Weiss also notes that the FHA guidelines put second-rate developers “...out of business by imposing publicly advertised development standards and by denying mortgage insurance on properties located in subdivisions that failed to meet these

standards” (Weiss 1989:150). The FHA subdivision planning principles became de facto industry standards so that even those builders who developed higher-end subdivisions, which exceeded the maximum allowable loan amounts to qualify for FHA insurance, followed them as a matter of practice.

As part of the drive to preserve the long term stability of the community—and in turn property values—the FHA also endorsed deed restrictions/covenants to restrict objectionable changes to properties as well as to prohibit “undesirable” residents which included persons of “lower classes” and those classified as minorities (McGann 2013). The Home Owner’s Loan Corporation had previously established “residential security maps” for 239 locations in the U.S. in which areas of lower income and higher minority resident populations were coded red to indicate their “instability.” The FHA perpetuated this policy, which was later termed “redlining.” Borrowers living in these redlined areas were nearly universally unable to qualify for FHA-insured mortgages—which as time progressed—would create a de facto form of housing segregation (Highsmith 2009; Squires 1992).

Federally Funded Defense Housing Programs

WWII began in Europe in 1939, and by mid-1940, the U.S. was in full-scale production of arms and supplies for allied forces as well as in the process of increasing its own military defense capabilities. Certain areas of the country, particularly in the west, became loci for military activities and supply production, drawing large numbers of workers from other regions of the country. It is estimated that 8 million Americans, largely from rural states and older industrial areas, relocated to new areas of military production to the west of the Mississippi River during the war era (Malone and Etulain 1989). San Francisco, San Diego, and Los Angeles were already the sites of naval bases and became centers of shipbuilding with San Francisco drawing more than 500,000 workers alone. Many military industrial companies also located in other western cities such as Denver where the company Remington Rand employed roughly 20,000 people in its munitions factory, in Phoenix where the Goodyear Aircraft, AiResearch, and Alcoa companies drew more than 13,000 workers who constructed airplane parts and manufactured aluminum products, and the Las Vegas area, where Basic Magnesium employed 15,000 persons in the construction and operation of its magnesium processing factory (Luckingham 1989; Malone and Etulain 1989). Military bases and military training installations also became dominant features in the southwest where the government could take advantage of the predominantly clear weather and large existing tracts of open federal land (Hirsch and Mohl 1993).

The western cities which became centers of military development grappled with having sufficient housing for workers. Many cities conducted “share-your-home” campaigns, but housing capacity soon reached its limits (Luckingham 1989). A number of federal agencies were given funding to help provide housing in these defense areas, the first of which was the United States Housing Authority. Authorized in June 1940, the “Navy Speed-up Bill” allowed the Housing Authority to assist the War and Navy Departments in developing housing, either through technical assistance or the direct construction of homes. Recognizing the immense undertaking this level of housing development would require, the following month, the Council on National Defense created the office of Defense Housing Coordinator to coordinate between the various federal agencies involved in defense housing and evaluate the need for additional housing development. Before a community could be deemed in need of government funded housing, a survey was conducted to estimate the number of workers who were required to work in the military related industries; the existing number of vacant

rooms/dwellings available for rent; and the capacity of the private industry to meet any gaps in housing (Veenstra 1941).

In August 1940, President Roosevelt authorized emergency funding for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to finance the construction of defense housing, with loans issued by the corporation to be insured by the FHA (Veenstra 1941). In October of that year, Roosevelt established the Defense Homes Corporation to spur residential construction in defense areas where private development was not keeping up with demand. Also in October, Congress passed the Lanham Act—named for bill sponsor Representative Fritz Lanham—which authorized the expenditure of \$150,000,000 disbursed through a number of Federal agencies to alleviate the war-time housing shortage through the construction of rental housing (Veenstra 1941; Wendt 1962). Housing built under the Lanham Act was limited to enlisted men and defense industry workers and their families. As the funds for construction were distributed to a number of government agencies, the design, quality, and speed of construction varied greatly between different developments (Peterson 2013).

There was considerable concern on the part of private developers and builders in the housing industry that housing directly constructed by government agencies would negatively impact the private housing industry (Mason 1982). In response, the Office of the Defense Housing Coordinator specifically noted that government funded housing would only be constructed when the private sector could not meet local needs, or when private development was not economically feasible. For example, it was argued that areas comprised predominantly of low-wage defense workers would need government funded housing as these developments targeted for low-income residents would not be profitable for private developers (Veenstra 1941). Furthermore, the Defense Housing Coordinator argued, the Lanham Act developments were restricted to rental housing and would therefore not impact the single family housing market.

Initial construction under the Lanham Act focused on permanent housing; however, as construction material restrictions progressed, and to allay continued private market concern over the effects of public housing on the real estate industry, the construction shifted to temporary “demountable” housing which could be removed after the war’s conclusion (Doan 1997). Contrary to private developers’ fears, during the period between 1940 and 1941 the actual level of government constructed housing projects, broadly enmeshed in bureaucracy, represented only 12 percent of the broader housing market (Mason 1982). Despite this low percentage, interest groups, such as the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and private developers, continued to call upon the federal government to stimulate the private housing sector which came about through the passage of the Title VI amendment to the NHA.

Title VI Amendment to the NHA (1941)

In the hopes of stimulating the development of low cost defense housing by the private market, President Roosevelt signed the Title VI amendment to the NHA on March 26, 1941, creating the Section 603 housing program (Veenstra 1941). This measure stipulated that the FHA would provide mortgage insurance for the construction of homes in locations that were classified as “critical defense areas,” which included growing western cities such as Denver, Phoenix, Oakland, and Las Vegas. In total, 146 such defense housing areas

were designated in 41 states throughout the country and the number of locations was increased to 270 by September 1941 (Bunyak, Simmons and Simmons 2011; Sies and Silver 1996).

The maximum allowable cost for Section 603 housing ranged from \$4,000 for a single-family dwelling to \$10,500 for a four-unit dwelling, or roughly \$64,380 to \$168,999 today based on inflation (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). In order to qualify for housing, defense workers were required to demonstrate that they earned less than \$3,000 annually (Sies and Silver 1996). Similar to FHA Title II, Section 203 insurance on small homes, Title VI provided insurance on mortgages up to 90 percent of the value of the home, requiring the purchaser to make a 10 percent down payment. A subsequent modification came about through the Title VI guidelines which allowed buyers to make installment payments on the down payment amount over a 30-month period which eased the initial investment requirement (Weintraub and Tough 1942).

Recognizing that many war workers would need to rent homes, rather than purchase them, Title VI insurance was also extended to mortgages on one- to four-family rental properties (Weintraub and Tough 1942). The program also differed from Section 203 in that a builder or non-occupant owner could also qualify for the same 90 percent loan-to-value (Federal Housing Administration 1942).

Title VI financing did not prove immediately successful. By the end of 1941, the new program had insured roughly \$13,000,000 in loans which represented only 1 percent of the total FHA mortgage insurance commitments made that year (Federal Housing Administration 1942; Weintraub and Tough 1942). Following the U.S.' entry into WWII, however, the FHA began to shift its focus to defense housing touting "a concerted drive to stimulate that type of privately financed low-cost housing, particularly for rent, which can best meet the housing needs of war workers in the war industry centers" (Federal Housing Administration 1942:8). This public shift in FHA's mission was bolstered by the government's decision in September of 1941 to restrict the disbursement of building materials to designated critical defense areas. Additionally, the materials were reserved only for homes with a sale price of less than \$6,000 (Peterson 2013). The FHA noted that "to qualify for priorities assistance in securing critical materials, a private war housing project must (1) be located within reasonable distance of the designated Defense Housing Critical Areas; (2) suitable for and intended primarily for defense workers within those areas; and (3) offered at a sales price or rental within reach of the defense workers for whom the housing is intended" (Federal Housing Administration 1942:20).

These restrictions in the use of building materials ultimately impacted the number of FHA Title II developments as well as those developments where builders intended owners to purchase homes with "conventional" financing. Conventional loans differed from FHA loans in that they were offered by a bank and not insured by the Federal government. Because the bank took on a greater risk, qualifications for these types of loans were often more strict, requiring borrowers to put down a larger down payment or have a lower debt to income ratio in order to qualify. However, conventional loans did not have the same types of maximum loan amounts as set forth by the FHA and thus often catered to more affluent housing. The materials restrictions set forth by the government on conventionally financed and FHA Title II developments therefore limited the ability of developers to construct them. By 1943, Title II financing had become largely restricted to the refinancing of mortgages on existing housing. Of the total 52,408 homes insured under the Title II program in that year, only 9,186 insured new construction while the remaining 43,222 insured

refinances of existing homes (Federal Housing Administration 1943). Title I financing utilized for home improvements, which had remained fairly consistent in the years leading into the war, also experienced a decline as the emphasis of the FHA shifted to Title VI housing (Figure 2).

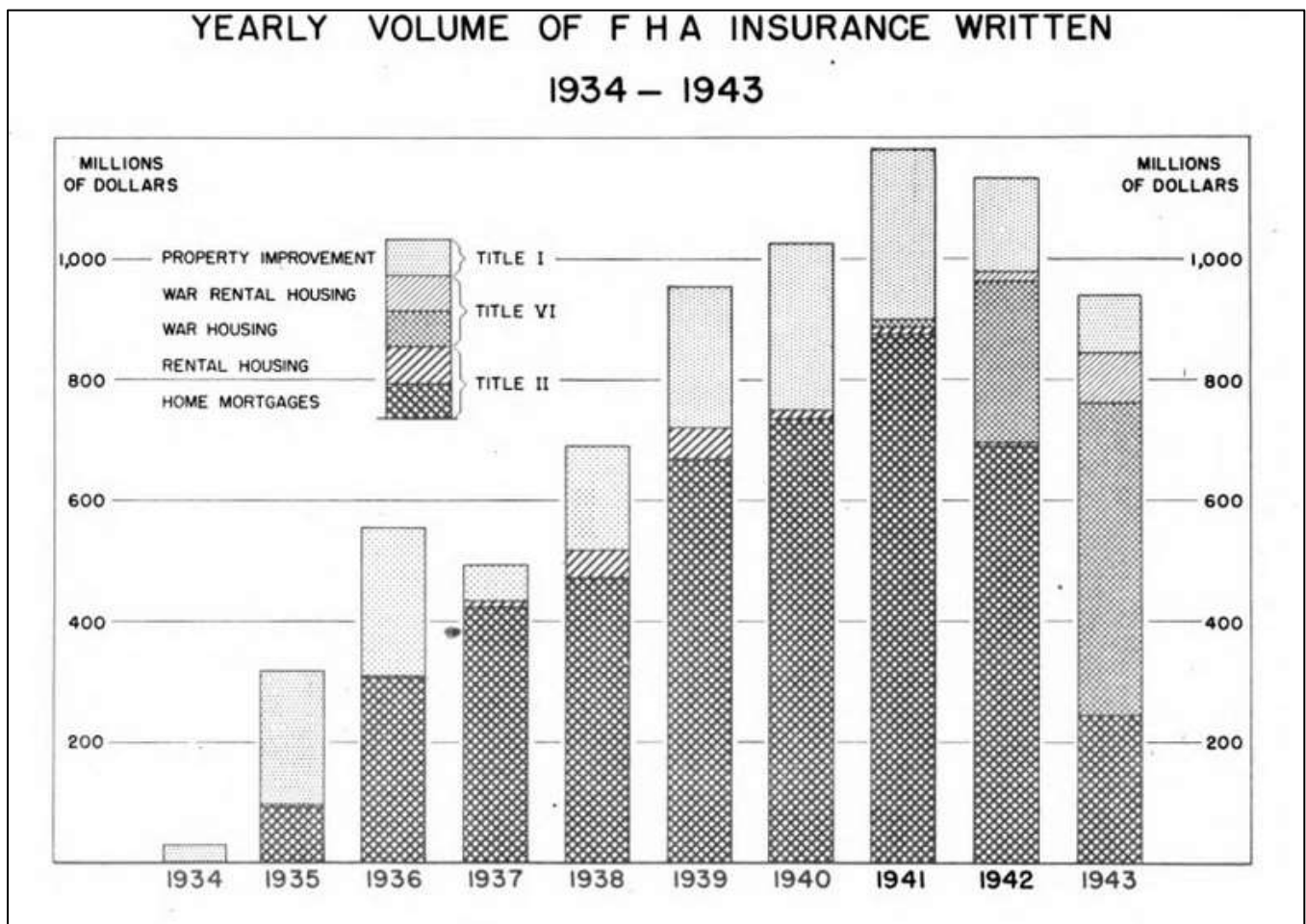


Figure 2. Loan volume by FHA insurance program (Image taken from the *Annual Report of the Federal Housing Administration* published in 1943).

In May 1942, Congress amended Title VI to increase the maximum loan amount for single-family residences under Section 603 to \$5,400 to effectively match the FHA Title II small-home financing limits. Additionally, the revised legislation created Section 608 to stimulate development of large-scale apartment construction for defense housing. In response to these changes, FHA Title VI financing applications began to rapidly increase (Mason 1982; Peterson 2013; Weintraub and Tough 1942). By the close of 1942, FHA Title VI housing represented 33 percent of the total number of FHA mortgages awarded. The following year, Title VI significantly outpaced Title II mortgages, reaching 72 percent of the total mortgages, and it remained the predominant type of FHA insurance issued throughout WWII. In total, the program facilitated the construction of 335,000 one- to four-family dwellings for war workers during the period between 1941 and 1945 (Federal Housing Administration 1945; Hansen 1946).

In October 1944, the Federal government removed restrictions on housing construction materials which set the stage for a dramatic increase in new housing construction (Mason 1982). In order to purchase these homes, many buyers turned to conventional, non-FHA financing and veterans also took advantage of the new home loan programs established by the G.I. Bill. In 1946, Title VI was converted to a veteran's emergency housing program and the FHA was charged to "prescribe procedures for giving WWII veterans and hardship cases priority in the purchase or rental of Title VI housing" (The Congressional Research Service 2004). The following year, Title VI financing was also made available to veterans interested in permanent purchase of government-owned war housing (The Congressional Research Service 2004). The FHA authority to issue insurance on mortgages for new construction under Section 603 expired in 1948 and FHA commitments under Section 608 expired in 1950 (Federal Housing Administration 1952).

Serviceman's Readjustment Act (1944)

On June 22, 1944, President Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which became known as the G.I. Bill of Rights or "G.I. Bill." The primary purpose of the bill, which consisted of five titles (e.g., Titles I–V), was to assist returning WWII veterans in the readjustment to civilian life by providing them with a range of government sponsored benefits. One of the titles—Title III—enabled veterans to secure government "loans for aid in purchasing or constructing homes and in purchasing farms or business property" (Social Security Administration 1944). Veterans were not required to pay a premium for these loans, which were overseen by the Veteran's Administration (VA) and needed to be applied for within two years of being discharged from the armed forces (Mitchell 1985). Unlike FHA financing, the new VA financing was not a form of insurance but an actual guarantee from the federal government to the lender providing the financing. Returning veterans could qualify for a guarantee of 50 percent of a loan amount, up to a cap of \$2,000; or, if the veteran already held a first mortgage through a government agency, the bill allowed him or her to apply for a second mortgage to be guaranteed by the government, for up to an additional 20 percent loan-to-value, not to exceed \$2,000. This effectively meant that if a borrower was receiving 80 percent loan-to-value financing on his or her first mortgage through FHA approved financing, he or she could apply for a second mortgage to cover the remaining 20 percent of the value, guaranteed by the Administrator of Veterans Affairs, assuming the second mortgage did not exceed \$2,000.

The act further stipulated that the purchase price could not exceed the appraised value of the property (Social Security Administration 1944). The inflation of materials and labor occurring after the conclusion of the war problematically drove the value of construction costs higher than could be insured by FHA; this meant that returning veterans could not qualify for the new housing that was being constructed to meet the growing need (Mitchell 1985). The housing market also continued to be hampered by the lack of available building materials so that in cases where veterans were able to obtain credit, there was not sufficient housing stock for them to buy new homes.

In 1945, Congressional hearings regarding the Title III loan program resulted in the recommendation that the appraised value of a house should be based upon current market conditions rather than "reasonable normal value" assigned by the FHA. Congress also passed Public Law 268 in that year, amending the appraisal process and increasing the maximum first mortgage loan amount from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Additionally, 25-year loan terms were made available and the eligibility period for qualifying for the financing was increased

from 2 years to 10 years after discharge (U.S. President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions 1985). Despite these changes to the Title III program, housing production in 1945 continued to remain sluggish, (amounting to roughly 226,000 units) mainly due to continued shortages in building materials (United States Bureau of the Census 1949). With return of servicemen and women from overseas, the housing situation in many cities reached crisis proportion.

In 1946, the Veteran's Emergency Housing Act was passed to encourage construction projects for low-to-medium priced housing (Remington 1947). Initially, the post-war developments remained on a small scale. As materials became increasingly available, developers began to incorporate FHA guidelines into an "economies of scale" assembly line approach to construction in order to efficiently construct large scale neighborhoods containing hundreds of affordably priced homes (Finbraaten 2003). In 1946, with the easing of both construction materials and credit, more than 670,000 housing units were constructed in cities across the U.S. (U.S. President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions 1985).

SECTION II: STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Context 1: Growth of Las Vegas and WWII-era Subdivision Development

The natural geography of Las Vegas with its fertile plains and many springs attracted indigenous peoples such as the Paiute more than a millennium before Euro-American settlement of the area (Moehring and Green 2005). The first Euro-American attempt to settle the Las Vegas Valley occurred in 1855 when a group of Mormons established a small fort and mission in the area as part of the Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints' broader initiative to settle lands in the desert southwest. This mission, however, was ultimately abandoned due to disagreements between the settlers and limited opportunities to sustain agriculture (Moehring and Green 2005). In 1865, the remaining infrastructure of the settlement was acquired by Octavius Decatur Gass, who re-established "Las Vegas Rancho" as a commercial hub along the Old Spanish Trail from which to supply goods to mining camps in the area. After Gass defaulted on debts in 1882, the Rancho was acquired by Archibald and Helen Stewart. Although Archibald died soon thereafter, Helen continued to operate the ranch until 1902 when she sold the property to Montana Senator William Clark whose intention was to establish a railroad line connecting Salt Lake City, Utah to Los Angeles, California via the Las Vegas Valley (Moehring 2000).

William Clark formed the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad in 1900 and initiated construction on the portion of the rail line through Las Vegas in 1904. Workers constructed a tent camp to the west of the railroad tracks which became the nucleus of a small settlement. John T. McWilliams, a surveyor who was hired by Helen Stewart in 1902 to survey the Rancho land prior to the sale to Clark, acquired 80 acres from the government, including the railroad construction camp site. After formally surveying the land, he established the townsite of Las Vegas in 1904 and began speculative sale of the lots (Figure 3). Concurrently, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company, a subsidiary of the railroad, surveyed its own townsite on the east side of the railroad tracks which it recorded as "Clark's Las Vegas Townsite" in 1905 (Figure 4). This second townsite was laid out in 80-foot-wide streets running parallel to the northeast-southwest railroad alignment, as opposed to McWilliam's north-south oriented grid. The townsite, bounded by Main and Fifth Streets (roughly east and west) and Stewart and Garces Avenues (roughly north and



Figure 3. Plat of the original townsite of Las Vegas (also known as the McWilliams Townsite), ca. 1905 (Image courtesy of the UNLV Special Collections Library Las Vegas).

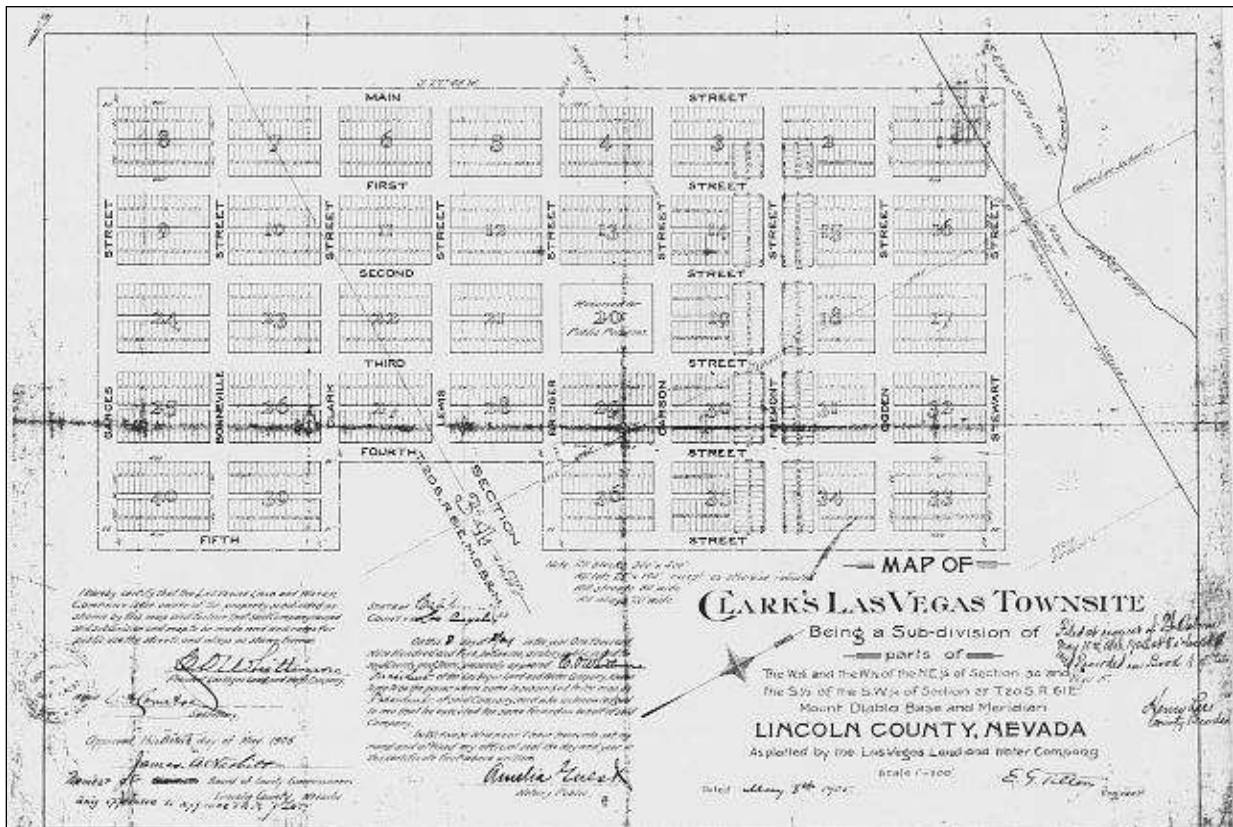


Figure 4. 1905 map of Clark's Las Vegas Townsite (Image available at the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

south) consisted of 1,200 lots (Paher 1971). Blocks adjacent to the north-south aligned Fremont Street were specifically platted to be shallower to encourage a higher density of commercial development along Fremont. The centrally located block 20 was reserved for public use; the remaining 25-foot-wide by 140-foot-long lots, platted on 300-foot-wide by 400-foot-long blocks, were laid out identically facing the east-west aligned roads (Mooney 2003a) (see Figure 4).

Investors filed more than 3,000 land applications for the 1,200 available lots in Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, ultimately resulting in a land auction in May 1905 (Paher 1971). Capitalizing on the remaining investor demand, astute investor Peter Buol platted a subdivision east of Clark's townsite prior to the auction and sold lots in the first "suburb" of Las Vegas. Buck's Addition, as it was called, followed the pattern of street orientation established in Clark's Las Vegas townsite which radiated from the railroad tracks. Buol subsequently platted the Grandview, Fairview, and Pioneer Heights tracts in 1905 (Figure 5). He broke from the orientation of previous plats with the Grandview Addition which possessed streets with a nearly true north to south alignment. The rectilinear Grandview Addition grid of streets would serve as a precedent for the town's development to the east (Moehring 2000).

In 1921, William Clark sold his interest in the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad to the Union Pacific Railroad Company. In that year, a national general strike by union employees of the Union Pacific would also have ramifications in Las Vegas as local members of the national shop workers union also participated. Union Pacific retaliated against Las Vegas union members and sympathizers, by relocating repair shops significant to the local Las Vegas economy to the town of Caliente (Moehring and Green 2005). At the same time, the railroad company also refused to make upgrades to the infrastructure it had created under its umbrella organization, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company (LVL&WC), which further impaired the growth of the city. Recognizing the need to diversify the economy and break free of the railroad's dominance, city leaders began to push for the development of a tourism industry. Initial civic efforts to boost tourism included improvement of Fifth Street to create a highway route connecting Las Vegas with the affluent urban center of Los Angeles (Moehring and Green 2005). Fifth Street had been platted as part of the 1909 Clark's Townsite and ran parallel to the railroad line. In 1926, the road was extended in a southwesterly direction along South Fifth Street creating U.S. Highway (US) 91 (also known as the Los Angeles Highway). In this same year, the Western Air Express Company also brought the first air mail service between Las Vegas and Salt Lake City and Los Angeles (Moehring and Green 2005). Business began to grow in downtown Las Vegas, as utility services were improved and investments made in hotels and tourist services.

The town experienced significant growth during the period between 1920 and 1930, with population increasing from 2,304 to 5,100; however, the development of tourism and the undertaking of large federal projects undertaken during the Great Depression, set Las Vegas on a course of even more dramatic growth in the period between 1930 and 1940 (Moehring and Green 2005).

Las Vegas during the Depression Era

While the nation writ large began to experience the effects of the Great Depression in 1930, Las Vegas was poised for growth. In December of 1928, President Calvin Coolidge signed the Boulder Canyon Project Act to

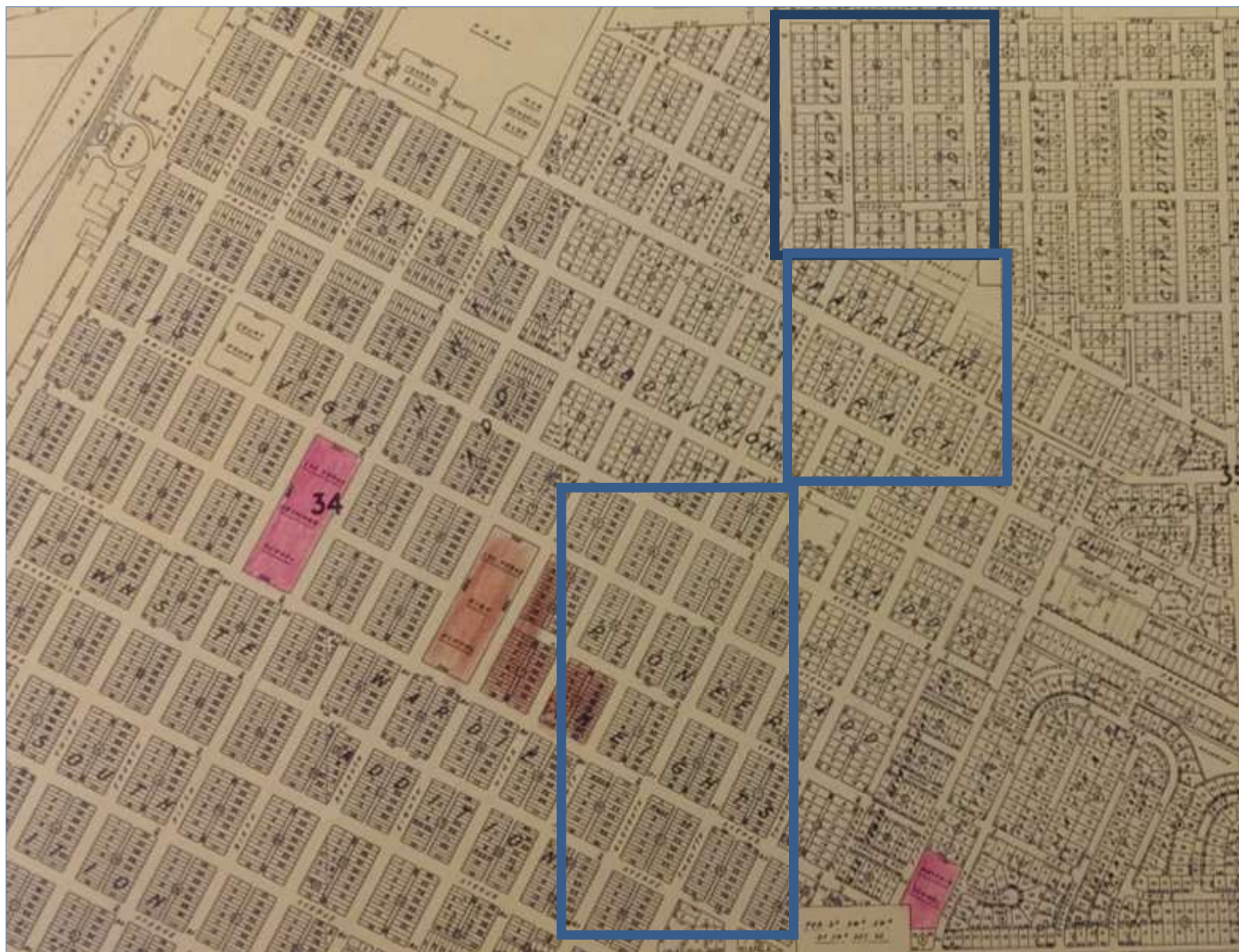


Figure 5. 1950 Pioneer Title Map of the City of Las Vegas showing the Grandview, Fairview, and Pioneer Heights Subdivisions outlined in blue (Image courtesy Nevada State Museum, Cahlan Research Library, Las Vegas).

regulate water on the Colorado River and provide a consistent water supply to the Imperial Valley in California. Men looking for work came to the area by the thousands; many lived in tent cities awaiting the opportunity to apply for a job. In the spring of 1931, Six Companies, Inc.—the corporation formed to complete construction of what was in its planning stage called Boulder Dam—began work on the massive structure sited 25 miles southeast of Las Vegas. The undertaking was so large in scale that the Bureau of Reclamation’s contract with the construction company stipulated it was required to develop housing to accommodate at least 80 percent of the workforce (Stevens 1988). The housing development, called Boulder City, consisted of “250 one-room cottages, 260 two-room homes, and 123 three-room homes that married couples could rent, as well as 8 two-story dormitories for single men” (Moehring and Green 2005:81). The company also constructed a road to connect its construction site to Las Vegas, which became known as the Boulder Highway. When construction of the dam infrastructure began, the workforce was comprised of 1,100 men (Stevens 1988).

The dam proved a boon to Las Vegas. The Six Companies office was headquartered out of Las Vegas and the location became a shipping point for supplies to the construction site. In 1931 the city of Las Vegas legalized gambling and while Boulder City developed with residential housing, commercial buildings, churches, and a theatre, Las Vegas with its burgeoning casinos, clubs, and tourist attractions, was where many of the dam’s construction workers spent their leisure time. An estimated \$19,000,000 was infused into the local economy as a result of the dam’s construction. Additionally, the dam itself served as a tourist destination for thousands of Americans who sought to witness its construction. The number of tourists who visited Las Vegas continued to rise through the years of dam construction growing from 230,000 people in 1933 to 300,000 in 1934 (Moehring and Green 2005). The dam was completed in 1935 and its associated reservoir became known as Lake Mead.

As construction workers left to seek work in different regions of the country, Las Vegas experienced a modest recession. However, Depression-era public works programs continued to stimulate the economy. The War Memorial Building was constructed in Las Vegas with New Deal funding in the period between 1935 and 1936 (Moehring and Green 2005). Hotel owners and local leaders also worked to develop and promote new events to draw tourists from Lake Mead to Las Vegas, such as the Helldorado Rodeo and Parade. In 1940, the population of Las Vegas stood at approximately 8,400 persons (Moehring and Green 2005). However, it was not until the onset of the Second World War that Las Vegas once again began to experience large-scale growth.

The Impact of the Defense Industry on the Growth of Greater Las Vegas

The defense industry which developed during World War II had a great impact upon the City of Las Vegas. In the two years spanning 1940 and 1942, both a military training facility and a massive industrial plant were developed on the periphery of the city. The Las Vegas Army Air Force Gunnery School (later known as Nellis Air Force Base) was completed to the northeast of the city and began instructing military personnel in 1941. In addition to the civilian employees and military personnel required to operate the facility, thousands of men came to the facility for each six week training course. The Basic Magnesium Plant, constructed to the southeast of Las Vegas, brought roughly 15,000 employees to the Las Vegas area both through its initial construction and continued operation. While much of the influx of population associated with the construction

of these two facilities was transient, local leaders expected a significant number of workers and their families to remain in Las Vegas and contribute to its economy. Additionally, those who were stationed—even temporarily—for construction or training would visit the city's casinos, which would in turn draw additional job seekers in the tourism industry (Moehring and Green 2005). The Las Vegas tourism industry benefitted not only from the gunnery school and Basic Magnesium Plant, but also from the establishment of Camp Sibert, a small Marine base near Boulder City, and the Desert Warfare Center, a training facility located south of Searchlight, Nevada. Some estimates place the peak population in the Las Vegas area during the war at more than 35,000 people (Cahlan 1942).

Las Vegas Army Air Force Gunnery School/Nellis Air Force Base

The completion of Hoover Dam provided the Las Vegas area with a direct supply of water and electricity. Defense industries for WWII, attracted by these resources, soon brought new economic and human capital to the local economy. In 1939, the Military Appropriations Act dedicated funding for the creation and expansion of Army Air Corps schools (Assistant Chief of Air Staff 1945). The following year, military authorities visited Las Vegas and determined that the weather conditions and vast amount of surrounding open desert land were ideal for the development of a gunnery school. Nevada Senator Pat McCarran further lobbied the Army to establish the school and successfully brokered a deal with Western Air Express, owner and operator of an airfield 7 miles north of Las Vegas, to sell their land to the City, who could subsequently use federal funding to make improvements for the new school (Assistant Chief of Air Staff 1945; Moehring 2005). The city signed an agreement with the Army in January 1941, thereby creating the first of six national gunnery ranges (Assistant Chief of Air Staff 1945). In May, the school's site agent issued a request for bids for a 25-acre housing project consisting of 125 units to be occupied by non-commissioned officers and civilian employees (*Las Vegas Review, Journal* 28 May 1941). In July 1941, an article in the *Nevada State Journal* noted that the government was not successful in purchasing lands, and therefore filed a legal action to condemn 21 acres of private land, including Blocks 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12 of the Grandview Addition (see Figure 5; Figure 6). The owners of the land reportedly included the Neiswender Corporation, whose name appears on a 1939 replat of the 1905 Grandview Addition (Clark County Recorder 1939: Book 2 page 20; *Nevada State Journal*, 9 July 1941).

An article in the September 13, 1941 edition of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* noted that the Army Air Corps gunnery school and associated air field were nearing completion with sewer and utility lines in place. Interestingly, it was mentioned that wartime restrictions on steel slowed the construction of a water tank on site as there was a considerable delay in obtaining the necessary material. It was anticipated that the school and airfield site would be completed by the beginning of 1942 (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 13 September 1941b).

A second article in the same newspaper noted construction had begun on a 125-unit defense housing development, referred to as the Grandview Addition. The construction contract was awarded to the Lembke Construction Company of New Mexico and the housing was to consist of four, five, and six room dwellings (type not specified) which were described as “modern in every detail” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 13 September 1941a:5). As was noted in the previous article from May, the housing was to be occupied by non-



Figure 6. Pioneer Title Map of the City of Las Vegas, ca. 1950, with Blocks 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12 of the Grandview Addition outlined in blue.

commissioned officers and civilian employees of the airfield. The project was approved with Lanham Act funding and is illustrative of the early approach to publicly funded defense housing which focused on permanent over temporary construction. The article stated “the buildings are being so constructed that if the army post is ever abandoned any time in the future, the houses can be sold or rented to civilians in Las Vegas and their value not affected” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 13 September 1941a:5). The Grandview Addition development was not located in close proximity to the air field and gunnery range but was situated in the northeastern portion of Las Vegas, to the south of Bonanza Street and east of South Fifth Street (Las Vegas Boulevard). Historic aerial photography demonstrates that the Grandview Addition housing was impacted by the construction of Maryland Parkway, which bisected the eastern portion of the development, in the period between 1965 and 1973. In the period between 1973 and 1983, the buildings on the site were demolished and new buildings were constructed by the Southern Nevada Housing Authority. This demolition was likely in response to the planned development of U.S. Highway 95 which cut through the southern portion of the original housing site by the early 1980s.

Training began at the school after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and by the end of the year the center sought to expand its facilities in order to accommodate the entrance of 320

students per week (Assistant Chief of Air Staff 1945). Improvements were also carried out at the site of the air field and gunnery range, including barracks and mess halls. In 1943 the school was renamed the Las Vegas Army Air Field (LVAAF) (Nickel 2012). It is estimated that during the height of WWII, a total of 4,000 students completed training at the facility every six weeks (Moehring 2000). By the end of August 1944, more than 44,000 students had graduated from the Las Vegas Gunnery School (Assistant Chief of Air Staff 1945). In 1945, as the war was nearing its close, local concerns rose regarding the potential deactivation of the LVAAF spurring city leaders to launch a campaign to ensure the facility would remain open. Local officials brokered an initial deal to sell the site to the Army for \$1 contingent upon receipt of government funds for the development of a civilian airfield. However, this deal stalled and it was not until 1947 that Las Vegas voters approved a ballot initiative to raise the funds to create a civilian airfield that the LVAAF site was permanently dedicated to military use (Nickel 2012).

Basic Magnesium, Inc.

Basic Magnesium, Inc. (BMI) and the U.S. Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) selected a site for a magnesium factory to be located between Las Vegas and Boulder City in 1941. The lightweight magnesium metal was a key material used in the construction of aircraft and weaponry, making its procurement as war material of interest to the U.S. government. Because operation of the plant required large amounts of electricity and water, the proximity of the site to the Hoover Dam and Lake Mead proved ideal. Additionally, large stores of magnesite—the ore used in the production of magnesium—were located within a few hundred miles of the plant (Waldron 1942). Former U.S. Senator Charles B. Henderson of Nevada served on the board of directors for the U.S. Defense Plant Corporation (DPC) and supported the construction of a plant which could make use of the magnesite ore discovered near Gabbs, Nevada (Mooney 2007). With the further support of Nevada Senators Key Pittman and Patrick McCarran, DPC made a commitment to fund the construction of a plant, which would be leased and operated by BMI (Mooney 2007; Waldron 1942). The McNeil Construction Company won the contract for the plant's development and began construction in October 1941 (Waldron 1942). The massive plant was projected to be 1.75 miles long by 0.75 mile wide (Mooney 2007) (Figure 7). Reportedly 4,000 McNeil construction employees travelled to the site and, with additional out of state emigrants seeking war-time work, the numbers of workers on site swelled to between 10,000 and 12,000 (Mooney 2007; Waldron 1942). As there was no available housing in the immediate area, many workers lived in tents or ramshackle housing in the desert (Sadovich 1971; Waldron 1942) (Figure 8). Opening in 1942, the factory soon became one of the country's largest manufacturers of metallic magnesium.

While the need to develop housing for the great influx of workers was nearly universally recognized, BMI operators of the factory, government representatives, and local politicians argued as to the appropriate location for the development (Mooney 2007). Local leaders in Las Vegas opposed the creation of a new townsite which had the potential to draw revenue away from Las Vegas proper. However, it was recognized that Las Vegas did not have the utility capacity to accommodate the necessary housing. BMI executive Howard Eels sought to have housing developed at Boulder City; however, the Bureau of Reclamation rejected this plan noting that Boulder City also did not have sufficient infrastructure to house the employees.

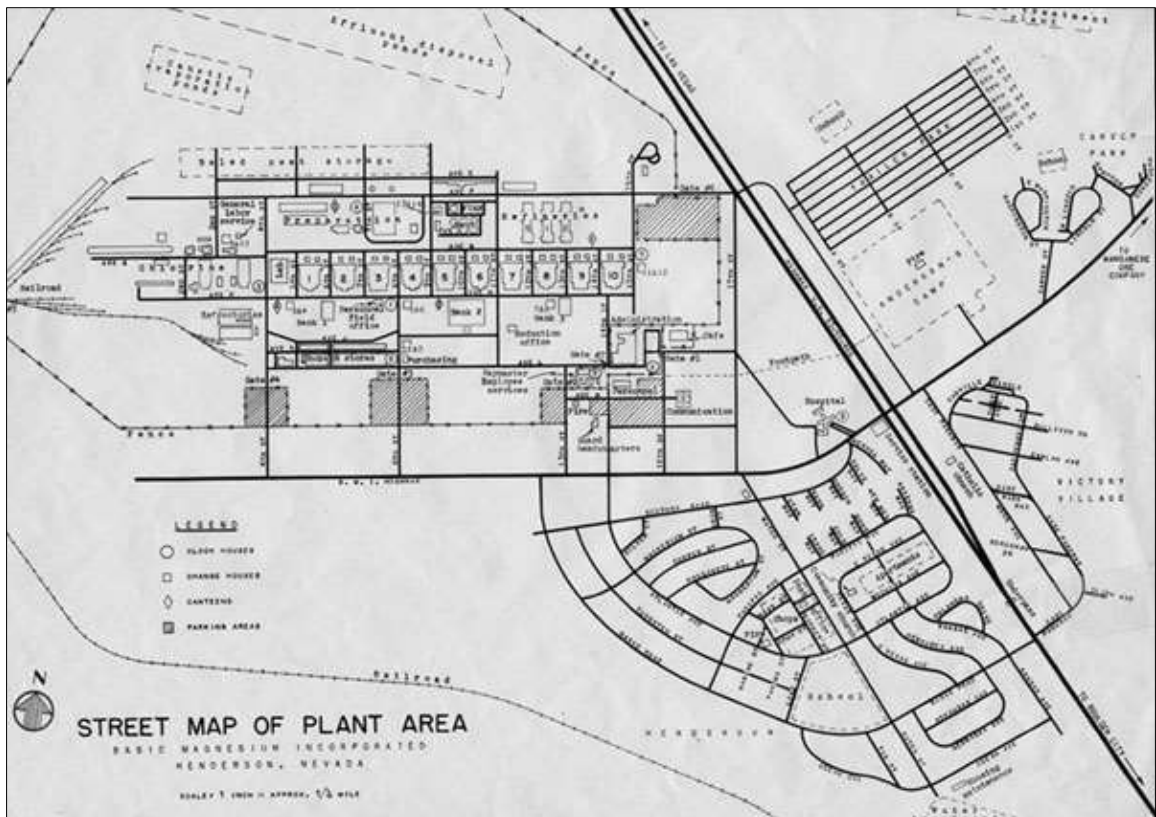


Figure 7. Street map of the BMI plant area, date unknown (Image reprinted from RAFI Planning, Architecture, and Urban Design 2008:14).



Figure 8. Housing conditions near the BMI plant, date unknown (Image courtesy of mypubliclibrary.com).

In a compromise with the leaders of Las Vegas, the housing constructed at the plant site was classified as “demountable.” Units were manufactured in pieces off site, assembled on site, and considered temporary in nature (Mooney 2007; Waldron 1942). One thousand single-family homes were constructed in the Basic Townsite on the west side of the Boulder Highway; these homes housed management level BMI employees and their families. A large women’s dormitory was also located within the southern portion of the townsite (Van Dee 2009). The 300-unit Victory Village, located across the highway, consisted of apartments, dormitories, and social/commercial service buildings for lower income white workers and their families. A 324-unit housing development known as Carver Park was constructed specifically for African American workers and their families to the northeast of Victory Village (Canfield 1976; Mooney 2007) (Figure 9).

The Basic Townsite continued its trajectory of rapid growth, and by 1943, it represented the third largest community in Nevada (Mooney 2007). The Townsite was laid out in a curvilinear pattern with houses facing the streets at oblique angles. The community included a business center and school, and post office. In 1943, Anaconda Copper Company purchased rights from BMI to operate the plant and it remained in operation until 1944, when surplus magnesium stores obviated the need for continued production. The townsite had officially been designated Henderson in 1944, in honor of BMI plant promoter, Charles Henderson; however, upon the plant’s closure, a massive exodus of residents occurred (Henderson Historical Society, n.d.). The population did not stabilize until the plant was purchased by the State of Nevada in 1948 (Mooney 2007).



Figure 9. Photograph of the Basic Townsite with the BMI plant in the distance, ca. 1942 (Image courtesy of mypubliclibrary.com).

Context 2: Local Efforts to Cope with the War-Time Housing Shortage

As defense industries such as the gunnery range and BMI plant began to draw large numbers of workers to the Las Vegas area, the existing housing stock within the city proper proved woefully inadequate to accommodate them. Many emigrant workers lived in makeshift tent communities, shared homes within the city, or lived in trailers at the city's tourist auto camps (Moehring and Green 2005). In 1941, Rolla E. Clapp, chairman of the National Housing Research Organization, was hired to study and compile a report on the housing situation in Las Vegas (Painter 2005). Clapp reported that there was an immediate shortage of 385 homes and a need to replace roughly 500 existing sub-standard homes. He underscored the urgency of Las Vegas' housing crisis, noting that for the 3,000 families anticipated to relocate for work at the newly constructed BMI, an additional 4,500 families would arrive in Las Vegas to support them in the service industry. Clapp predicted that the 1940 population of roughly 8,000 in Las Vegas would soon reach 13,000 (Painter 2005).

Clapp's report provided the critical data to bolster the general perception that Las Vegas was suffering from a critical housing shortage. Nevada Senator Berkeley L. Bunker reported in a June 16, 1941 article in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* that talks were ongoing with President Roosevelt's defense housing coordinator Charles F. Palmer on the designation of Las Vegas as a critical defense area. Such designation, he observed, would allow the city to benefit from the recently passed FHA Title VI mortgage insurance program (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 16 June 1941). One week following this article, the *Las Vegas Review Journal* announced Las Vegas's designation as a Title VI defense area. The article noted "the president's designation makes possible mass construction of FHA-financed homes, which will complement and not supplant the existing FHA facilities in the home financing field (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 23 June 1941).

An article appearing in a December 1941 edition of the *Las Vegas Review Journal* demonstrates that the FHA had begun approving Title VI housing in Las Vegas noting that 647 applications for insurance commitments had been received totaling more than \$2,500,000 of potential new housing. FHA representative Harry Sheeline stated that of these applications 167 had been approved which would result in the construction of \$496,350 in new housing. The average cost of each home was listed as \$4,000 and it was reported that home construction was typically completed within three months (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 20 December 1941:4). In January of the following year, the *Las Vegas Review Journal* reported that in Las Vegas "building permits show tremendous gain over 1940" (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 3 January 1942:5). The article gave a breakdown of the number of permits issued by housing type which included 273 single family residences, 43 duplex dwellings, and 21 multi-family dwellings (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 3 January 1942). The growth in residential development continued as is demonstrated by a March 1942 article in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* which stated that in the first two months of the year building permits had been issued for more than \$500,000 in construction. The article further projected that several thousand residences were to be constructed in 1942 which would establish a record level of development surpassing the era of growth during the Boulder Dam construction (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 10 March 1942).

While the majority of the residential development which occurred during the war was accomplished through private development constructed by builders with commitments for federal mortgage insurance programs, several subdivisions were also privately developed for homebuyers with financial means as "custom-built"

housing. While the developers of these “conventionally financed” subdivisions faced limited supplies of construction materials, due to rationing, they did not have to comply with the underwriting regulations set forth by the FHA and could exceed standard property and loan amount restrictions. In the case of minority housing, de facto segregation, surging populations, and restricted access to construction materials resulted in the hasty development of substandard housing.

The Development of Built on Demand (Custom) Subdivisions

A total of eight subdivisions were platted within the Las Vegas area between 1940 and 1945. Of these, only three were developed by private developers without the assistance of the Federal government. These three neighborhoods, which include the Beckley Subdivision, Sebec Acres, and the Eastland Heights Neighborhood, were all developed between 1941 and 1942, reflecting efforts to house the new influx of families relocating to Las Vegas to seek work in the city’s defense-related industries. Whereas the Beckley Subdivision was located south of E. Charleston Boulevard to the east of the original townsite, Sebec Acres and Eastland Heights were located outside the city limits to the east and west of U. S. Highway 95 (now N. Rancho Drive) and north of Vegas Drive. One additional neighborhood—Charleston Square—was originally planned as an FHA development but was later converted to a custom subdivision due to inflation and increased production costs. Brief descriptions of the four built on demand subdivisions, in order of their plat dates, are provided below.

Beckley Subdivision (1941)

The plat for the Beckley Subdivision was filed by Will and Leva G. Beckley in April 1941, in an undeveloped area to the east of the Vega Verde Addition. Husband and wife Will and Leva G. Beckley filed the plat nearly 31 years after the pioneer couple moved to Las Vegas from their home in Indiana (*Las Vegas Sun*, 10 November 1966). Although Beckley, a painter, first came to Las Vegas in 1908 after his brother Jack and pioneer Las Vegas businessman Ed Von Tobel recommended he relocate, he did not bring wife, Leva, with him until 1910. Beckley is best known for his men’s clothing store, known as Beckley’s Men’s Wear,” which he opened with his brother in 1908. The store originally operated out of a canvas tent, and was later the old Hotel Nevada building (now part of the Golden Gate Hotel and Casino complex), which was advantageously located across from the railroad depot (Garza 2011; *Las Vegas Sun*, 10 November 1966). In 1912, he and Leva constructed a home at 120 South Fourth Street where they raised their two children, Virginia and Bruce. The couple continued to operate the clothing store together on Fremont and Main Streets, eventually expanding its stock from men’s work clothes such as “Levis and gloves” to include men’s suits and specialized clothing, such as bathing suits, for both genders (Whitely 2005:52). By 1929, the business had become so successful that the couple relocated the store to a refurbished 3-story building on the corner of First and Fremont Streets (now the location of the Pioneer Club). Beckley operated the store on the ground level and leased the upper stories to numerous organizations and businesses, including the Bureau of Reclamation during the construction of Boulder Dam (*Las Vegas Sun*, 10 November 1966). The store remained in operation at this location until Beckley’s retirement in 1941 (*Las Vegas Sun*, 10 November 1966). Additional stores were later opened in Goodsprings, Nevada and Blythe, California (Whitely 2005:52).

During his 57 years in the city, Beckley was active in civic and social affairs both before and during his retirement. He was a member of the city’s Chamber of Commerce, as well as a director at the Bank of

Southern Nevada. He was also a charter member of the Las Vegas Rotary Club, and hosted numerous social events at his home and in the hall above his business. Beckley was also active in the Las Vegas real estate market, acquiring numerous landholdings, including the land of Beckley Addition and a parcel at the intersection of Fifth and Fremont Streets.

Cited by Ainlay and Gabaldon (2003:28) as “bringing gracious living to the dusty small community” of Las Vegas, Leva was also active in the Las Vegas community. She was a member of the Mesquite Club, and was instrumental in establishing most of the social and cultural organizations in Las Vegas. Following Will’s death in January 1965, Leva remained in the family home until ill health forced her to move in with relatives in 1978. At the time of the move, Leva was 93 years of age. As the home was one of the last pioneer homes remaining in Las Vegas, and its existence was being threatened by development pressures, the family donated the home to the Clark County Museum in 1979 (Clark County Museum n.d.). Through the efforts of the Junior League, the Beckley home was subsequently moved to the museum grounds, where it remains one of five house museums along Heritage Street (Clark County Museum n.d.). At least one other building and one business paid homage to the Beckley family remain in Las Vegas today. In 1966, an elementary school near Mojave and Desert Inn Streets was dedicated in Will Beckley’s honor (Las Vegas Sun, 10 November 1966). In 2011, Beckley’s great granddaughter Melissa Richardson Akkaway opened a fashion boutique known as “Beckley” in The Cosmopolitan hotel-casino on the Las Vegas strip.

The triangular-shaped Beckley Subdivision was bounded by the Boulder Addition to the west, Fourth Street to the east, and Charleston Boulevard to the north (Figure 10). The lots of the tract were numbered consecutively from 1 to 17, with Lots 2–12 oriented to face a cul-de-sac identified on the plat as “Third Place.” The remaining lots (Lots 1 and 13–17) were situated in the northeastern and southern portions of the subdivision. Due to the subdivision’s shape, the lots varied in size with the smallest lots located to the east and west of the cul-de-sac and the largest lot forming the southernmost tip of the subdivision. Setback also varied, with Lots 13–17 exhibiting no setback and those facing Third Place (Lots 2–12) possessing 20 feet of setback. Lots along E. Charleston Boulevard—or Lots 1, 2, and 12—were also setback 15 feet from the street. Additionally, a 10-foot-wide planting easement ran the length of Lots 1, 5, 6, and 7 along Fourth Street.

This study could not locate information on the types of homes planned for the development. A newspaper article announcing the opening of the subdivision indicates that least two of the homes within the subdivision were to be “one-family dwellings” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 8 July 1941). The homes were being constructed by Las Vegas contractor Guy D. Mathis for Tom Bellis, a state traffic officer, and bank clerk Jimmy Hoy. The article also indicates that city lights, water, sewer, curbs and gutters were already installed in the subdivision, and graveled streets and fire hydrants were planned (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 8 July 1941).

Today, the subdivision is entirely commercial and little remains of its original lot configuration (Figure 11). Third Place, once a cul-de-sac, provides access to parking areas to the south of businesses along E. Charleston Boulevard on Lots 1, 3, 4, and 12. A large office complex (1200 S. Fourth Street) occupies the



Beckley Subdivision (1941)



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 11. The Beckley Subdivision as it appears today (Image courtesy of Google Earth).

western half of Lots 13–17 with the eastern half of the lots serving as a parking area for the complex. Aerial photography confirms that residences within the subdivision were razed sometime between 1965 and 1973. Clark County Assessor records indicate that the office complex was constructed in 1984.

Sebec Acres (1941)

The Sebec Acres subdivision was platted by Las Vegas Mormon residents William R. and Zina Smith on August 16, 1941 (Figure 12). The couple was married in Salt Lake City, Utah on July 28, 1910 (*Deseret Evening News*, 30 July 1910). Prior to moving to Las Vegas, they resided in Evanston, Wyoming, where William served as the Agricultural Agent for Uinta County (Census of Population and Housing 1930). The Smiths are listed in the 1940 Federal census as residing in Las Vegas at 610 S. Tenth Street along with their 16-year-old daughter, Helen Jean (Census of Population and Housing 1940). The census indicates that William (age 56) was employed as a veterinarian and Zina (age 55) was listed as a “housewife.” Both William and Zina were born in Utah (Census of Population and Housing 1940). According to a family blog site, *Turn the Hearts*, created by “Lark” for descendants of Shadrach Roundy and Betsey Quimby, Smith was the city’s first veterinarian.

The wedge-shaped Sebec Acres consisted of a single block comprised of 12 lots; 5 of the lots were rectangular in shape and measured 0.92 acres, and remaining 7 lots were irregularly-shaped and varied in size from 1.03 to 1.49 acres. The subdivision was bounded by U.S. Highway 95 (now N. Rancho Boulevard) to the west and undeveloped land to the north, south, and east. Historic maps suggest that Vegas Drive and Ferrell Drive, the two streets which currently border the subdivision to the south and east, were not formally constructed until the mid-1950s. At the time of its platting, the subdivision was located just north of the incorporated city limits. This remained the case until the early 1960s, when the subdivision, along with much of the Eastland Heights neighborhood to the west, was annexed into the city by the Planning Department (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 25 March 1961). Other than the annexation date, no information on Sebec Acres was found during the archival research effort.

The development trajectory for Sebec Acres is largely unknown. According to Clark County Assessor’s records, nine properties remain within the neighborhood, and of these, only four are residential (Table 1). Two of the properties—3022 Vegas Drive and 1608 Ferrell Street—have three single-family dwellings each, and the remaining properties have only one. All of the residences are constructed of wood frame or concrete block in the Minimal Traditional architectural style. Interestingly, only one of the residences remaining in the development has a 1940 construction date (Photograph 1). The remaining residences were constructed in 1948 (Photograph 2), 1955, and 1964. Although it is not clear if these dates represent the actual construction year or the dates when significant modifications were made to the dwellings, aerial photography suggests that development of Sebec Acres was slow, with only four houses present on Lots 2, 3, 7, and 12 by 1950. A second photograph taken in 1965 shows additional development in the southern and eastern portions of the tract on Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. This suggests that despite its 1941 plat year, much of the residential development within the Sebec Acres subdivision occurred between 1951 and 1964. Between 1994 and 1999, the two ca. 1950 buildings on Lots 2 and 3 were razed; otherwise, development within the subdivision today looks much like it did in the mid-1960s. In recent years, the boundary of the subdivision was expanded to the



Figure 13. William Richard Smith, ca. 1906 (Image reprinted from Turn the Hearts blog [<http://larkturnthehearts.blogspot.com/search/label/SMITH%20William%20R>], accessed on 9 March 2015).

Table 1. Residential properties currently present within Sebec Acres (Source: Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

Parcel No.	Address	Lot no.	Year Built	Description
139-20-411-008	3040 Vegas Drive	Lot 7	1948	One story, wood frame, single-family dwelling measuring 1,147 ft ² . A Residential Appraisal Record suggests the home originally had two bedrooms and one bath.
139-20-411-010	3028 Vegas Drive	Lot 9	1955	One story, 1,834 ft ² single-family dwelling constructed of concrete block. The home originally had two bedrooms, one bath, one family room, and hardwood floors throughout.
139-20-411-011	3022 Vegas Drive	Lot 10	1955 & 1964	Consists of three, wood frame single-family dwellings built in 1955 and 1964. All of the homes are a single story and range in size from 450 ft ² to 1,995 ft ² .
139-20-411-012	1608–1610 Ferrell Street	Lots 11 & 12	1940 & 1955	Consists of three single-family dwellings built in 1940 and 1955. All of the homes are a single story and range in size from 660 ft ² to 820 ft ² .



Photograph 1. 1610 Ferrell Street, constructed within Sebec Acres ca. 1940, facing west (Source: Google Earth).



Photograph 2. 3040 W. Vegas Drive, constructed within Sebec Acres in 1948, facing northwest (Source: Google Earth).

north to include a large parcel of predominantly undeveloped land and a single lot to the east of U.S. Highway 95. Both the historic plat boundary and boundary of the subdivision as currently recognized by the Clark County Assessor's Office are shown on Figure 14. The northern parcel encompasses 17.05 acres and has no standing structures. A commercial building currently occupies the eastern parcel, which encompasses approximately 0.3 acre. The reason for the boundary increase is not known.

Eastland Heights Neighborhood (1942, 1945, 1957, and 1959)

Located across U. S. Highway 95 (now N. Rancho Boulevard) to the west of Sebec Acres, the first tract of the Eastland Heights neighborhood was platted by Ezra B. and Muccola J. Coram of Riverside County, California, and Van O. and Jessie L. Eastland of Las Vegas on February 25, 1942 (Figure 15). The Corams were residents of Riverside County, California, and the Eastlands resided in Las Vegas, where Van worked as a civil engineer. Little is known about Ezra and Muccola Coram. Archival research suggests that Ezra was born in Romoland, California on November 2, 1876. On December 29, 1908, Ezra married Boone, North Carolina native Mucolla Spencer in Sun City, California. The couple eventually moved to Pasadena where they had three children—Paul, Ruth, and Ralph. In 1920, the Coram family migrated from Pasadena to a 160-acre ranch in Menifee, California. While in Menifee, Ezra served as trustee of the Menifee School Board and was active in community affairs. Sometime prior to 1942, the couple sold their ranch and moved to Riverside, California, their place of residence when they filed Tract 1 of the Eastland Heights Neighborhood (Martin and Bouris 2006:83).

As previously noted, Eastland was a civil engineer in the “building construction industry” (Census of Population and Housing 1940). A Montana native, Van lived in Great Falls, Montana and Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife Jessie before migrating to the Las Vegas area in 1937 to work for the Bureau of Reclamation as an inspector for the Boulder Canyon project. Eastland served as civil engineer and surveyor for many of the WWII era subdivisions, including the Biltmore, Huntridge, and Sebec Acres developments. Water permit records on file with the Nevada Division of Water Resources indicate that he also served as the State Water Right Surveyor between 1943 and 1948.

Plat No. 1 of the Eastland Heights Neighborhood was fan-shaped and comprised of four blocks (Blocks 14, 15, 21, and 22), each of which had a different number of lots. Block 21 had the most lots (10), with Blocks 14, 15, and 22 having 8, 6, and 7 lots, respectively. Most of the lots were square and measured 200 feet long by 200 feet wide. Corner lots varied in size, with the largest lot (Lot 1 of Block 22) measuring 1.1 acres. The lots were situated along four curvilinear streets (Melody Lane, Sunset Drive, Primrose Path, and Mountain Trail)—two of which connected with U.S. Highway 95 and provided access to the interior of the neighborhood. Similar to the Sebec Acres neighborhood, the Eastland Heights subdivision was located just north of the city limits.

The first tract of the Eastland Heights neighborhood was described in a May 9, 1941 edition of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* as located along Bonanza Road just east of the city golf course. The article described the tract as encompassing 40 acres and confirmed that at the time of writing, water lines had been laid and some grading performed. It noted, however, that further work within the tract had been suspended pending a well



Sebec Acres (1941)

Current Subdivision Boundary 



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 14. Sebec Acres as it appears today (Image courtesy of Google Earth).

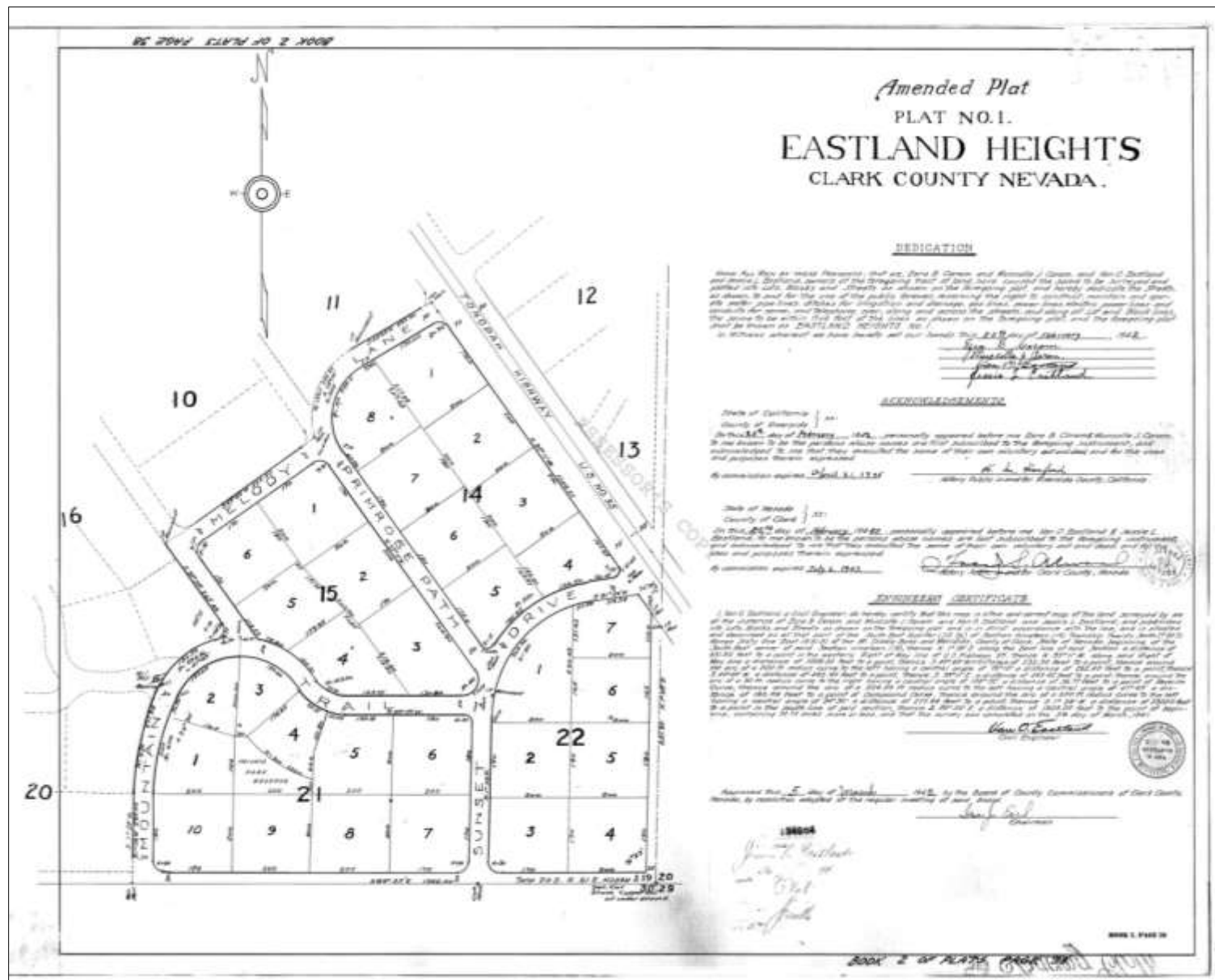


Figure 15. Plat No. 1 of the Eastland Heights neighborhood, amended on February 25, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

drilling hearing to be held before the public service commission at a yet to be determined date. According to the article, the hearing was the result of the city engineer's receipt of numerous informal protests against Eastland, who had planned to drill a well to provide water to the subdivision. Despite the subdivision's location just north of Las Vegas, Eastland was required to cooperate with the city engineer and planning commission subdivision law which placed all neighborhoods located within three miles of the incorporated limits under the city's jurisdiction.

According to Eastland, who was interviewed for the article, the finished development was to be one of the "most outstanding home areas in the community" (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 9 May 1941). Eastland noted that land within the 40-acre tract was being sold off in one-half acre lots for the construction of "single residence units" that were not to exceed \$5,000 in cost (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 9 May 1941). He further stated that the completed development was to include a \$350,000 "residence type" hotel; however, the location for the proposed hotel was not specified in the article (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 9 May 1941).

Interestingly, Clark County Assessor's records indicate that only six residential buildings were constructed within Plat No. 1 during the WWII era. Even more interesting, three of these buildings have a build date of 1940, or one year before the plat was filed with the city. Two of the buildings are located on Vegas Drive, and one is located at 3909 Mountain Trail. The building at 3909 Mountain Trail consists of a 2,941 ft² wood frame dwelling with stucco sheathing and a side-gabled composition shingle roof (Photograph 3); a Building Permit



Photograph 3. 3909 E. Mountain Trail, constructed within the Eastland Heights Neighborhood in 1940, facing east. Assessor records suggest that the exterior of the building has been substantially altered (Source Google Earth).

Record on file with the Clark County Assessor indicates that all four facades of the building have been altered by additions (ca. 1964 and 1981), suggesting that little of the home's original footprint remains intact. The buildings on Vegas Drive consist of multi-family homes. The larger of the two buildings—a triplex located at 3916 Vegas Drive—is situated at the northern end of the lot and is not visible from the street. The second building—a 1,516 ft² duplex at 3900 Vegas Drive—was originally a single family dwelling that was converted to a duplex sometime prior to 1998 (Photograph 4) The remaining three buildings—3920 Mountain Trail, 3808 Vegas Drive, and 1703 Primrose Path—were built in 1944 and 1945. The buildings at 3920 Mountain Trail and 3808 Vegas Drive (Photograph 5) have been converted to commercial space and 1703 Primrose Path (Photograph 6) remains a residence.

On December 5, 1945, the Eastlands filed a second plat (Eastland Heights Plat No. 2) to the west of Plat No. 1 (Figure 16). Mountain Trail and a newly-designated road known as Hill Path (now known as Hillpath Trail) served as the eastern boundary, and the northern and southern edges of the plat were bounded by Melody Lane and Vegas Drive, respectively. The rectangular plat more than doubled the size of subdivision, adding an additional 54 lots and four blocks (Blocks 9, 10, 11, and 12) to the 31 lots of Tract No 1. Lots within Plat No. 2 were generally rectangular in size and measured 200-feet-long by 100-feet-wide; the only exception were lots at the eastern end of Blocks 10 and 11, where the curvilinear streets of adjoining Plat No. 1 necessitated the development of irregularly-shaped lots.



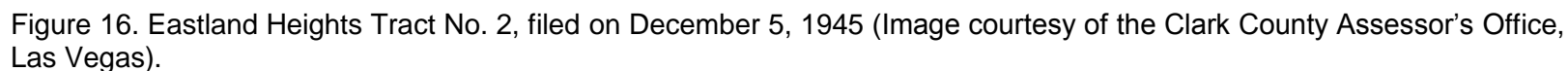
Photograph 4. 3900 Vegas Drive, located within the Eastland Heights Neighborhood, facing north (Source Google Earth).



Photograph 5. 3808 W. Vegas Drive, constructed within the Eastland Heights Neighborhood in 1944, facing northwest (Source Google Earth).



Photograph 6. 1703 Primrose Path, constructed within the Eastland Heights Neighborhood in 1945, facing east (Source Google Earth).



Despite its plat date of 1945, assessor records indicate that the average build date for single family dwellings within Tract No. 2 is 1954; the earliest residence, 1693 Hillpath Trail, was built in 1949, and construction continued within the tract as late as 1958. The lack of early development within the neighborhood is confirmed by a 1950 aerial photograph, which shows buildings within Tract No. 1 primarily concentrated on the periphery of the subdivision along Vegas Drive and U.S. Highway 95. Five additional buildings are present along the west side of Primrose Path and the south side of Melody Lane (Photograph 7). In addition to the residence on Hillpath Trail, only five buildings within Tract No. 2 appear in the 1950 aerial. These buildings are situated on Lots 9 and 10 of Block 10 and Lots 12, 20, and 21 of Block 11. Assessor's records confirm that buildings were developed on these lots in 1949 and 1950. Later aerial photography suggests that build out for Tract Nos. 1 and 2 was completed by 1965.

In May 1957 and August 1959, Jessie Eastland filed two additional plats (Tract No. 3 and No. 4) to the north of Tract Nos. 1 and 2 for the Eastland Heights neighborhood (Figure 17 and Figure 18). Whereas Eastland was the sole owner of the fourth tract, couples Hoyt S. and Anita N. Sibley and F. Stanley and Martha Broad also appear as owners on the Tract No. 3 plat. Tract No. 3 was bounded by Spring Road to the north, Melody Lane to the south, Sycamore Trail to the east, and undeveloped land to the west. Eastland Heights No. 4 was located to the north of Tract No. 3 between Spring Road and College Avenue (now Coran Lane) with vacant land to the west and east. Tract No. 3 had 25 lots and No. 4 was slightly smaller, with 20 lots. Streets within both tracts were laid on a grid, creating rectangular shaped lots that measured 137 feet wide and varied in length from 118 feet to 164 feet. As development of these tracts occurred well after the end of



Photograph 7. 4067 Melody Lane, an example of a home constructed within Tract No. 2 of the Eastland Heights Neighborhood between 1949 and 1950, facing south (Source Logan Simpson).

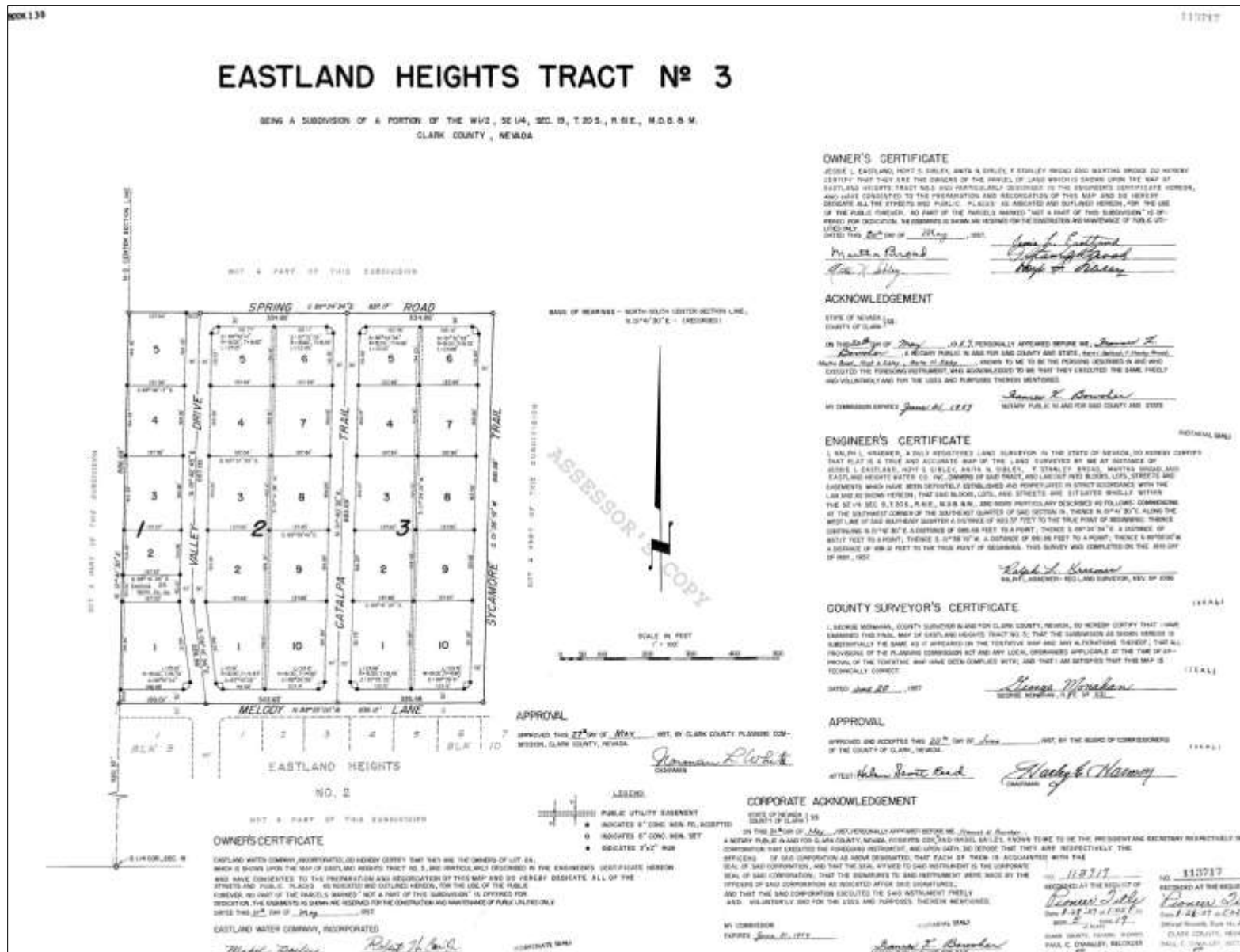
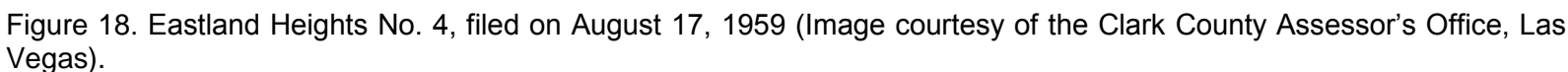


Figure 17. Eastland Heights Tract No. 3, filed on May 20, 1957 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).



WWII, they were not further researched; however, a review of aerial photographs indicates that 7 lots within each tract—or 28 percent of the housing stock in Tract No. 3 and 35 percent of No. 4—remained undeveloped by 1965. Houses within both tracts were built out by 1983.

Today, the development consists of a mix of businesses and single- and multi-family dwellings (Figure 19). Commercial enterprises are principally located along N. Rancho Boulevard (formerly U.S. Highway 95) and Vegas Drive, although some smaller, locally-owned businesses are located on the interior of the subdivision along Primrose Path, Mountain Trail, and Sunset Drive. Most of the properties are located in single family dwellings that have been converted to commercial space. The majority of the homes present within the neighborhood today were constructed between 1965 and 1983. Very few homes dating to the WWII era remain, and those that do have been substantially modified through additions and the replacement of historic materials.

Charleston Square (1945; 1948–1949)

Unlike the other three built on demand subdivisions discussed in this context, Charleston Square is unique in that its platting occurred at a pivotal point in the U.S. housing market—the transition between the development of defense area housing and the housing boom to accommodate returning WWII veterans. One year prior to the initial platting of the subdivision, Congress passed the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act (also known informally as the G.I. Bill) which provided a range of benefits for returning WWII veterans. Among these benefits was low interest, zero down payment home loans for servicemen, with terms that favored purchase of new construction over existing housing. A November 1945 newspaper article describing the planned Charleston Square subdivision noted that the developers originally intended to market homes to returning war veterans who could take advantage of the G.I. Bill loan provisions as well as FHA financing. However, shortly after construction began on the first 31 homes, material and production costs increased, making continued development of the subdivision under the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act unfeasible. After a number of meetings between the contractor, FHA, and the VA, it was decided that the \$1,248,000 development be reverted to a strictly non-veteran project. Nevertheless, the neighborhood represents one of the first attempts of a local developer to capitalize on government-sponsored financing options available to returning veterans.

Pioneer Title Insurance and Trust Company platted Tract 1 of the Charleston Square Subdivision on July 11, 1945 (Figure 20). Signatories on the plat included Vice President M. M. Sweeney and Assistant Secretary J. E. McManis. A newspaper article printed in the *Nevada State Journal* indicates that Sweeney was acting President of the statewide firm as late as January 1960 (*Nevada State Journal*, 12 January 1960). The rectangular tract was located to the east of the Huntridge Addition and south of E. Charleston Boulevard, and included lots to the west and south of Chapman Drive and to the east of Sixteenth Street (see Figure 20). It consisted of six blocks (Blocks 1–6) containing a total of 66 lots. The majority of the lots were square in shape, although some irregularly shaped lots were located at curved intersections within the subdivision. With the exception of four lots along E. Charleston Boulevard, all of the lots faced the interior, curvilinear streets of Chapman Drive, Sixteenth Street, and Thelma Drive.



Eastland Heights

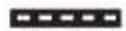
Tract 1 (1942)



Tract 3 (1957)



Current Subdivision Boundary



Tract 2 (1945)



Tract 4 (1959)



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 19. Eastland Heights neighborhood as it appears today (Image taken from Google Earth).

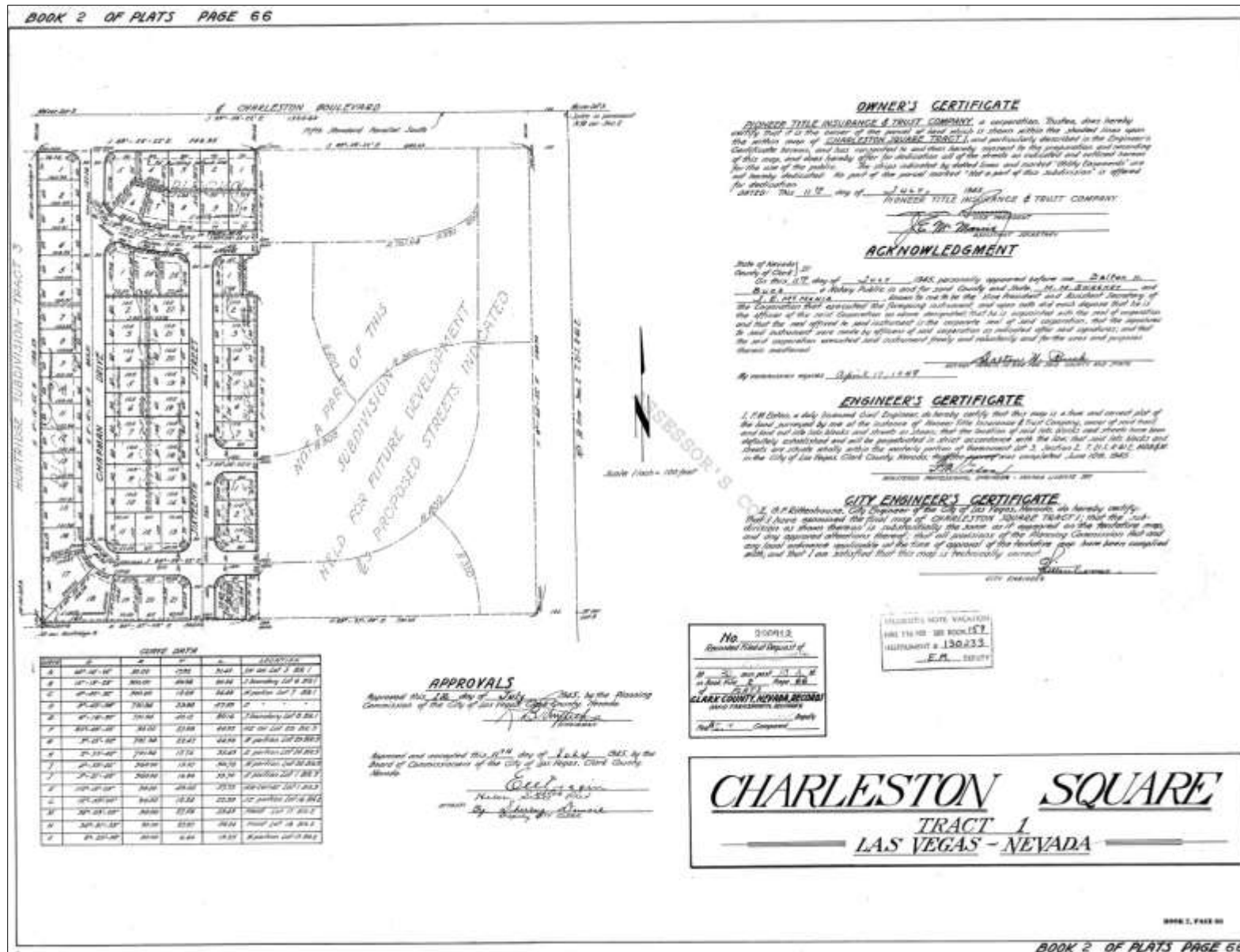


Figure 20. Charleston Square Tract No. 1, platted on July 11, 1945 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

As previously stated, the tract was part of the larger neighborhood plan illustrated by a November 1945 article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. Although a developer's name is not provided, the article states that Lembke Construction Company, on behalf of Mastercraft Homes, Inc., would serve as the building contractor for the 156 lot subdivision. Jack Chapman, whose affiliation is not disclosed, provided much of the information on the neighborhood's development for the article. According to Chapman, residential lots within the subdivision were to range from 60 feet long by 100 feet wide to 55 feet long by 180 feet wide. Dwellings were to consist of wood frame single, family detached homes with redwood siding and shingle roofs. Each of the homes would have three bedrooms and two bathrooms, and in order to alleviate the city's "acute housing shortage," were expected to be completed within one year (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 19 November 1945). The plans for the development also called for the installation of 36-foot-wide, "heavily paved" streets, "full L-shaped" curbs, 4-foot-wide sidewalks, and landscaping, "with a tree planted every 40 feet" (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 19 November 1945). In conclusion, the article boasted that the neighborhood "would be one of the most fully developed and highly restricted areas in Las Vegas and no outbuildings or additions to the homes or fences will be allowed unless approved by a committee of homeowners" (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 20 November 1945).

Although the newspaper article suggests that 31 homes were under construction at the time of its publication, Clark County Assessor records indicate that the earliest build date for single family homes within the tract is 1947. Of the 57 homes currently located within Tract 1, 45 were constructed in 1947 (Photograph 8); one was built in 1950; and ten were completed in 1951. Only one of the buildings (1219 S. Sixteenth Street) is classified as a multi-family residence, or duplex, by the Clark County Assessor (Photograph 9). An aerial photograph showing the Charleston Square neighborhood confirms that most buildings within the tract were constructed by 1950; only four lots to the north of Thelma Lane remained vacant by this date. While assessor records indicate that buildings were constructed on these lots in 1951, they also provide build dates of 1951 for seven residences that are clearly visible in the 1950 aerial.

Subsequent tracts for the Charleston Square neighborhood (Nos. 2–4) were filed during the post-WWII period in 1948 and 1949. Mastercraft Homes, Inc., the building contractor noted in the 1945 article, was listed as owner on all of the plats. Plat No. 2 consisted of five lots along Chapman Drive to east of Tract No. 1 (Figure 21); Tract No. 3 had seven lots situated on a single block to the east of Seventeenth Street and north of Curtis Drive. (Figure 22); and Tract No. 4 was located to the south of Charleston Boulevard, north of the Hillside Terrace subdivision, west of Hillside Place, and east of Seventeenth Street (Figure 23). The largest of the subsequent tracts, Tract No. 4 consisted of three blocks (Blocks 1, 2, and 3) encompassing 21 lots.

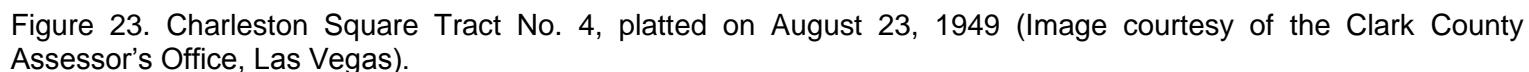
A newspaper article suggests that by 1948, homes within the development were being constructed by Tee Construction Company, a contracting firm headed by Las Vegas contractor Richard "Tony" Toleno and Reuben Speckter of Los Angeles (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 14 October 1948). The article indicates that the



Photograph 8. 1224 Chapman Drive, an example of a single-family, Ranch style home constructed within Tract No. 1 of the Charleston Square Neighborhood in 1947, facing southwest (Source Logan Simpson).



Photograph 9. 1219 S. Sixteenth Street, example of a multi-family dwelling constructed within Tract No. 1 of the Charleston Square Neighborhood in 1947, facing north (Source Google Earth).



company was initiating construction on at least 58 new homes in Tract No. 2.¹ An aerial photograph showing the development confirms that homes within all three tracts were completed by 1950.

Clark County Assessor's records indicate that a total of 92 buildings are currently located within the subdivision. The majority of these buildings, or 68 percent, are located within Tract No. 1. Tract No. 3 has the least number of buildings, with only three remaining. Today, the northern edge of the subdivision along Charleston Boulevard is lined with commercial properties, rather than the single-family dwellings that were once present. Aerial photographs confirm that the residences on Block 1 of the original tract were razed and replaced with larger commercial buildings between 1965 and 1994. In comparison, development within the other Tracts has remained largely unchanged. Photographs suggest that, with the exception of one dwelling that was demolished in the early 1990s to create a parking lot, the original residences remain but have been converted for commercial use. A cluster of multi-family duplexes, the majority of which were constructed in 1950, remain along the south side of Thelma Lane and attest to the developer's desire to provide a higher density of housing to the city's growing population.

FHA-Influenced Subdivisions

Archival research indicates that four FHA-influenced subdivisions were constructed in Las Vegas during the WWII era. These neighborhoods include the Vega Verde Addition within the John S. Park Historic District (1941–1945; 1951); the Biltmore Addition (1941–1946); the Huntridge Neighborhood (1941–1946), and the Mayfair Homes Neighborhood (1941–mid-1950s). Whereas the Vega Verde Addition was constructed in a manner that allowed home buyers to qualify for FHA Title II financing, the other three subdivisions received funding under Title VI and were specifically developed to house non-commissioned officers and civilian employees of the Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range, as well as employees of Basic Magnesium Inc. and their families. The following section provides a brief description of these neighborhoods. More detailed histories of these developments can be found in Mooney (2003a; 2003b; 2003c), Painter (2005) and ICF International (2015), respectively.

The Vega Verde Addition within the John S. Park Historic District (1941–1945)

The Vega Verde Addition is one of two subdivisions comprising the NRHP-listed John S. Park Historic District. The district, which consists of 160 homes and a small park, is located south of downtown between Las Vegas Boulevard and South Ninth Street and Charleston Boulevard and Franklin Avenue. The earlier subdivision, known as the Park Place Addition, forms the western half of the historic district, and the Vega Verde Addition forms the eastern half. The Park Place Addition was platted by John S. Park and his son William in 1928, with most of the residences built in the 1930s. In comparison, the Vega Verde Addition was platted 13 years later and represents the first housing development in Las Vegas to be approved for FHA Title II funding. Because of this, the Vega Verde Addition is the only addition within the larger John S. Park Historic District to be included in this context. Properties within the John S. Park Historic District were surveyed by Courtney Mooney of 20th Century Preservation in 2002. The historic district was

¹ This is presumably a typographical error, as Tract No. 2 only had 7 lots. It is probable that the company replaced Lembke Construction Company on the project, and was hired to finish construction of the development, including new homes within Tract Nos. 2, 3, and 4, and on the few remaining vacant lots within Tract No. 1.

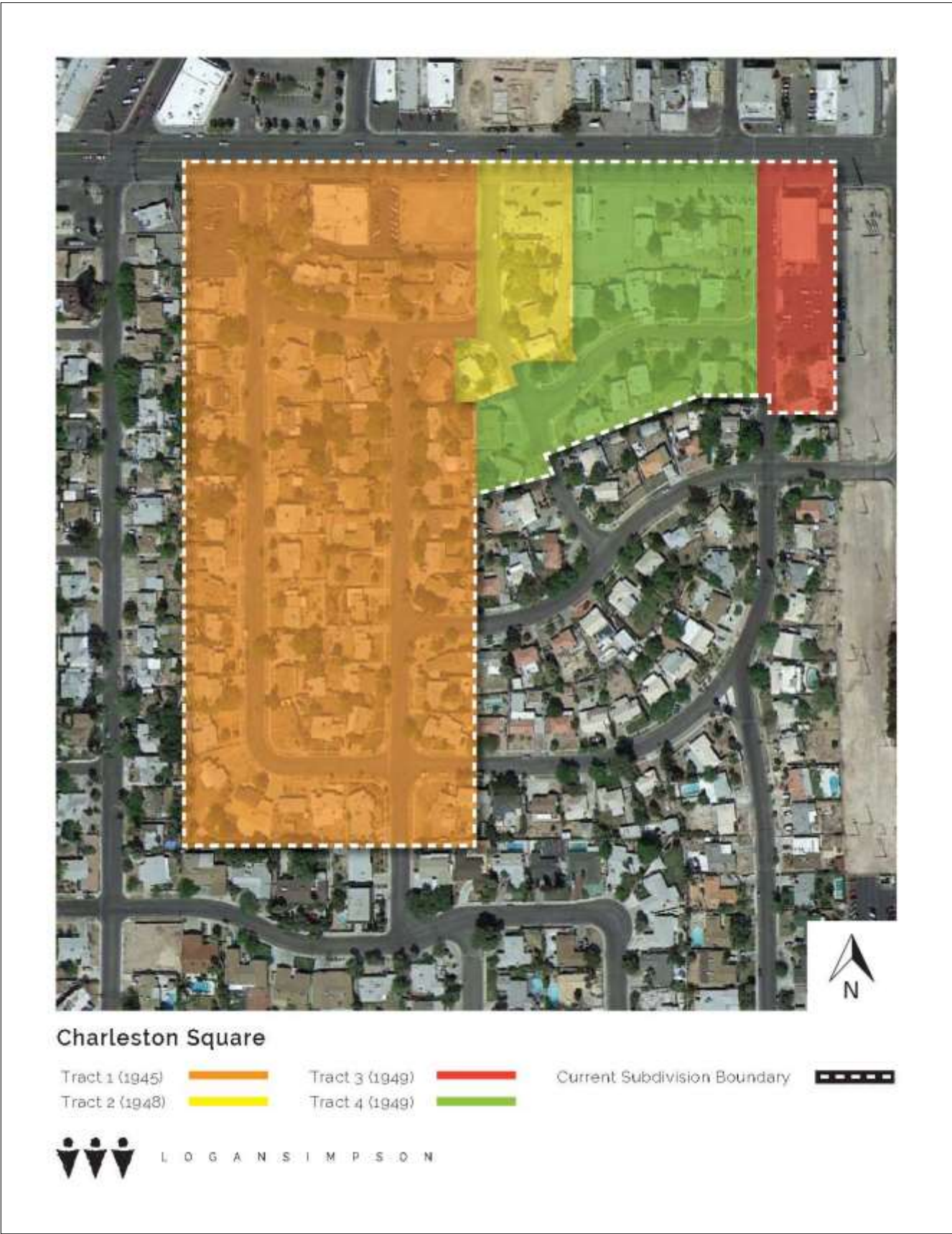


Figure 24. Charleston Square as it appears today (Image taken from Google Earth).

added to the city's historic register on March 19, 2003, and was subsequently listed in the NRHP on May 16, 2003 under Criteria A and C for its "high level of existing historic integrity and the association of the historic building types and subdivision design with local and national historic occurrences and trends" (Mooney 2003a:7).

The Vega Verde Addition within the John S. Park Historic District was platted by Park's son William and his wife Mary Belle and property owners Robert "Leroy" and Mary E. Dutton on April 17, 1941 (Figure 25). The addition consisted of three blocks (e.g., Block 1, 2, and 3) located along Sunset Drive, S. Sixth Street, Park Paseo, Franklin Avenue, and Charleston Boulevard. Blocks 1 and 3 had 24 lots each, and Block 2 was considerably smaller, consisting of only six lots. Most of the lots were 60 feet wide and encompassed between 0.18 to 0.20 acres. The plat also included a park (known today as Mary Dutton Park) on a triangular-shaped parcel to the west of Block 1 and northeast of Block 2 (see Figure 25).

Mooney (2003a) notes that sometime prior to the platting of the addition, 55 acres of land within Vega Verde were acquired by George Franklin and his business partner, Frank Beam. Although the exact date of the land transfer is not known, George Franklin's name appears on the 1941 plat map as the surveyor of the addition. The plat further states that Franklin was responsible for laying out the "blocks, lots, streets, parks, and public places" of the addition, which further suggests that he was involved in the early planning of the neighborhood.

Franklin's involvement with the addition is further confirmed by a February 1941 newspaper article, which states that both Franklin and Beam planned to lay out water lines and sell the lots individually to prospective owners, speculators, or builders who could purchase multiple lots and concurrently build houses on them (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 26 February 1941). The article also noted that streets and lots within the addition were to be "laid out in accordance with FHA regulations" (Mooney 2003a:30; *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 26 February 1941). A second article appearing in the April 18, 1941 edition of the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* stated that the "petitioner" (presumably Franklin), had agreed at the request of "the board" to surface the streets with gravel and install fire hydrants within the addition (*Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 18 April 1941).

In August of 1941, the addition is described by the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* as rapidly growing. According to an article in the newspaper, four homes within the addition had been completed and plans for eight new houses had been developed. The eight homes to be constructed were expected to be available for sale within the next 90 days and were described as having air-conditioning and electric heat. The average cost of the homes was \$6,000 and each was described as possessing six rooms. The article further provided a description of two six-room dwellings which were nearing completion at the time of the article. One of the residences was described as having a basement, a cream-colored exterior, and green trim, and the second was described as a Ranch style home with a white and brown exterior (*Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 2 August 1941). Dale Howell was listed as the owner of the home with the basement, and the owners of the ranch home were Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Grant. The article also provided owners' names for two of the

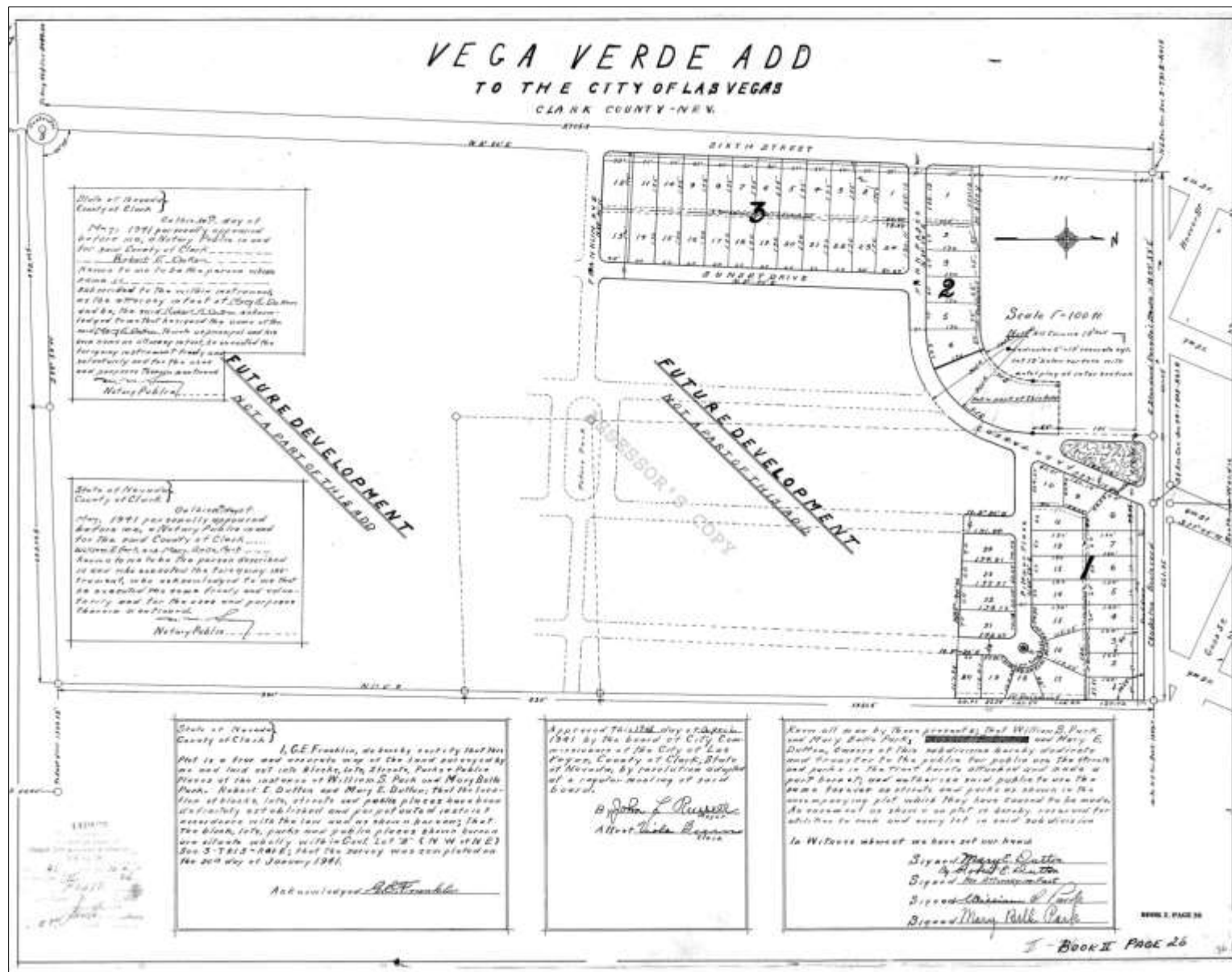


Figure 25. Vega Verde Addition, as platted in April 1941 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

completed homes, as well as those owners currently building homes in the subdivision; these include: Mr. and Mrs. Rex Jarrett, George Franklin, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Wilbourn, Herbert Wollmam, Mr. and Mrs. Van Santongue, Frank Santongue, Alden Sharp, and James H. Downs, Jr. (*Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 2 August 1941).

Clark County Assessor's records suggest that the newspaper article may have exaggerated the early success of the subdivision as only four homes—presumably the four mentioned in the article—were built by the end of 1941. One event that may have contributed to a delay in construction was the sudden death of Franklin's partner, Frank Beam, in December 1941. The scarcity of lumber and the Federal government's restriction on building materials may have also been a factor, particularly since home plans prepared for the subdivision called for wood frame construction. Despite these obstacles, building permit records confirm that work within the addition continued, with seven of the eight planned homes were finished in 1942—well beyond the anticipated 90-day completion date noted in the newspaper article. Interestingly, Clark County Assessor's records list the build date for one additional residence within the addition as 1940, or one year before the plat was formally filed with the city. According to Mooney (2002), this residence located at 1141 S. Sixth Street was constructed for James H. Down, Jr., one of the owners of the four finished dwellings noted within the August 1941 article (Photograph 10). All of these residences remain in the addition today and are considered contributors to the John S. Park Historic District (Table 2).



Photograph 10. 1141 S. Sixth Street in the Vega Verde Addition of the John S. Park Historic District constructed in 1940, facing east (Source: Mooney 2002). The photograph was taken in 2002. The wrought iron porch enclosure is no longer present; otherwise, the building appears the same today.

Table 2. Residential properties within the Vega Verde Addition built between 1940 and 1942
(Source: Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas; Mooney 2002).

Parcel No.	Block & Lot	Address	Year built	Description ^a
162-03-511-011	Block 3, Lot 11	1141 S. Sixth Street	1940	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with a U-shaped front façade
162-03-511-014	Block 1, Lot 18	1201 S. Ninth Street	1941	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with an L-shaped plan
162-03-511-009	Block 3, Lot 9	1133 S. Sixth Street	1941	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with an L-shaped facade and one-car garage
162-03-511-015	Block 1, Lot 17	925 Park Paseo	1941	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with a rectangular footprint
162-03-511-020	Block 1, Lot 11	815 Park Paseo	1941	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with a one-car attached garage
162-03-511-013	Block 1, Lot 19	1205 S. Ninth Street	1942	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with a U-shaped footprint
162-03-511-019	Block 1, Lot 13	819 Park Paseo	1942	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with a square footprint and metal carport at its west end
162-03-511-016	Block 1, Lot 16	831 Park Paseo	1942	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with an L-shaped plan
162-03-511-018	Block 1, Lot 14	823 Park Paseo	1942	One-story, wood frame, Minimal Traditional style house with a rectangular footprint and one-car garage at its west end
162-03-511-007	Block 3, Lot 7	1119 S. Sixth Street	1942	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house with brick and stone masonry veneer
162-03-511-004	Block 3, portion of Lot 3	1105 S. Sixth Street	1942	One-story, wood frame, Ranch style house
162-03-511-001	Block 2, Lot 1	1033 S. Sixth Street	1942	One-story, wood frame, Tudor style house with an L-shaped plan and patio addition

^a = Taken from Historic Resource Inventory Forms prepared by Courtney Mooney in 2002 as part of the field survey for the John S. Park Historic District.

On December 21, 1942, a second tract, known as the “Amended Tract of the Vega Verde Tract 2 Addition,” was filed to the south of the original subdivision by William and Mary Belle Park, Robert and Mary Dutton, L. J. and Joanne L. Gibson, and Estella C. Beam (presumably Frank Beams’ widow). The amended plat added an additional six blocks and 124 lots to the south of Park Paseo, north of Franklin Avenue, and along the east and west sides of S. Ninth Street and S. Sixteenth Street, respectively (Figure 27). It also included the resubdivision of 17 lots (e.g., Lots 21–24 of Block 1 and Lots 12–24 of Block 3) of the original Vega Verde Addition to accommodate the reconfiguration of Park Paseo and the removal of 11 lots (e.g. Lots 1–11) from Block 3 (see Figure 27).

Newspaper articles suggest that Franklin & Law Developers were primarily responsible for the construction of homes within Tract 2 (Mooney 2003a:9). This partnership between the addition’s original developer, George Franklin and John Law formed in April 1945. Buyers of homes within the addition were offered the choice of four home plans to be built by a contractor selected by Franklin & Law (Mooney 2003a:9). All of the models were of wood frame construction, with prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$12,000 (Mooney 2003a:28). More expensive homes, up to \$15,000 in value, were also offered to prospective buyers, but few were built

according to building permit records (Mooney 2003a:28). Building permit records suggest that construction within Tract 2 was also slow, with only 11 homes built between the platting of the tract in 1942 and 1944. The majority of these homes were located on Blocks 3 and 5.

In 1945, the subdivision appeared in the news again, this time advertised as a “new realty development” to the south of Charleston Boulevard (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 14 July 1945). Although incorrectly referred to as the “Vegas Verde Addition,” the article credits Franklin & Law Realty & Development Company with the subdivision’s development, including the installation of sewers, water lines and streets, which are described as nearly completed in the article. It further states that the company planned to begin construction on four homes, with 25 applications for additional dwellings received and pending approval. Many of the homes were reported as sold to returning veterans who were taking advantage of the financing opportunities offered by the “Veteran’s branch of the FHA” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 14 July 1945). According to Mooney (2003a:28), nine homes were completed within the subdivision in 1945 (Figure 26); the following year, 25 homes were built, the resurgence likely due to the lifting of restrictions on building materials. Mooney (2003a:28) does point out that residents were still fighting for water, streetlights, and pavement as late as 1947, however.



Figure 26. Aerial photograph showing development within the Vega Verde Addition, ca. 1945. Charleston Boulevard is visible along the right edge of the photograph (Image courtesy of UNLV Special Collections, Las Vegas).

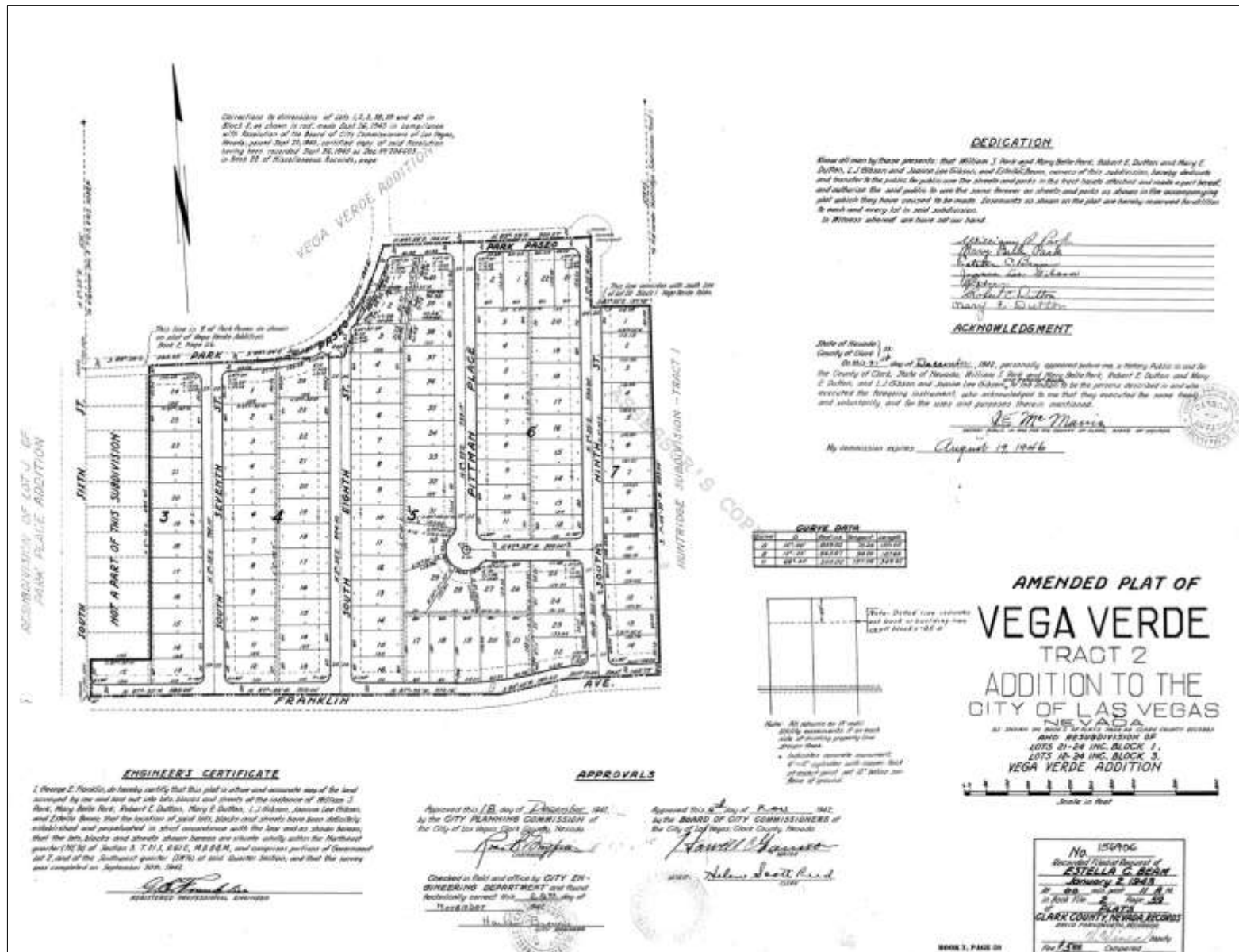


Figure 27. Amended plat (Tract 2) of the Vega Verde Addition, as platted in December 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

The listing of the Vega Verde Addition, as part of the John S. Park Neighborhood Historic District, in the City of Las Vegas Historic Property Register in 2003 paved the way for the development of design guidelines. These guidelines, nested under the applied historic residential zoning, have assisted with the retention of historic building fabric within the district (Figure 28). Although many of the homes have been altered by exterior modifications, the overall condition of the neighborhood remains good (Photograph 11 and Photograph 12). In 2002, Mooney described the neighborhood as continuing “to improve as younger professional families move into the homes and invest money into improvements.” She further noted that property values in the neighborhood had steadily increased an average of \$10.00 per square foot between 1999 and 2002 (Mooney 2003a:10). Furthermore, the creation of the John S. Park Neighborhood Association in 1995 has further served to preserve housing stock within the addition and maintain the “unique way of life” that the neighborhood offers to both longtime residents and prospective buyers.

Biltmore Addition (1941–1946)

The initial plat for the Biltmore Subdivision was filed by Biltmore Homes, Inc. on December 21, 1941, on property formerly owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (Mooney 2003b:9). The irregularly-shaped subdivision consisted of 97 lots located to the north of the I-15 and I-95 interchange along the west sides of N. First Street and Biltmore Drive and the south side of Palm Lane on the north (Figure 29). The lots were situated within six blocks (e.g., Blocks 1–6) that varied in size due to the subdivision’s irregular shape. The lots also varied in size and shape, with the smallest lots located adjacent to street intersections and the largest lots located to the north of Biltmore Drive and along a cul-de-sac at the east end of N. First Street (see Figure 29). Streets within the subdivision were narrow and curvilinear. Housing setback was also curvilinear, with some lots exhibiting as much as 55 feet of setback and others having a setback of only 20 feet. A newspaper article describing the addition noted that the variation in setback was designed to “avoid the old time uniformity of house fronts” (Mooney 2003b:9). Additionally, a 5-foot-wide utility easement was present along the rear of each lot.

Homes planned for the addition were designed by Phoenix, Arizona architect and Secretary of Biltmore Homes, Inc. Orville A. Bell. Prospective buyers could choose from 16 elevations designed by Bell, with the stipulation that their home had to be a different elevation than the ones adjacent to it (Mooney 2003b:9). Although a 1942 newspaper advertisement for the original subdivision depicts a cottage style home with a central chimney, double hung, multi-lite windows, and a one-car attached garage, the majority of the homes within the addition were built in the FHA-prescribed Minimal Traditional architectural style (Figure 30). All of the homes were to be a single story with a shaded overhang, or service porch, and each was to contain two bedrooms and one bathroom. Additional rooms included a living room, dining room, and kitchen. Homes were advertised with a concrete tile exterior, but were predominantly constructed of concrete block with brick veneer (Mooney 2003b:9).

In 1942, three consecutive annexations were filed to the original addition. All three of these annexations—known as Biltmore Addition Annex Nos. 1, 2, and 3—were filed by local businessmen Archie C. Grant, Al E. Cahlan, and E. W. Clark of Victory Homes, Inc. Annex No. 1 was approved by the Board of Commissioners and city on March 4, 1942, and Annex Nos. 2 and 3 were both approved on May 4. Annex No. 1 included 43



Figure 28. Vega Verde as it appears today (Image taken from Google Earth). Note the exclusion of one lot originally within the 1941 Addition from the current subdivision boundaries.



Photograph 11. 1206 S. Seventh Street, example of a Ranch style house in the Vega Verde Addition constructed in 1948, facing west (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 12. 1235 S. Ninth Street, an example of a Ranch style house in the Vega Verde Addition constructed in 1947, facing east (Source: Logan Simpson).

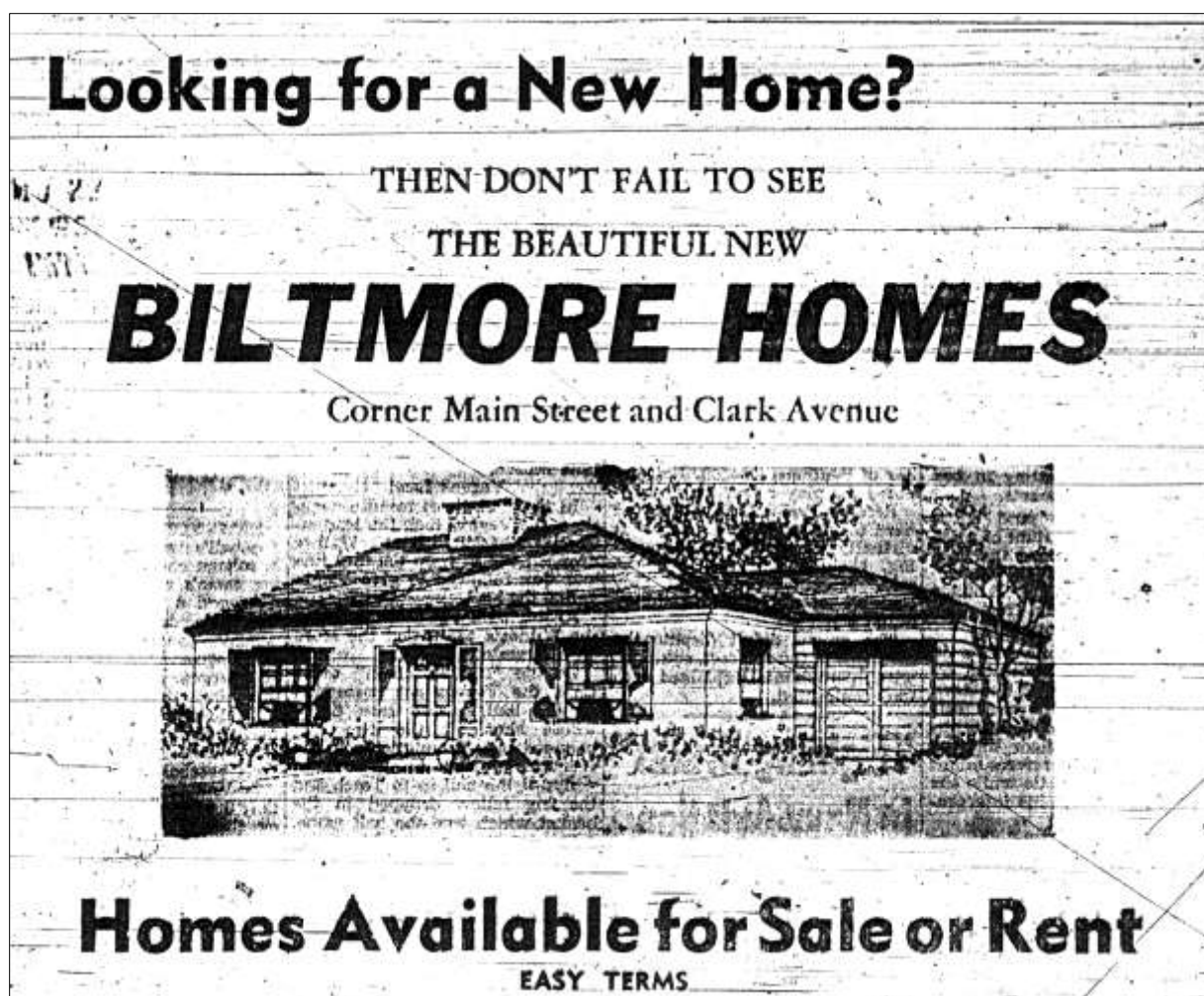


Figure 30. 1942 advertisement for the Biltmore Addition (Image reprinted from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 2 February 1942).

lots—one of which was reserved for an elementary school (known today as the Biltmore Alternative School) (Figure 31). Annex No. 2 was slightly larger, with 55 lots located along N. Fourth Street, Bell Drive, and Bonanza Way (Figure 32). The largest of the plats, Annex No. 3, was situated between N. Fifth Street (now Las Vegas Boulevard), North Ninth Street, McWilliams Avenue, and Bonanza Road and consisted of 61 lots (Figure 33). Unlike the other three plats, the third plat had lots for commercial development and included plans for the construction of a hotel and shopping center (Mooney 2003b:10). Additionally, the lot on the corner of Bonanza Drive and N. Ninth Street was reserved for the construction of the North Ninth Street School. Homes within these later annexations were generally the same as those of the original tract, although the final phase of development also includes some homes built in the Ranch architectural style, which according to Mooney (2003b:10), “succeeded the Minimal Traditional as the most common WWII and post WWII suburban housing type and style.” Newspaper accounts also indicate that dwellings within Annex No. 3 were slightly more expensive, with the original price of at least 10 homes averaging between \$5,000 and \$6,000 (Mooney 2003b:11). This change in price was presumably due to inflation, as all of the buildings were constructed in 1954 (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 19 March 1945).



Figure 31. Biltmore Addition Annex No. 1, as platted on March 4, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).



Figure 32. Biltmore Addition Annex No. 2, as platted on May 4, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

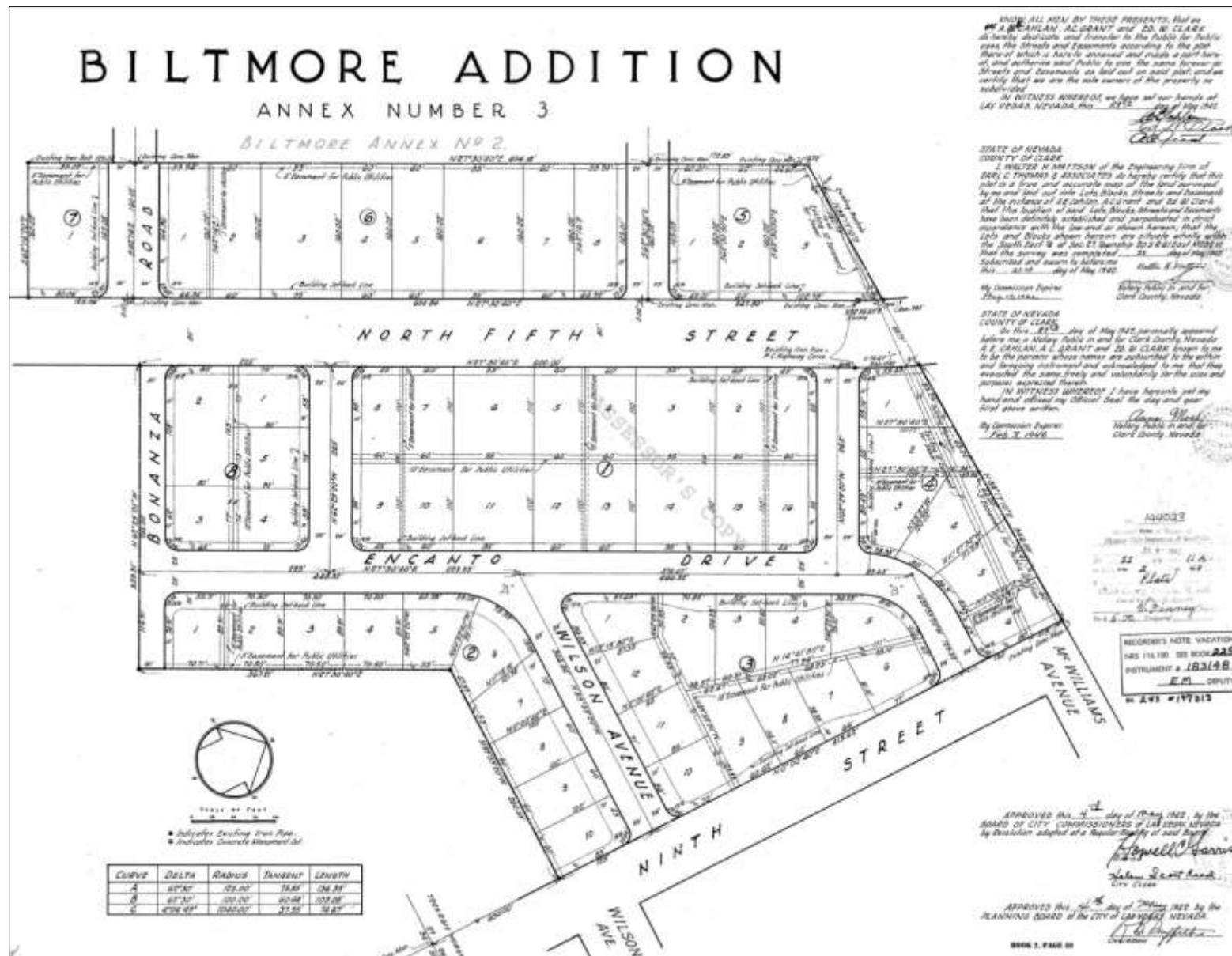


Figure 33. Biltmore Addition Annex No. 3, as platted on May 4, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

Today the subdivision contains 206 single- and multi-family dwellings and commercial properties (Photograph 13 and Photograph 14). Construction years for 205 of these buildings are included in Table 3. Assessor's records suggest that the remaining building was constructed prior to the platting of the original subdivision in 1936. This building, which is located within Annex No. 3 at 721 N. Ninth Street, is similar in style to those built within the original addition, suggesting that the build date is likely a typographical error.

Table 3. Build dates for buildings currently located within the Biltmore Addition (Source: Clark County Assessor's office, Las Vegas).

Construction Year	Biltmore Addition	No. of Buildings			Total (%)
		Annex No. 1	Annex No. 2	Annex No. 3	
1942	79	28	8	—	115 (56.1)
1943	2	14	44	—	60 (29.3)
1944	1	—	—	—	1 (0.4)
1945	1	—	1	—	2 (1.0)
1946–1959	2	—	1	20	23 (11.2)
1960–1969	1	—	—	1	2 (1.0)
Post 1970	—	—	—	2	2 (1.0)
Total no. of Buildings	86	42	54	23	205 (100.0)

The subdivision remains much the same as it did during the historic period (Figure 34). Aerial photographs confirm that residential construction within the addition was largely completed by 1950, with additional commercial development occurring along N. Las Vegas Boulevard (now N. Fifth Street) and E. Bonanza Road between 1950 and 1965. Seventeen vacant lots—once home to single-family residences—are also present within the addition. Twelve of these lots are located within the original addition along the west side of N. First Street. Aerial photographs suggest buildings on all 12 of these lots were razed between 1994 and 1999. Only one and four lots are vacant within Tract Nos. 2 and 3, respectively. According to Mooney (2003b:11), many single-family homes within Annex No. 3 have been converted to multi-family housing. Records on file at the Clark County Assessor's office also confirm that at least ten single-family residences within the original plat and Annex No. 2 were converted to duplexes and fourplexes since 1970. Additionally, aerial photography suggests that all of the original buildings on Block 1 of Annex #3 were demolished sometime between 1973 and 1983. An apartment complex and parking lot is situated on the southern half of the block, and the Neon Museum is located on the northern half.

Huntridge Neighborhood (1941–1946)

The Huntridge Neighborhood is located in the heart of downtown Las Vegas approximately five blocks east of Las Vegas Boulevard and a little over a mile from Fourth and Fremont Streets. The neighborhood, which consists of 572 properties on 140 acres, is bounded by Charleston Boulevard to the north; Franklin Avenue to the south; the John S. Park Historic District and FHA-sponsored Vega Verde Addition to the west; and the



Photograph 13. 105 Palm Lane within the Biltmore Addition constructed in 1942, facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 14. 638 N. Fourth Street within the Biltmore Addition, constructed in 1943, facing south (Source: Logan Simpson).



Biltmore

Addition (1941)	█	Annex 2 (1942)	█	Current Subdivision Boundary	
Annex 1 (1942)	█	Annex 3 (1942)	█		



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 34. Biltmore Addition as it appears today (Image taken from Google Earth).

custom built Charleston Square Neighborhood to the east (see Figure 1). In addition to being the largest of the three subdivisions built under the auspices of FHA's Title VI program, it was one of the first subdivisions in Las Vegas where dwellings were constructed and sold along with the lot to buyers. It was also progressive as it included provisions for an elementary school, park, a theater, and a shopping center, all of which were within walking distance of the neighborhood "in interest of national defense" (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 10 February 1942; Painter 2005:8).

Tract No. 1 of the Huntridge subdivision was filed by Francis D. Griffin and Thomas A. Oakey of Realty Development Corporation (also known as the Huntridge Development Company) on December 12, 1941 (Figure 35). Four additional tracts (Tract Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5) were filed by the corporation in February, November, and December of 1942. Tract Nos. 2 and 3 were largely a continuation of Tract No.1 to the east (Figure 36 and Figure 37), and Tract No. 4 was situated to the south of the other three tracts and included lots along both sides of Franklin Boulevard and those to the south of Oakey Boulevard (Figure 38). The fifth tract was located to the west of Tract No. 4 and with the westernmost lots located along the west side of S. Tenth Streets. The four tracts contained a total of 502 lots situated on 35 blocks (e.g., Blocks 1–35). One hundred and forty four of the lots, or 48 percent of the total number of lots within the subdivision, were located within Tract No. 3. The eastern and western ends of Tract Nos. 2 and 3 joined together to form a 3.5 acre oval-shaped parcel in the center of Maryland Parkway which was reserved for the development of a park. Blocks within the subdivision were either rectangular or L-shaped, with the majority of the lots fronting interior streets. Lots were generally rectangular and measured 60 feet wide. The length of the lots varied from 100 feet to 150 feet, with the largest lots located in Tract No. 1 to the east of Ninth Street. All of the homes were setback 20 feet from the street and had a 5-foot-wide utility easement. Interestingly, this configuration differs from that described in a newspaper account, which stated that, "The distance each house is set back from the curb will be varied to avoid the 'military pup tent' effect" (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 20 December 1941).

According to an October 20, 1941 newspaper article, a total of 75 homes were to be built during the first phase of construction (Painter 2005:9). The newspaper article further stated that the subdivision was to include 18 four-unit apartment buildings in addition to the 572 single-family dwellings, although Painter (2005:9) notes that these multi-family dwellings were never constructed. In a second article printed two months later, President of the Realty Development Corporation, Francis D. Griffin described forthcoming homes within the subdivision as designed for "character, originality, and dignity" in order to "escape the mining town aspects so prevalent in former planned housing developments" (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 20 December 1941). In order to avoid repetition of design, 27 different elevations and 14 basic floor plans for single-family homes were developed (Painter 2005:10). The homes were to be constructed by McNeil Construction Company, the contractor responsible for the construction of BMI. Homes ranged in price from \$4,000 to \$5,000, depending on the type of home constructed and the size of the lot (Painter 2005:10).

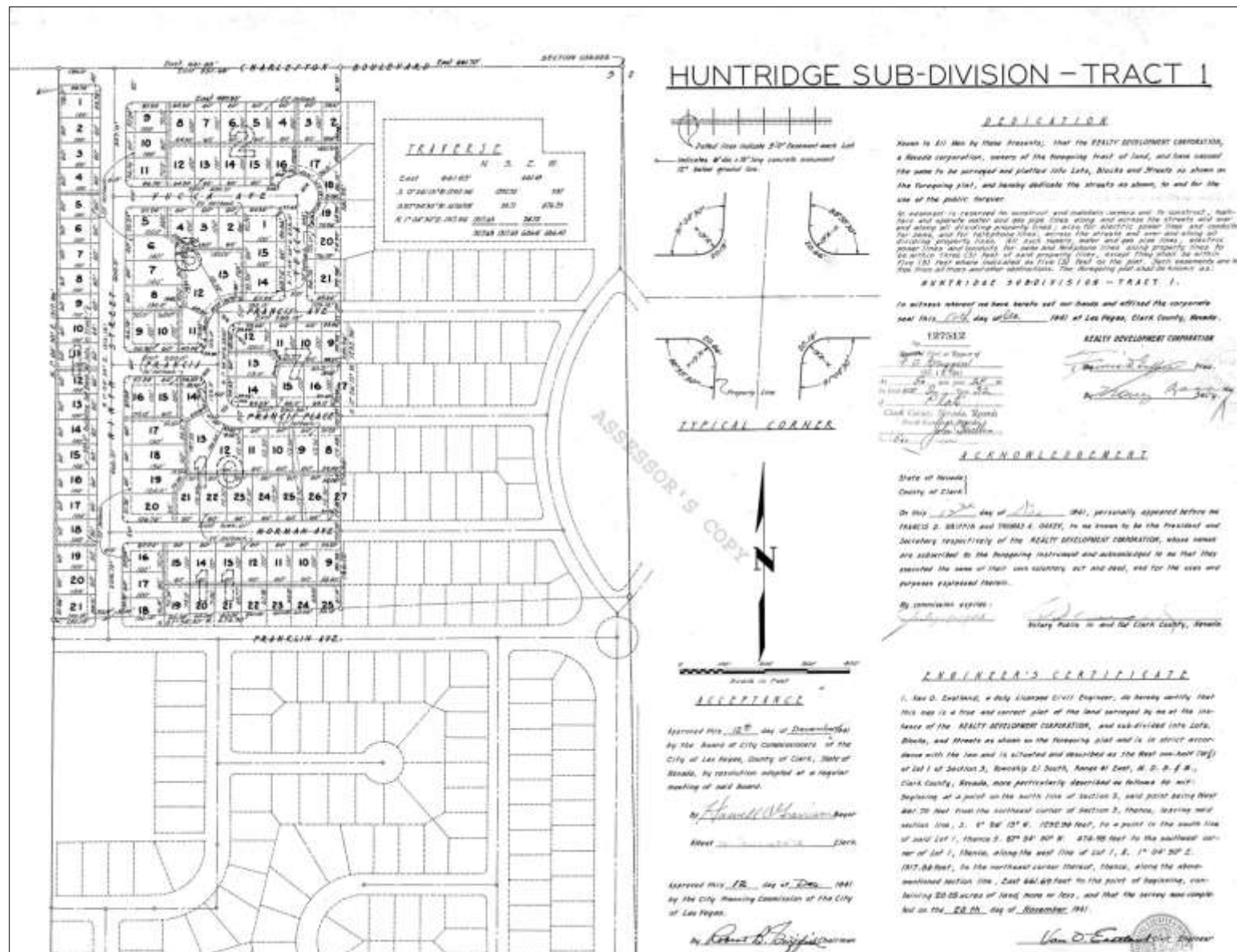


Figure 35. Huntridge Subdivision Tract No. 1, as platted on December 12, 1941 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

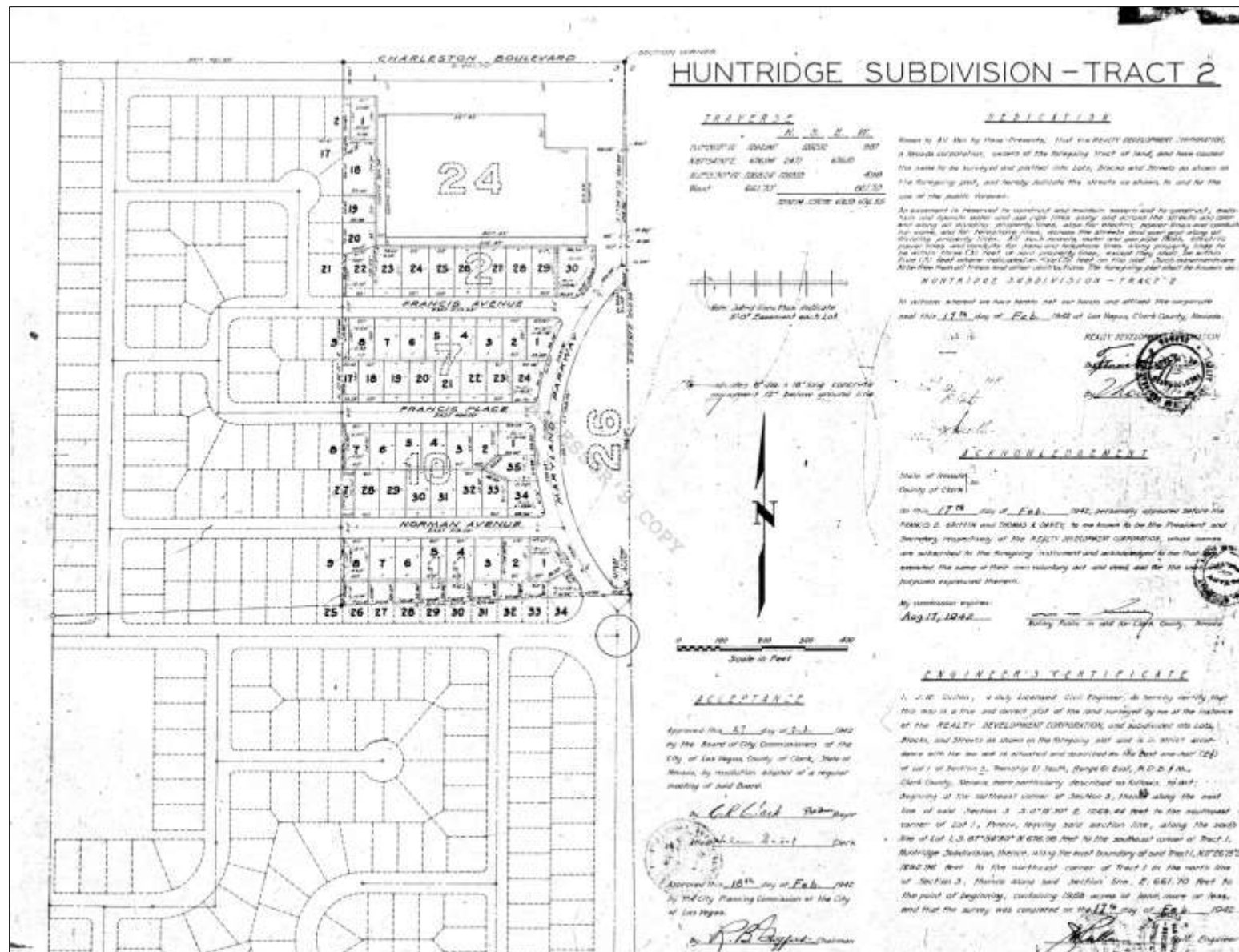


Figure 36. Huntridge Subdivision Tract No. 2, as platted on February 17, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

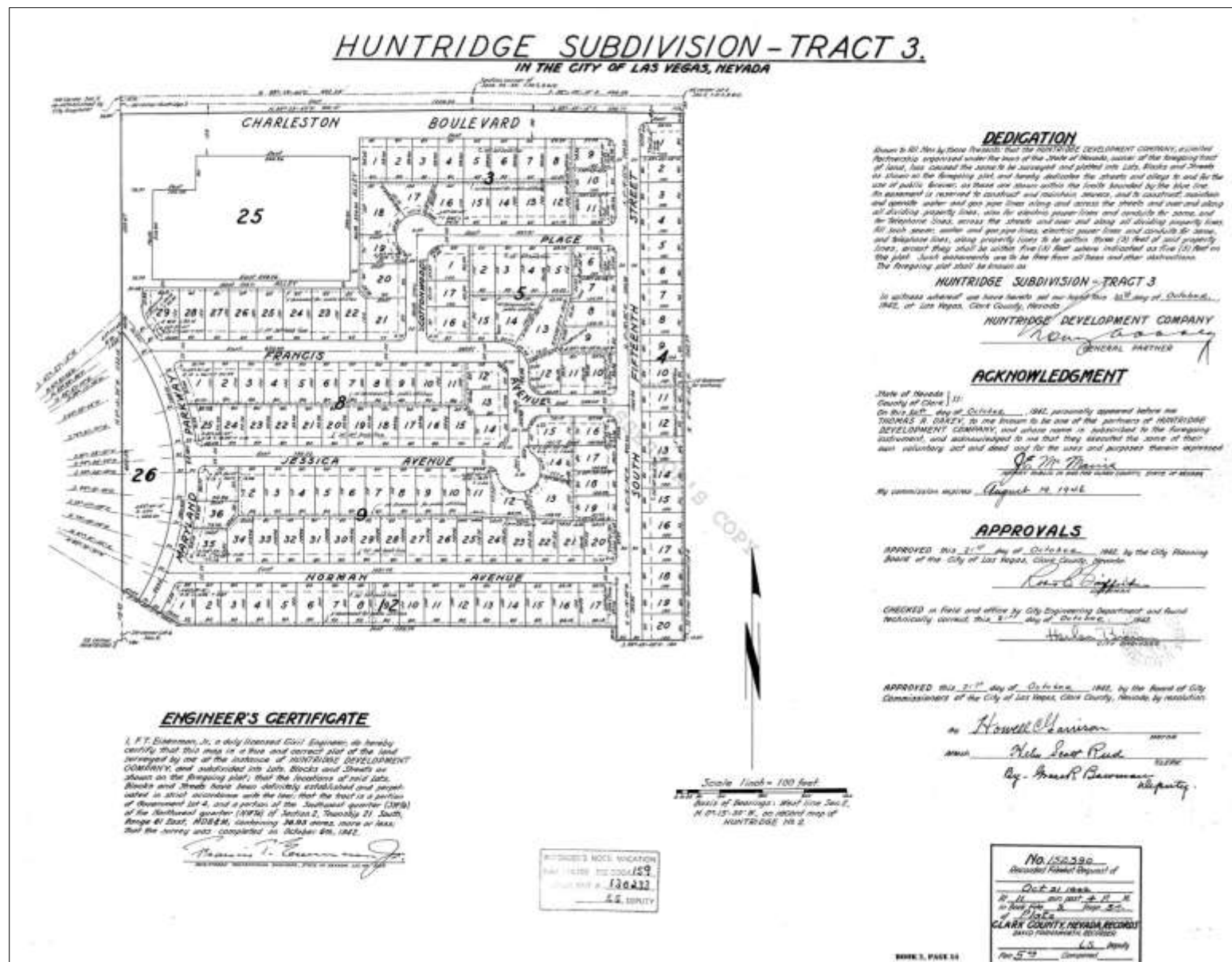


Figure 37. Huntridge Subdivision Tract No. 3, as platted on October 20, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor's Office, Las Vegas).

RECORDER'S NOTE: VACATION
HRS. TAKEN SEE BOOK 172
INSTRUMENT # 140270
J.M. DEPUTY

DEDICATION

[illegible]

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

State of Nevada
County of Clark ss.
I, the 22 day of November 1942, personally appeared before me
and Clark is one from the list of the persons of American
descent born in the United States of America and whose name is shown on the foregoing
affidavit and advised me that they executed the same of their own
voluntary and free will and for the uses and purposes therein expressed.

Clark
Notary Public in and for Clark County, State of Nevada

NOT COMMENCED BEFORE Feb. 2, 1942

APPROVAL

Approved this 4 day of November 1943, by the City Planning Board
of the City of Los Angeles, Clerk County, Nevada.

Checked in field and office by City Engineering Department and found Architecturally correct.
Date: 6.15 day of September 1946.

Approved this 4th day of December, 1942, by the Board of City Commissioners of the City of Los Angeles, Clark County, Nevada, by resolution.

by Howard C. Davis
agent Nelson Scott Reed

ENGINEER'S CERTIFICATE

[illegible]

Francis T. Emerson and J.

City of Las Vegas Historic Context
WWII Era Residential Housing in Las Vegas
LSD Technical Report No. 145648

No. 156817
Recorded Filed of Request of
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA PROBATE COURT
Book 50 Page 37
9/18/05
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA PROBATE COURT
Date: 9/18/05
Per: 05/05
Compared: 05/05

[illegible]

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

State of Nevada } ss.
County of Clark }
On this 2nd day of September, 1942, personally appeared before me
Robert A. Clark, a Justice of the Peace of the County of Clark, State of
Nevada, the following named person, who being duly sworn, testified that the foregoing
instrument and acknowledged to him that they executed the same of their own
voluntary act and were duly bound for the contents thereof as expressed therein.

Notary Public in and for Clark County, State of Nevada
My commission expires August 19, 1944

Approved this 18 day of July, 1942, by the City Planning Board
of the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada.

Checked in field and office by City Engineering
Department and found technically correct
this 18th day of November, 1922.

Harold T. Johnson
City Engineer

Approved this 1st day of June, 1942, by the Board of City Commissioners
of the City of Los Angeles, Clerk Charles Adams, by publishing

by Arthur J. Warner
Agent

Witness John Scott Rude
Clerk

[illegible]

PAGE 3, PAGE 3

City of Las Vegas Historic Context
WWII Era Residential Housing in Las Vegas
LSD Technical Report No. 145648

The park in the center of Maryland Parkway was to have shaded benches, a softball diamond and a touch football field, and a children's recreation area with playground facilities, sandboxes, and a wading pool (Painter 2005:10). Landscaping was to consist of grass and shrubs, with trees outlining its perimeter (Painter 2005:10).

On February 10, 1942, an article reporting on the progress of the Huntridge Neighborhood was printed in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. The article noted that grading within the neighborhood had been completed, and that water and sewer and utility lines had been installed (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 10 February 1942). It further stated that 75 homes were currently in production, with the first house expected to be completed on March 1 (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 10 February 1942). After March 1, the subdivision's contractor, the McNeil Housing Company, anticipated that three buildings would be completed per day. The homes, several of which were pictured in the article (Figure 40), had shingle roofs and were reported to contain six rooms including two bedrooms, a living room, a dinette, a kitchen, and one bathroom, as well as a garage. The article further stated that streets within the subdivision were intentionally curved to slow traffic; a small shopping center was to be provided; and the entire neighborhood was to be landscaped upon completion (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 10 February 1942).



Figure 40. Photograph showing homes constructed by the Realty Development Co. on Charleston Boulevard in 1942 (Image reprinted from *Las Vegas-Review Journal*, 10 February 1942).

Between 1943 and 1944, Realty Development Corporation initiated an aggressive marketing campaign in order to sell homes in Huntridge Neighborhood. Initially, advertisements were targeted toward the city's defense workers, including those employed at BMI and the Gunnery Range (Figure 41). A later advertisement printed in a December 1943 edition of the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* boasted that in addition to its schools, parks, and bus service, it had protective restrictions – which implied the restriction of African-Americans from living in the neighborhood (Figure 42). As previously noted, these covenants were endorsed by the FHA until 1948, when the U. S. Supreme Court determined that the restrictions were unconstitutional and could not be enforced (Painter 2005:11). Other advertisements highlighted the development's amenities, such as its proximity to public transportation, shopping, and downtown Las Vegas, or simply included a recent photograph of a grouping of homes and included catchy headlines to entice future homeowners (Figure 43 and Figure 44). As the war progressed, Painter (2005:11) points out that the emphasis of the advertisements shifted from promoting basic services to comfort, convenience, and the availability of technologically advanced, modern conveniences that enhanced family life.

HUNTRIDGE HOMES FOR DEFENSE WORKERS

WAR WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES,
Engaged in Defense Work,
Living in Las Vegas, Nevada

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Partners of HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, in a desire to lend their aid to the fullest extent in WINNING THE WAR, and in the PRESERVATION OF THE AMERICAN HOME, have launched a program providing BETTER living accommodations for the many War Workers and their families engaged in Defense Work in the vicinity of Las Vegas.

In this program, we have the support and the cooperation of the War Production Board, Federal Housing Administration, Bank of America, the Bank of Nevada and First National Bank of Nevada.

TO THIS EFFORT THIS PROGRAM IS DEDICATED.

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.,
Thomas A. Oakley, General Partner.



\$ **50** ⁰⁰
RENT

WITH OPTION TO BUY

HERE ARE YOUR SPECIFICATIONS

Our homes are of brick or stone, finished with
flooring, and 2 bedrooms. A complete kitchen
appliance, including stove and a 30 gallon electric
water heater is included. The bathroom has
a tub and toilet. A full size bed is included. The
kitchen and bath are equipped with the latest
fixtures. Water, sewer, gas, and electric are being in-
stalled. Lot is 4000 sq. ft. in 1943.

Huntridge Homes are located in a self
contained community, which will in-
clude:

1. Parks
2. Grammar School
3. Playgrounds
4. Complete Shopping Center
5. Amusement and Recreation

HERE IS HOW YOU SAVE MONEY

1. Rent is \$50.00 month.
 2. Price is \$5,000.00.
- If you decide to buy the home within
thirty months, your rent payments will
build up an equity towards the purchase
price.

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

OFFICE 1109 SO. 10th ST.

PHONE 79

WAR PRODUCTION BOARD: ESS SERIAL NUMBER 1641 AND SERIAL NUMBER 2008

Figure 41. Advertisement for the Huntridge Neighborhood appearing in the January 26, 1943 edition of the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* targeted towards workers in the defense industry (Image reprinted from Painter 2005).

A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes

NOW AVAILABLE IN

HUNTRIDGE

"A Good Place To Live"

Schools — Parks — Bus Service — Protective Restrictions

Some of the Special Features in These Homes Are

Bruce Block Hardwood Floors	Built-in Laundry Room
Bath with Tub and Shower	Double Kitchen Sinks
Built-in Hollywood Bath Tub	Large Wardrobe Closets
Forced Air Oil Burning Furnace and Complete Cooling Units with Individual Outlets to Each Room.	

TERMS ARRANGED TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE
Small Down Payment—Monthly Payments Like Rent

COME EARLY AND MAKE YOUR SELECTION
 Visit Our Model Furnished Home

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.

Open Daily and Tuesday and Friday Evenings

Office Corner 10th and Charleston Phone 78

Figure 42. Advertisement for the Huntridge Neighborhood appearing in a December 1943 edition of the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* (Image reprinted from Painter 2005).



I just felt like Huntridge was and is the up and coming place to live in Las Vegas. Everyone here is taking an interest in their home with splendid results. I for one am very interested and intend doing much more to our home this coming year.
—Mr. Stephen Cedzo.

Why Pay Rent? Select Your Huntridge Home Now!

- Every home FHA inspected and approved.
- Hardwood floors.
- Complete cooling and air-conditioning system.
- Oil burning furnace, operated by system of ducts bringing heat into every room.
- Modern plumbing fixtures with chromium plate fittings, including square bath tub in a variety of colors.
- Fully equipped with screens and window shades.

- Corner kitchen sinks.
- Spacious kitchen cupboards.
- Every room has double exposure with large windows.
- Shingle roofs.
- Every home equipped with electric hot water heater.
- Priorities furnished for electric refrigerator and electric stove.
- Highly restricted district for twenty-five years.

**OPEN
SUNDAYS**

**SMALL
DOWN PAYMENT
EASY
MONTHLY PAYMENTS
TO MEET YOUR BUDGET**

HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.

1109 South Tenth Street THOMAS A. O'KEY, General Manager Phone 79

Figure 43. June 1944 advertisement for the Huntridge Neighborhood (Image reprinted from ICF International 2014:24).



Figure 44. Advertisement for the Huntridge Neighborhood appearing in the November 24, 1943 edition of the *Reno Gazette* (Image reprinted from newspaperarchive.com).

Historic inventory reports indicate that as of 2005 and 2014, Tract Nos. 1 and 2 contained 154 buildings, and Tract No. 3 contained 133 buildings, respectively. These buildings consist of both single-family dwellings; commercial properties; and single-family dwellings that have subsequently been converted for commercial buildings (Photograph 15, Photograph 16, and Photograph 17; Figure 45). All of the commercial properties are located along the periphery of the neighborhood, and particularly along S. Maryland Parkway, where aerial photographs suggest that commercial development became widespread after the 1980s. Clark County Assessor's data confirms that the majority of the buildings within the first two tracts, or 75 percent, were constructed in 1942. The remaining buildings were built between 1943 and 1947, with only 11 homes constructed after the close of the war. 1944 was the most productive year for Tract No. 3, with 73 percent of its building stock built in that year. However, unlike the first two tracts, development of Tract No. 3 continued into the mid-1950s, with 17 buildings constructed between 1946 and 1954. Additionally, the records indicate that one of the residences (1450 Cottonwood Place) was built as recently as 1987, although this date may be a typographical error. Aerial photographs confirm that majority of the buildings constructed during the post-war period were located on arterial streets (e.g. Charleston Boulevard and Maryland Parkway).

In recent years, the boundary of the subdivision was expanded to the south of Tract No. 4 to include two parcels of land to the east and west of S. Maryland Parkway (see Figure 45). The tract located to the west of the road currently serves a parking lot for the adjacent St. Anne Catholic Church and Parish School, both of which are located to the east of the road at 1813 and 1901 S. Maryland Parkway (Photograph 18). The



Photograph 15. 1018 Yucca Avenue within the Tract No. 1 of the Huntridge Neighborhood, constructed in 1942, facing southeast (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 16. 1034 Franklin Avenue within Tract No. 5 of the Huntridge Neighborhood, constructed in 1944, facing south (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 17. 1141 Francis Avenue within the Tract No. 2 of the Huntridge Neighborhood, constructed in 1944, facing north (Source: Logan Simpson).



Huntridge Subdivision

Tract 1 (1941) Tract 2 (1942) Tract 3 (1942) Tract 4 (1942) Tract 5 (1942)

Current Subdivision Boundary



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 45. Huntridge Neighborhood as it appears today (Source: Google Earth).



Photograph 18. Parking area (visible at west) and St. Anne Catholic Church and Parish School (visible at right) located within the current boundaries of the Huntridge Neighborhood (Source: Google Earth).

church, which is currently a parish of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas, was founded in 1947 (. This date is questionable, however, as the lot is vacant in a 1950 aerial photograph. Later photographs confirm that the lot remained undeveloped until 1965. Aerial photographs also confirm that the parking lot was added to the west of S. Maryland Parkway sometime between 1994 and 1999. Buildings of unknown function were present on the northern half of the lot as early as 1950 and remained until 1994. Additionally, two parcels were removed from within the original Tract No. 2 boundaries (see Figure 45). The largest of the parcels bisects the John S. Park Elementary on the northwest corner of Sweeney Avenue and S. 10th Street, and the smallest parcel consists of the northeast corner of the lot on E. Oakey Boulevard and S. 10th Street. The reason for the removal of these lots is not known.

The park (known today as Huntridge Circle Park) was officially dedicated in February 1944 after it was deeded by the developer to the city (Painter 2005:10). The area remained undeveloped, however, as late as 1949 due to disagreements among city officials over who should be hired to construct and landscape the park (Painter 2005:10). The lack of development within the park is evident in a 1949 aerial photograph showing the Huntridge Neighborhood (Figure 46). The aerial photograph also confirms that the neighborhood was predominantly built out by this date. Several large trees are visible along the eastern and western edges of the park in a 1965 aerial photograph, and parking lots on either side of the park are present by 1973. Later aerial photographs suggest that the park didn't take on its current configuration until 2004, with this design modified substantially by 2013 (Photograph 19 and Photograph 20).



Figure 46. Aerial photograph showing development the Huntridge Neighborhood, ca. 1949 (Image reprinted Painter 2005). Circle Park is visible near the top of the photograph.

Mayfair Homes Subdivision (1941–1946)

Tract 1 of the Mayfair Homes Subdivision—or the last of the three subdivisions constructed in Las Vegas under the Title VI program—was platted by E. A. Clark and his wife Adeline on October 16, 1941 (Figure 47). The rectangular-shaped tract consisted of six blocks (e.g., Blocks 1–6) containing a total of 103 lots. The tract was located to the north of E. Charleston Boulevard and south of Fremont Street, and included lots to the west and east of S. Fifteenth Street and S. Bruce Street, respectively. The Ladd Addition, platted in 1911, bordered the tract to the northwest, and the Vega Verde Addition within the John S. Park Historic District and the Huntridge Neighborhood were located south of Charleston Boulevard to the southwest and southeast of the subdivision. Lots on the northern and western sides of the subdivision were oriented to face S. Fifteenth and Fremont Streets, with the remaining interior lots facing Carson and Lewis Avenues, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Streets. Similar to other WWII era housing developments, lots within the tract were predominantly rectangular and measured 60 feet wide and 120 feet long, although larger, irregularly-shaped lots were present adjacent to street curves. The tract also included one triangular-shaped lot on the northern end of Block 1 to be used for utilities. With the exception of the utility lot, which was to be surrounded by a planting strip on three of its sides, all of the lots had 11 feet of setback.

On March 16, 1942, the *Las Vegas-Review Journal* ran an advertisement announcing a grand opening for Mayfair Homes Tract No. 1 to be held the following day (Figure 48). Homes within the development were described in the announcement as nearing completion—a claim supported by Clark County Assessor's data which confirms that 86 single-family homes within the subdivision were completed by 1942. The



Photograph 19. Circle Park as it appears today, facing north (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 20. Circle Park as it appears today, facing south (Source: Logan Simpson).

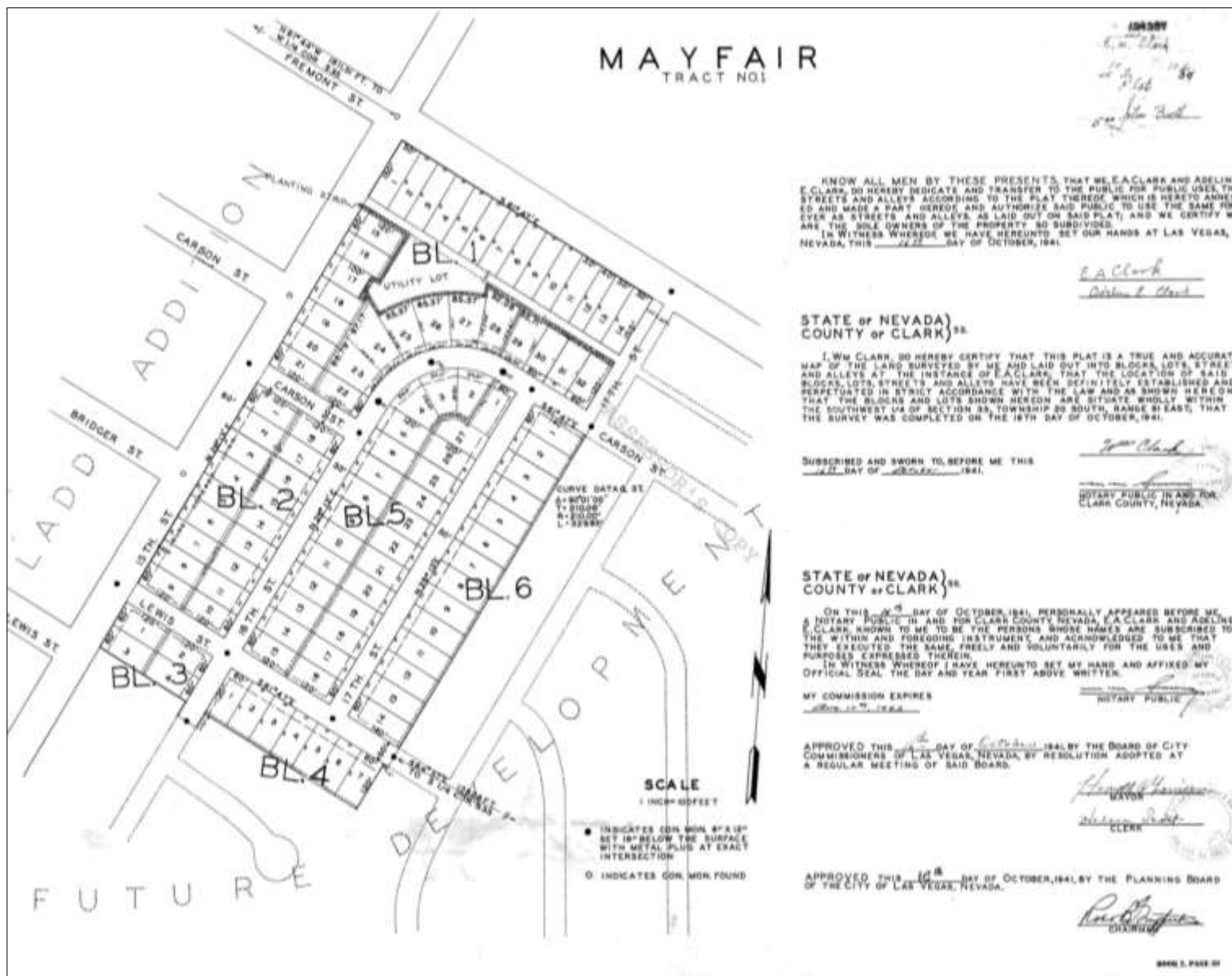


Figure 47. Mayfair Tract No. 1, as platted on October 16, 1941 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor, Las Vegas).

HOME BUILDERS CORPORATION
OF LAS VEGAS

ANNOUNCES---

THE GRAND OPENING
TOMORROW, TUESDAY, MARCH 17
OF THE

MAYFAIR TRACT
NUMBER ONE

LOCATED AT 16TH & FREMONT
DRIVE OUT TOMORROW AND PICK OUT YOUR
NEW HOME -- NOW NEARING COMPLETION.

**OFFICE LOCATED
ON TRACT**

- LOTS -- 60 x 120
- FHA FINANCING
- PAVED STREETS
- CURBS and GUTTERS
- CITY SEWER SYSTEM
- LIGHTS
- Unobstructed View of Las Vegas Valley

Phone 1417 for Appointments

EARL HONRATH E. A. CLARK



Figure 48. Advertisement for the Mayfair Addition appearing in the March 16, 1942 edition of the *Las Vegas-Review Journal* (Image reprinted from newspaperarchive.com).

advertisement further boasted that the development contained 60-foot-wide by 120-foot-long lots, paved streets, curbs and gutters, and lights; was connected to the city sewer; and provided residents with an “unobstructed view of the Las Vegas Valley” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 16 March 1942). It also noted that homes within the neighborhood could be purchased with FHA mortgage insurance.

Two days later, the newspaper published an article about the Mayfair Homes neighborhood, noting that more than 300 homes, as well as a business district, were planned for the completed subdivision. Homes were described as wood frame and stucco construction, with 40 elevations and 10 floor plans available to buyers (*Las Vegas-Review Journal*, 18 March 1942). Similar to the other Title VI neighborhoods, the dwellings were to be constructed so that no two identical homes were present on the same block (Mooney 2003c:10). All of

the homes were to be single-story and contain six rooms, including two bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen, a dinette, and a living room. Some of the homes also offered attached or detached garages (Mooney 2003c:10). Additional features included electric heat and air-conditioning and tiled sinks (Mooney 2003c:10). The article further noted that the entire project had been approved by the FHA, with the first tract laid out in accordance with “FHA plans for new tracts, eliminating alleys and providing for curved streets to slow traffic in residential areas” (*Las Vegas-Review Journal*, 18 March 1942).

In April and May of 1942, Clark filed two additional plats (Mayfair Tract Nos. 2 and 3) to the north and south and east of the original tract, respectively (Figure 49). Interestingly, the third tract was filed one month before Tract No. 2, with additional owners listed as Ernest and Nellie Allen and the Pioneer Title Insurance and Trust Company, with Vice President M. M. Sweeney as signatory. The relationship of these men to Clark is not known. In addition to Clark, husband and wife Earl A. and Sonya Honrath are listed as owners of the second tract. Earl’s name appears at the bottom of the 1942 advertisement for the subdivision’s grand opening (see Figure 48), which suggests that despite not being listed as owner on the first or third tracts, he was involved with the development of the subdivision. Combined, Tract Nos. 2 and 3 added an additional 265 lots to the subdivision, bringing the total number of lots available for construction to 368. In addition to the residential lots, Tract No. 2 also included a parcel along its western edge for the construction of a grammar school, identified on the plat as the “Las Vegas Grammar School District No. 12,” as well as triangular-shaped parking area to the south of an alley connecting N. Seventeenth Street and Bruce Street (see Figure 49). Tract No. 3 also differed from the other two tracts in that all of the lots along the north side of Fremont Street were reserved for commercial development.

Today the Mayfair Homes Subdivision contains 326 commercial and residential properties (Figure 51). Construction years for 325 of these properties are included in Table 4. The remaining building—located at 1512 Fremont Street—has a build date of 1933, or eight years prior to the platting of the neighborhood’s first tract. This is likely a typographical error and the original building was presumably constructed in 1943. Assessor’s data suggests that the majority of the buildings remaining in Tract Nos. 1 and 3 were constructed during the WWII era (Photograph 21 and Photograph 22), with most buildings in Tract No. 2 built between 1946 and 1969. Additionally, 11 of the buildings within Tract Nos. 1 and 2 were constructed after 1970.

An examination of aerial photographs dating from 1950 to 2005 confirms that all of the lots within Tract Nos. 1 and 3 were developed by 1950. Houses were also present along the interior streets of Tract No. 3, with lots along the north side of Charleston Boulevard, the west side of Circle Drive, and south of Fremont Street largely undeveloped by this time. These photographs suggest that the development of the tract first occurred in the interior and subsequently moved out towards the arterial streets. Later aerials confirm that Tract No. 3 was completely built out by 1965, with few changes occurring to any of the tracts after this date.

As noted in Mooney (2003c:11), many of the homes within the neighborhood have been altered by additions, window replacement, and other exterior façade modifications. The homes vary in condition from moderate to poor, with many of the homes on the verge of condemnation. Much of the original landscaping is also no longer intact.

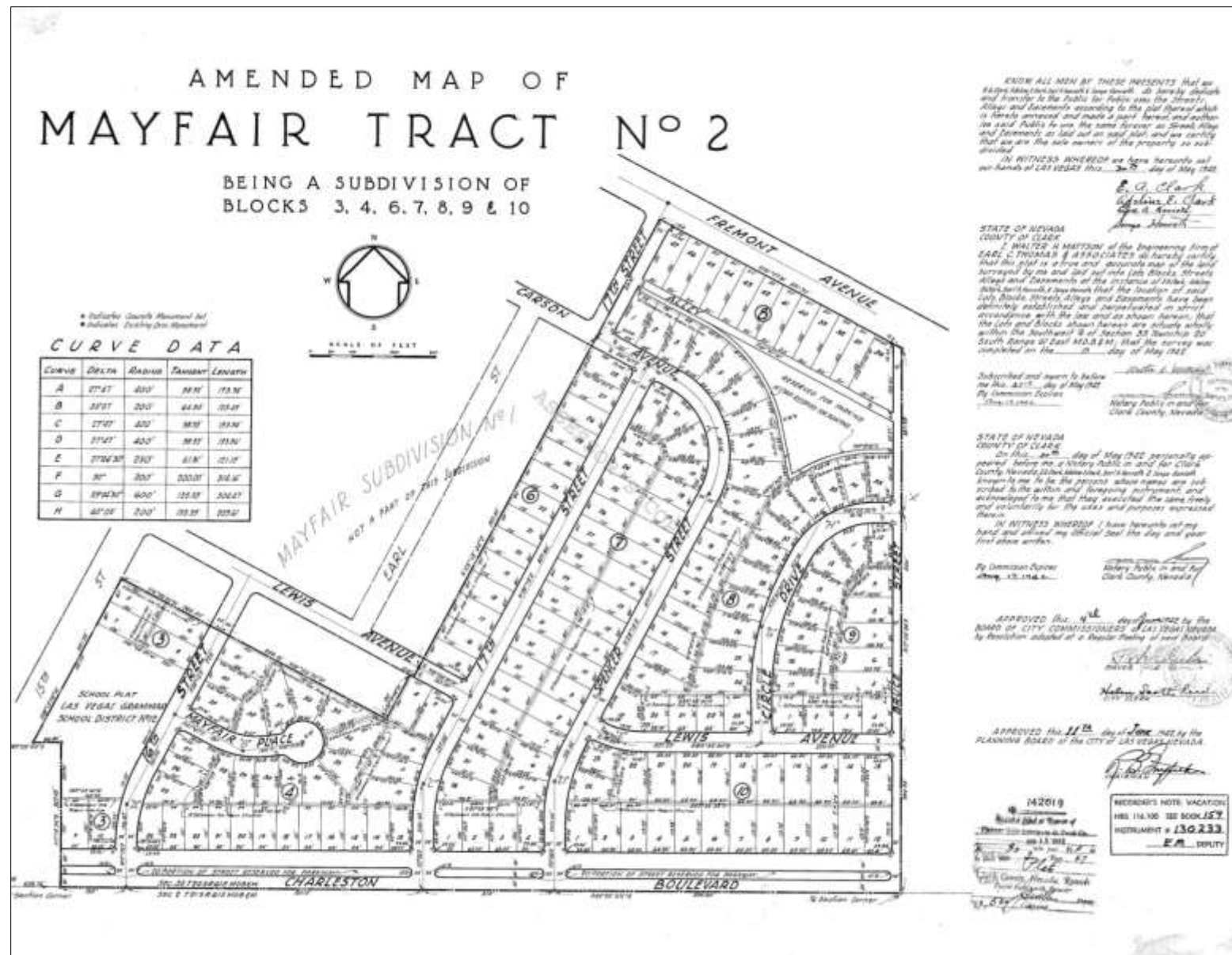


Figure 49. Mayfair Tract No. 2, as platted on May 30, 1942 (Image courtesy of the Clark County Assessor, Las Vegas).



Mayfair

Tract 1 (1941) — Tract 3 (1942) —
 Tract 2 (1942) — Current Subdivision Boundary



L O G A N S I M P S O N

Figure 51. Mayfair Homes Subdivision as it appears today (Image taken from Google Earth). Note that three lots originally part of Tract Nos. 2 and 3 have been excluded from the current subdivision boundaries.



Photograph 21. 228 N. Seventeenth Street within Tract No. 3 of the Mayfair Subdivision, constructed in 1943, facing east (Source: Logan Simpson).



Photograph 22. 210 Spencer Street within the Tract No. 2 of the Mayfair Subdivision, constructed in 1942, facing west (Source: Logan Simpson).

Table 4. Build dates for single family residences currently located within the Mayfair Addition (Source: Clark County Assessor's office, Las Vegas).

Construction year	Tract Number			Total (%)
	Tract No. 1	Tract No. 2	Tract No. 3	
1942	86	50	—	136 (41.9)
1943	—	1	66	67 (20.6)
1946–1959	3	91	2	96 (29.5)
1960–1969	—	14	1	15 (4.6)
Post 1970	2	9	—	11 (3.4)
Total no. of Buildings	91	165	69	325 (100.0)

Recent data from the Clark County Assessor's Office suggests that three parcels have since been removed from the subdivision boundaries (see Figure 51). Two of these lots were originally part of Tract No. 2, and one was located within Tract No. 3. The northernmost lot within Tract No. 2 currently houses a strip mall and the southernmost parcel serves as a station for the Las Vegas Fire and Rescue Department. The parcel within Tract No. 3 is located on the southeast corner of Stewart Avenue and N. 15th Street and includes a commercial building that is currently being used as a church. The reason for the removal of the lots within the subdivision is unknown.

Context 3: Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas

Although the preceding eight subdivisions were constructed to provide war time housing for an influx of workers to Las Vegas, the developments were restricted to white residents. The following context is presented to address the housing conditions for African Americans in the Las Vegas area, who were subject to various forms of de facto segregation. Other minority groups, including Chinese and Mexican Americans, composed relatively low percentages of the overall Las Vegas population during the first half of the twentieth century, largely due to discriminatory policies that continued into WWII.

The Chinese, who migrated to Nevada during the Railroad building era of the late nineteenth century, were subject to hostilities from whites who considered them a threat to employment opportunities. These sentiments were codified in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, re-enacted in 1902, which restricted Chinese immigration to the U.S. The act was not repealed until 1943 during the height of the war (Lyle 2014). The population of Mexican Americans in Las Vegas in 1910 totaled 56 persons. During the Great Depression the U.S. enacted restrictions on Mexican immigration and also adopted a policy of deportation for Mexican immigrants who had not gained citizenship (Lyle 2014a). Additionally, in 1931 the state legislature passed legislation which banned “aliens” from operating gambling houses in Clark County which resulted in casino employers not hiring persons who looked like a “Mexican” or “undocumented worker” (Miranda 1997:106). Mexicans and Mexican Americans also faced segregation in public areas such as parks, theaters, dance halls, and swimming pools (Miranda 1997:106–107). These policies are reflected by the fact that in 1950 the total population of Mexican Americans in Las Vegas included just 200 persons (Lyle 2014a).

While the population of African Americans in Las Vegas was also relatively small in comparison to the Euro-American population, unlike other minority groups, their population continued to steadily climb in the early twentieth century. Following the founding of Clark's Las Vegas Townsite in 1905, African Americans began migrating to the settlement to work for the newly-established branch of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, & Salt Lake City Railroad (Fitzgerald 1981:4; Nevada Humanities Council n.d.). Records for the 1910 Federal census confirm that many African Americans worked as machinists or electricians, and that some owned or operated their own businesses. According to Las Vegas resident Clarence Ray, a professional gambler of African American heritage, there were no "poor blacks" in Las Vegas. Those who were unable to find employment in Las Vegas simply moved on to other western states, such as California or Utah (Blue and Coughtry 1991). Despite the opportunities for employment in Las Vegas, the African American population remained small, and by the close of 1910, only 40 of the townsite's 945 residents—or less than 1 percent of the total population—were African American (Nevada Humanities Council n.d.).

In 1917, Walter Bracken, local manager of the LVL&WC, attempted to initiate a process that would restrict African American residents to Block 17 of the townsite. Although formal segregation laws or those evicting African Americans who already owned property were never passed, most African Americans lived on or around Block 17 in residences, rooming houses, or tents in a narrow area bordered by First Street on the west, Fifth Street on the east, Ogden Street on the north, and Stewart Street on the south (Fitzgerald 1981:45).

The 1920 U.S. Census lists a small population of African Americans within Las Vegas, totaling 52 persons, while the white population totaled 2,304 persons. Perhaps due to the low population, housing and the public education system within the City of Las Vegas were not formally segregated in the 1920s. Historian Claytee White notes that 12 people of the population of 52 African Americans were property owners who lived in the downtown area (White 2004:73). She also described relations among early racial groups as relatively harmonious during the 1920s (White 2004:73). However, the development of the Hoover Dam in the 1930s shifted the dynamics of race relations within Las Vegas (Chattel 2015).

African American residents of Las Vegas came together to form a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1928 in order to facilitate gaining employment for the new dam project. However, none of the initial 4,000 men hired for the dam construction work were African American (White 2004). The Las Vegas NAACP responded to this news by organizing, calling on regional groups for support, and lobbying Las Vegas mayor Ernie Cragin. This effort resulted in 44 jobs being opened to African Americans, although this was a miniscule number in comparison to the thousands of white construction workers hired for the project. The new white workers to the region also brought with them attitudes of race-based prejudice which impacted Las Vegas when they came to town seeking goods and services and entertainment and sought segregated facilities (White 2004).

Newspaper accounts suggest that during the 1930s African Americans were forced to move outside the city limits to an area of the city commonly known as the "Westside," across the San Pedro, Los Angeles, & Salt Lake City Railroad tracks (Anderson 2012:9; Blue and Coughtry 1991:30; White and Michel n.d.). A February 1931 article in the *Las Vegas-Review Journal* states that "colored residents" were making plans to

remove to the Westside; and another article printed in May 1932 confirms the “removal of the colored district” to the Westside in advance of the construction of the Federal Post Office on Stewart Street (Mooney 2003d:13). Historians disagree on the causal factors behind this relocation. Fitzgerald (1981:10) argues that segregation in Las Vegas was driven by the construction of Hoover Dam and the burgeoning tourist industry which “systematically ushered” black residents out of the downtown area to create more space for tourists (Fitzgerald 1981:10). During an interview with students from UNLV, Clarence Ray asserted that African Americans were not ordered to move, but rather opportunistically chose to sell their properties when property values downtown rose significantly and “blacks got to where they could sell their land for a big profit” (Blue and Coughtry 1991:32). It has also been noted that after 1943, city officials including Las Vegas Mayor Ernie Cragin refused to renew black-owned business licenses unless they relocated their businesses from downtown to the Westside (Palm 1977:3; White 2004). Clarence Ray refuted this claim stating, “when blacks started selling their downtown properties, it was said that they were *asked* to move out. That’s not true. A lot of things that they said about Ernie Cragin was mostly street talk. I never heard him say any of these bad things, and I knew him quite well” (Blue and Coughtry 1991:32).

Whatever the cause for the relocation, by the close of the 1930s, numerous African Americans owned businesses that had been established in the Westside area, including several cafes and barber shops, a community grocery store, and a two-story hotel. The redlining policies of the FHA during the 1930s further contributed to the pattern of African American occupancy within the Westside, as black home ownership prohibited developers from gaining FHA financing and caused them to restrict residency to white owners. In 1939, white residents also 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 were ruled in violation of the Fourteenth amendment of the Constitution. Despite this ruling, landlords and housing developers systematically refused to rent and sell to black residents.

In general, the living conditions on the west side of Las Vegas were poor. According to Woodrow Wilson, a labor activist and African American resident of West Las Vegas in the 1940s, most people rented enough land on which to erect a small tent or shack; many of the structures were erected beneath mesquite trees in an effort to shade residents from the harsh desert sun. Cooking was accomplished on a communal-type stove, which was situated outside the tent, and many families pooled their efforts to prepare food for their families (Coughtry and King 1999:57). Most structures lacked electricity or running water, and outhouses and communal toilets were common until the sewer was extended to the Westside in the 1950s (Coughtry and King 1999:58). Despite continued lobbying efforts on the part of African American residents of West Las Vegas to receive infrastructure improvements in the 1930s and 1940s, city leaders stated that the low property values of the Westside did not warrant city expenditures for improvements (White 2004).

On June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 which, in part, proclaimed “there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin.” It further ordered that all government contracts with defense industries include anti-discrimination provisions (Fitzgerald 1981:7). Between 1942 and 1944, the African American population of Las Vegas soared, largely due to the construction of Basic Magnesium, Inc. and the provisions of EO 8802. Production at Basic Magnesium commenced in 1941, and the plant operated until the

fall of 1944. Prior to WWII, the black population in all of Clark County did not exceed 180; three years later, the black population in West Las Vegas alone numbered over 3,000 (Blue and Coughtry 1991:35). BMI employee Woodrow Wilson noted that blacks typically worked “manual labor” and “menial” jobs, with most “assigned to the jobs in the units where the hot metal was being handled and down in the preparation building where it was hot” (Coughtry and King 1990:33). He further noted that turnover was low, as the work was “so much better” than their previous work in southern states of origin such as Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Arkansas (Coughtry and King 1990:33).

More than 4,000 African Americans arrived in southern Nevada during the first two years of BMI’s operation. While EO 8802 stated that there would be no discrimination in government employment, these policies did not extend to housing, which—for those who worked at BMI—was fully segregated. The Hammes-Euclemiler Company of Los Angeles, California built Carver Park in the Basic Townsite (now Henderson) for the African American employees of BMI between 1941–1943; the development, which consisted of multi-family homes comprising 324 units, was designed by prominent African-American architect Paul R. Williams in 1941 (Figure 52). The development was located on the east side of Boulder Highway near Lake Mead Drive; it had 64 units for single workers, 104 one-bedroom units, and 52 three-bedroom apartments, as well as a school and recreation hall (Lyle 2012). On October 14, 1943, the first African American residents of Carver Park—Mr. Robert C. Williams, his wife Rosie, and their children Theodore, Cleopatra, Roscoe, Clarice, and Yvonne—moved into the development (Figure 53) (Lyle 2012). The development later housed black airmen from Nellis Air Force Base. Interestingly, Wilson noted that although “excellent housing for the time,” the Carver Park development never reached its full capacity because “there wasn’t anything out near Carver



Figure 52. Carver Park, date unknown (Image reprinted from Lyle 2012).



Figure 53. Mr. Robert C. Williams, his wife Rosie, and their children Theodore, Cleopatra, Roscoe, Clarice, and Yvonne—taken on October 12, 1943 (Image reprinted from the University of Nevada’s *Documenting the African American Experience in Las Vegas* website [<http://digital.library.unlv.edu/aae/timeline#14>], accessed on 9 March 2015).

Park that was close,” and people “didn’t want to be bothered by staying that far from the action” in West Las Vegas and Las Vegas proper (Coughtry and King 1990:41–42).

The FHA continued its policy of maintaining the color line when providing mortgage insurance during the war, justifying it along economic lines such as the stabilization of resale values. In Las Vegas, the first major private housing project to be constructed during the war was the Huntridge development. The development provides an example of how the FHA’s race-based policies influenced neighborhood developers, as those neighborhoods of “mixed-race” were frowned upon by the agency. In an interview with Las Vegas resident and labor activist Woodrow Wilson, he notes that:

A young white kid from Arkansas came here. He had saved \$150, and I had about \$500. He was working in stores and I was working in stores [warehouses] at BMI. We were riding to work together, and we came by the Huntridge area. He applied for one of the houses over at Huntridge. They were asking for a \$300 deposit on the house. He had \$150.

I wanted to buy a house, too, and I told them I had \$300 I’d deposit. “Sorry, we can’t accept your \$300.” They were asking \$300, but they accepted his \$150 deposit. I thought it was totally ridiculous to set aside a housing project and segregate it, but they refused my application emphatically. They weren’t permitting blacks to live there. They were that bold! They were that bold all over Las Vegas!

Those Huntridge houses were nice houses and cheap—dirt cheap. They were a tremendous buy. Blacks were forced to live in West Las Vegas. You could have had the First National Bank and it didn't matter. Black people had money. Money wasn't the problem; it was a restrictive, discriminatory practice that was the problem (Coughtry and King 1990:50).

In July 1942, it was noted in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that housing conditions in West Las Vegas were “deplorable,” declaring that, “tents, shacks, and sometimes nothing at all except beds are being placed in the vacant property...” (Mooney 2003d:17). Families of six or more were living in one-room cardboard shacks, the majority of which lacked running water and sewer service (Figure 54). When city building inspector R. S. Norton was asked to review the area for code enforcement, he replied that he had no jurisdiction unless a permit was issued. He was subsequently given jurisdiction by the city board and was ordered to determine the best way to halt the building of additional shacks. One solution he proposed was to construct a trailer camp facility for black workers. The Federal government approved \$29,000 to construct the trailers, as well as two utility buildings, four garbage platforms, a sewer disposal area, and a water system. It is unclear when, or if, these improvements were made in the Westside, but nearly six months later, a December 1942 article in the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* notes that a health study was to be conducted within West Las Vegas due to concerns over the potential for epidemics due to unsanitary conditions (*Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 16 December 1942).



Figure 54. Housing conditions in Westside Las Vegas, ca. 1942 (Photograph courtesy of the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas).

As WWII came to an end, the poor living conditions on the Westside could no longer be excused by the lack of building materials and wartime housing shortages. The city decided that the best way to handle this public embarrassment was through mass slum clearance. Between September 1944 and April 1945, roughly 375 substandard shacks and cabins, and 50 privies were demolished or razed with no plans by the city for replacement. It is not clear where the residents of these houses relocated. It wasn't until the construction of Marble Manor—an FHA-sponsored public housing project of 50 duplexes built on the southwest corner of Washington and H Street—that strides were made to improve living conditions for the city's African American community (Figure 55). Three years later—in 1954—the Berkley Square subdivision was platted. This neighborhood, which was designed by prominent African American architect Paul R. Williams and named after one its financiers, Oakland civil rights activist Thomas L. Berkley, provided an additional 148 single-family homes; although, this was a considerably small number based on the city's population of 16,000 black residents(Painter 2007).



Figure 55. Aerial photograph of the Marble Manor public housing project, ca. 1952 (Image reprinted from Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas, Nevada [1952]).

SECTION II: ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII

In the pre-WWII era, national trends in residential architecture included the development of the prominent Period Revival styles which included a number of subsets such as Colonial Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Cape Cod Revival, and Tudor Revival. The Craftsman style, which gave birth to the Bungalow, also emerged as one of the most popular styles of the early twentieth century. The Bungalow, as a rejection of late nineteenth century Victorian ornateness, was spare in its detailing. The rectangular-shaped form of the building was more utilitarian in nature and incorporated gabled roofs with wide overhanging eaves. The front roofline often extended past the main façade creating large covered porches which proved ideal in sunny hot

climates (McAlester and McAlester 2004; Myers et.al. 2010). However, with the standardization of housing materials initiated by the FHA during the Great Depression years and the material restrictions faced throughout WWII, an even less adorned, modest type of residential architecture emerged on the national scene in the early 1940s; in its most refined application this movement which included the development of a broad range of types and architectural styles would eventually become known as the Modern period.

The Minimal Traditional type represents the earliest of the Modern architectural expressions to emerge in residential subdivisions. The type predates WWII and remained popular into the 1950s. Borrowing from aspects of the Tudor Revival and Bungalow, these one-story homes included medium-pitched roofs with front gable variants as well as hipped roof variants with modest overhanging eaves. The rectangular-shaped homes were generally small and possessed limited detailing and served as an embodiment of FHA principles of “small house” design (McAlester and McAlester 2004; Mooney 2003a). The Minimal Traditional type of housing became the predominant architecture type in Las Vegas during World War II.

The Impact of the FHA on Residential Housing Design

In the first years of the Great Depression, the American housing industry saw a precipitous decline in new housing construction. With a primary goal to stimulate housing construction, Congress passed the National Housing Act in 1934 to provide mortgage insurance on new construction and to assist with refinance of owner-occupied housing. The FHA served as the implementing agency of the legislation and, in the interest of creating sound investments, called for the creation of uniform guidelines in housing design and construction. The FHA recognized a broad need for modest, affordable housing which could be constructed throughout the country and created technical bulletins with specific plans that developers as well as individual builders could use.

The chief reference guide put forth by the FHA technical division was *Principles of Planning Small Houses*, first released in 1936 and reissued throughout the 1940s. The house plans presented in the Bulletin recognized the primacy of maintaining functional space within a small home. Along these lines, the bulletin also advised builders to consider the placement and orientation of the home on the lot to achieve optimum ambient temperature, natural light, and views. The square-shaped home, for example was touted as preferable over irregular forms, as uniform squares allowed for conservation of materials (Federal Housing Administration 1940a). Additionally, the bulletin called for simple, lower-pitched roof lines which emphasized the horizontal mass of the dwelling. In a foreshadowing of the ranch style yet to be popularized, the bulletin noted “exterior proportions are also improved by setting the house as low on the ground as possible” (Federal Housing Administration 1940a:37). The bulletin also specifically stated that “simplicity in exterior design gives the small house the appearance of maximum size. The fewer different materials used on the exterior the better the appearance usually will be” (Federal Housing Administration 1940a:37). Despite exhortations for simplicity, the bulletin suggested varying the materials between houses as well as varying building orientation on the lots in an effort to promote heterogeneity in subdivisions (Figure 56). Ultimately, it was the “small-home” guidelines developed by the FHA that fostered the development of the “Minimal Traditional” style home with its small, rectangular-shaped form, low to medium pitched roofs, and uniform wall materials (Quimby McCoy Preservation Architecture 2012).



Figure 56. FHA's depiction of how to achieve variation among small houses through varying material selection and building orientation (Image taken from Federal Housing Administration 1940a).

War-time Restrictions and Impacts upon Housing Design and Construction

With the onset of World War II, the ability of developers to acquire construction materials became increasingly restricted; as such, opportunities to vary facades through different material use became more limited and building appearances became more standardized. A 1941 article in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* noted the potential impacts of war time restrictions on the housing construction industry. Lumber company owner Ed Von Tobel noted that “priorities on metals, raw materials and finished products which go into a home may in the near future cause delays in buildings and remodeling in many circumstances” (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 13 September 1941:5). Von Tobel quoted J.C. Nichols of the federal Office of Production Management as stating there was an existing need for 200,000 houses for defense workers with the potential for an additional 200,000 over the next year which would further strain limited construction material resources (*Las Vegas Review Journal* 13 September 1941:5). Recognizing the need to coordinate the efforts of various federal agencies involved in the production of war-time housing, the following year President Roosevelt created the National Housing Agency, an umbrella agency charged with oversight of 16 separate agencies- including the FHA (Mason 1982).

In July 1942, the War Production Board (WPB) issued a directive which formally restricted the distribution of construction materials within the national housing industry. Both private and public housing developers were required to submit preference ratings for materials distribution which were limited to areas considered essential to the war effort (War Production Board 1942). The WPB and the National Housing Agency also

adopted *War Housing Construction Standards*, which impacted the design of dwellings by limiting the location, materials, and maximum floor areas of homes, as well as restricting materials used for plumbing and heating installations (Federal Housing Administration 1943:6). The WPB specifically noted, “wherever possible, designs should make use of substitutes for all the metals, but where necessary, designs must be such as to use a minimum amount of them. Similarly, lumber use must be scrutinized with an eye toward the employment of marginal grades and sizes, and dimensions selected that will result in a minimum of cutting waste in regard to materials” (War Production Board 1942:1). Amendments to Standards in 1943 did allow for a small increase in the maximum square footage of construction to “improve the livability of dwellings” (Federal Housing Administration 1943:6).

Interestingly, because the WPB restricted the use of common materials such as steel, copper, and lumber the FHA made allowances in its standard construction requirements for the acceptance of alternate materials and construction methods. However, while the WPB called for all construction to “be of the cheapest, temporary character with structural stability only sufficient to meet the needs of the service which the structure is intended to fulfill during the period of its contemplated war use”, the FHA continued to stress the importance of “sound structural quality as a requirement of houses to be financed with FHA-insured mortgages” (War Production board 1942:2; Federal Housing Administration 1943:9). In this respect, the FHA did not cede authority for wartime residential construction to the WPB, but continued to collaborate with developers in critical defense areas in order to assist with community and architectural planning (Federal Housing Administration 1943). As the war progressed, the Minimal Traditional type continued to play a significant role in the architecture promoted by the FHA, and its modest size and detailing conveniently conformed to WPB standards.

Manifestation of National Architectural Trends in Las Vegas Residential Subdivisions

In the pre-WWII era, the residential architecture of Las Vegas largely followed national trends, namely adopting the prominent Period Revival styles which included a number of subsets such as Colonial Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival, Cape Cod, Spanish Eclectic, and Tudor Revival. As the city entered the Great Depression and the FHA became involved in fostering residential development, revival styles in Las Vegas were replaced by the Minimal Traditional style. Mooney (2003b) reports that early variants of the Minimal Traditional style in Las Vegas included adaptations of Cape Cod Revival stylistic elements.

Minimal Traditional Cape Cod variant residences can be seen in the form of rectangular-shaped buildings with horizontal, symmetrical facades, steep, side-gabled roofs, and a central gabled front porch. The porch gable may also include a classical pediment. The rectangular-shaped multi-lite windows also frequently include decorative shutters. The walls are either brick or have clapboard siding and an interior brick chimney is nearly always present (Stokes et.al. 2007).

Minimal Traditional type houses draw characteristics from period revival as well as bungalow styles. These single-story homes are box-like and can take either rectangular or L-shapes; although rectangular-shape is predominant. The low-pitched roofs are of the gable or hip variety with virtually no eave overhang. A small front porch is typically present along the main façade. The walls of the buildings were generally brick and at

the time of their completion, could be painted or unpainted. There is typically no decorative detailing along the façade. The use of steel-casement windows was common but wood frame windows can also be found (Stokes et.al. 2007).

Ranch style architecture developed contemporaneously with and gradually replaced the Minimal Traditional architectural type as its more elongated floor plan readily lent itself to the growing needs of larger families in the U.S. California architect Clifford May, who designed the first modern Ranch style home in 1932, is credited with popularizing the Ranch style in the post-war era with his series of articles published in *Sunset* magazine during the 1940s (Maxwell and Massey n.d.).

Early Ranch style homes in Las Vegas shared many characteristics of the Minimal Traditional architectural style including one-story massing and horizontality, but favored L-shapes with projecting front gables. The rooflines became lower in pitch and incorporated wider overhanging eaves. Large picture windows were incorporated into the front elevation and entry doors were typically located under porches. The carport, and later garage, became a prominent feature of the home. These features were often incorporated under the existing roofline which further added to the horizontal expanse of the front facade. The placement of the carport also allowed for economically feasible conversions to rooms for additional space (Maxwell and Massey n.d.). Over the next two decades, Ranch style homes expanded in size and incorporated more elaborate detailing and multiple building materials. While hesitating to create an official definition of Ranch style architecture, Clifford May stated “most of us describe any one-story house with a low, close-to-the-ground silhouette as a ranch house. When a long, wide porch is added to this form, almost everyone accepts the name. And when wings are added and the house seems to ramble all over the site, the name is established beyond dispute” (May 1946:IX).

Biographies and Professional Contributions of Architects, Builders, Developers, and Corporations

Biographical and historical information on selected architects, developers, builders, and corporations who worked in Las Vegas between 1941 and 1945 is provided below. Background research suggests that the majority of the developers and architects are American born and white. Additionally, all of the individuals are male, although some women—namely the wives of developers—are listed as owners on historic plats. In general, developers discussed below are typically native Nevadans who became well known and powerfully connected through organizations, business opportunities, or politics. The majority of these men were politicians or entrepreneurs who experimented in the real estate industry as a means to supplement their wealth. Only one professional architect—Orville Albert Bell—was identified during the archival research effort. Like many of the builders, Orville resided in Phoenix, Arizona where he designed a number of public Depression era buildings and single-family residences in at least two neighborhoods. Builders consist of both small-scale, family owned businesses and large corporations with multiple offices across the West.

Beckley Subdivision

Guy Dewey Mathis

Guy Mathis, the builder responsible for the construction of at least two homes within the Beckley Addition, was born in Gainesville, Texas on November 5, 1898. A WWI registration card indicates that he was still living in his hometown as late as 1918 and was employed as farmer. In 1920 and 1930, he is listed in the

Federal Census Schedule for Amarillo, Potter County, Texas as a “house carpenter” (Census of Population and Housing 1930). Sometime between 1930 and 1940, Mathis migrated to Las Vegas where he continued to work in the housing industry as a building contractor (Census of Population and Housing 1940). He resided in the city along with his wife Alma A. and son Guy, Jr. until his death on June 3, 1984.

Biltmore Addition

A. E. Tiffany and Orville Albert Bell (Biltmore Homes, Inc.)

A. E. Tiffany and Orville A. Bell were affiliated with Biltmore Homes, Inc., the corporation responsible for platting the first (1941) phase of the Biltmore Addition (Mooney 2003b:9). At the time of the neighborhood’s platting, Tiffany was the corporation’s vice president and Bell was listed as its secretary (Mooney 2003b:9). While no information on Biltmore Homes, Inc.’s association with Las Vegas was discovered, historic newspaper accounts suggest that a corporation of the same name was constructing subdivisions in Long Beach, California during the late 1940s and early 1950s. It is unclear, however, if the two corporations are affiliated.

Interestingly, A. E. Tiffany and Orville Bell also appear to have been newcomers to the Las Vegas real estate scene when they platted the Biltmore Addition in 1941. While little evidence exists to suggest that either of the men were associated with the development and/or construction of additional subdivisions in Las Vegas, archival research indicates that both were prolific in the Phoenix, Arizona real estate market as early as the 1920s. In 1925, A. E. Tiffany and his brother Herb C. Tiffany, Sr. formed the Tiffany Construction Company.

Orville Bell was an engineer as well as a prominent Phoenix architect. Bell was born in Blaine, Maine to Israel G. and Alberta L. Bell on November 30, 1904. He eventually relocated to Athens, Ohio, where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in Architectural Engineering from Ohio State University in 1927. In 1930, Bell moved to Phoenix and teamed with Vere Olney Wallingford to form the architectural and engineering firm of Wallingford & Bell (Casey and Stein 1991).

During his time in Phoenix, Bell designed a number of important Depression era public buildings, including the Arizona National Guard Armory, Phoenix High School, the Publix Market (1930), and the west wing addition to the State Capitol Building (1939) (George 1992). He also designed single-family residences in at least two Phoenix neighborhoods—the North Encanto (1939–1956) and Encanto-Palmcroft (1927–1942) subdivisions—both of which are listed in the NRHP (Denny 2002; Minor and Brevoort 1983). Bell was closely affiliated with the FHA, and was purportedly the first architect to file an application for an FHA-insured mortgage after establishment of the Arizona office in 1934 (Minor and Brevoort 1983). Additionally, his residential designs—perhaps most notably the Nuckles House (1938), a one-story Pueblo Revival style residence within the Encanto-Palmcroft neighborhood—was widely publicized by the FHA in Phoenix newspapers during the mid- to late 1930s (Minor and Brevoort 1983). One of the streets within the addition is named Encanto, possibly as homage to the Phoenix neighborhoods, and the name of the addition proper may pay tribute to the famed Arizona Biltmore Hotel—which was designed by Albert Chase McArthur in 1929, with the assistance of Frank Lloyd Wright (Graham et al. n.d.).

A. P. Maynard, Albert “Al” E. Cahlan, Archie C. Grant, and E. W. Clark (Victory Homes, Inc.)

These four men were associated with Victory Homes, Inc., the corporation responsible for the platting and construction of homes within Annex Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of the Biltmore Addition. At the time of the first plat's filing, A. P. Maynard was the corporation's president and A. E. Cahlan was secretary. The archival research effort did not yield any information on A. P. Maynard. His name appears on the plat for the first annexation only, which suggests that he may have stepped down or was replaced as the company's president between the filing of Annex Nos. 1 and 2.

The remaining men—Clark, Cahlan, and Grant—were, according to Mooney (2003b:11), “extremely well known and powerfully connected local businessmen and politicians who were linked personally through various project collaborations and civic affairs.” Perhaps the most well-known of these men was E. W. Clark, a pioneer resident and prominent political and community leader (Figure 57). Clark's importance to the city of Las Vegas was recently summarized in a *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article, which stated:

The power structure of Las Vegas in the '30s was headed by Ed W. Clark. Ed Clark was to Vegas what George Wingfield was to Reno. He controlled most of the economy of the community through his banking facilities (Hopkins 1999a).

The article went on to state that Ed was responsible for appointing members of the city and county commission and other powerful bodies within the state (Hopkins 1999b). Ed was born to Jacob C. and Julia Clark in San Jose, California in 1877 (Hopkins 1999b). Ed's father passed away soon after his birth, and Ed's mother moved the family to the silver town of Pioche where she operated a boarding house for miners (Hopkins 1999b). Ed helped his mother with her business until the age of 17, at which point he started his own cattle business in northern Lincoln County. As Pioche was without a railroad siding, Clark also went into the freighting business, eventually forming a partnership with Charles C. Ronnow of Panaca (Moehring and Green 2005:23). Together, under the name the Ed W. Clark Forwarding Company, the men transported freight from the end of the Union Pacific Railroad in Milford, Utah to the mining communities of southern Nevada. The men eventually migrated to Caliente, where Clark continued to operate his freighting company and served a brief stint as the town's postmaster (Hopkins 1999b).

When the railroad came to Las Vegas, Clark and Ronnow moved their business to a wood-frame building within the newly-formed Clark Townsite² (Moehring and Green 2005:23). The men changed the name of the company to Clark County Wholesale and diversified their business to provide food and other items to miners in addition to hauling freight (Moehring and Green 2005:23). In 1906, Clark was elected treasurer of Lincoln County (Hopkins 1999b; Moehring 1989). One of his first acts as treasurer was to shift the county deposits from Pioche to the First State Bank in Las Vegas, a move which helped him become the bank's director in 1909 (Hopkins 1999b). He went on to become president of the bank in 1926 following the retirement of partners John S. Park and J. Ross Clark. He held this position until 1937, when he sold the bank to the First National Bank of Nevada (Hopkins 1999b). Clark also advocated for the formation of Clark County and was

² Townsite founder William Clark was of no relation to Ed Clark.



Figure 57. Ed W. Clark, date unknown (Image reprinted from <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/ed-clark>).

promptly elected its treasurer when the county was established in 1909 (Hopkins 1999b). He went on to become the president of Consolidated Power & Telephone Company, the city's first power and telephone company, and like other prominent Las Vegans, he was also instrumental in the construction of Hoover Dam (Hopkins 1999b; Moehring and Green 2005:23). In addition to serving 25 years on the interstate commission that ultimately persuaded Congress to build the dam, he is credited with conceiving the amendments that gave Nevada shares of the power and water that it provided (Hoover 1999b). He also served as Nevada delegate for the Democratic National Convention in 1936 and 1944, and was a member of the Democratic National Committee for the state of Nevada in 1939.

Interestingly, Clark never married and had no descendants. He lived with Ronnow and his wife next to their business on Main and Clark Streets until his death in April 1946. Numerous buildings and structures named after Clark are present in Las Vegas today. Among them is Nevada Energy's Ed W. Clark Generating Station (1954)—the state's oldest steam-powered generating plant—and the Ed W. Clark High School (1965). The school, which is located at 4291 Penwood Avenue, is the only high school in Clark County to be named after a person.

Second-generation native Nevadan "Al" E. Cahlan was an influential journalist, politician, and community activist. Cahlan was born in Reno in 1899 and remained there until graduating from the University of Nevada with a degree in electrical engineering (Hopkins 1999). He was employed as an engineer for the Nevada State Highway Department for several years after graduation, before moving to Las Vegas in 1921, where he taught math and science at Las Vegas High School (Online Nevada Encyclopedia n.d.). He continued to work summers with the highway department, and in 1922, moved to Elko where he worked for them full-time (Hopkins 1999a). While in Elko, Cahlan met newspaper publisher Frank Garside, who eventually purchased the *Clark County Review* and hired Cahlan to manage it (Hopkins 1999a; Mooney 2003b:11). Upon accepting the management job, Cahlan returned to Las Vegas, where he became acquainted with Ed W. Clark and together, the men are credited with controlling the political scene in Las Vegas during the 1930s and 1940s (Hopkins 1999a). In fact, the men were so close that Cahlan's brother John often referred to Al as Clark's lieutenant (Hopkins 1999a). Cahlan used his affiliation with the newspaper to promote community events and voice his opinions on Nevada civil issues (Mooney 2003b:11). He was made a partner of the newspaper in 1928 and in that year was responsible for convincing the Clark County commissioners that election officials should remain present at voting locations until all the votes were counted, which resulted in the news room having early access to election results. The following year, Garside and Cahlan bought out the *Las Vegas Age*, a competing publication, and the name of the newspaper was changed to the *Evening Review Journal* (Online Nevada Encyclopedia n.d.).

Between 1930 and 1960, Cahlan published a popular but controversial daily editorial-page column entitled "From Where I Sit," which was later mocked by founder of the *Las Vegas Sun*, Herman "Hank" Greenspun, in his daily publication "From Where I Stand." He also sold advertisements (Hopkins 1999a). In 1949, the newspaper was purchased by Donald Reynolds, with the agreement that either he or Cahlan (who remained managing director) could buy the other one out. Between 1926 and 1960, he transformed a 300-circulation weekly into a daily with 27,000 subscribers, the largest in the state (Hopkins 1999a). Reynolds exercised his option and bought out Cahlan on December 11, 1960. Cahlan remained active in politics and business, variously serving as a representative in the Nevada Assembly, a chairman of the state central committee and on the Las Vegas Planning Commission, as well as service as a committeeman for the Democratic National Committee.

He is often most remembered for his role on the Colorado River Commission where he lobbied for Nevada to purchase the Basic Magnesium Plant following its closure in 1944. He also collaborated with U.S. Senator Pat McCarran in drafting legislation for Federal Aviation Administration air mail contracts. He also wrote numerous articles on the city's history and his early memories of the city, before passing away from complications resulting from a stroke in 1968 (Mooney 2003b).



Figure 58. Cahlan family photograph, with Al E. Cahlan seated at center, date unknown (Image reprinted from <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/al-cahlan>).

Archie C. Grant was the first University of Nevada regent from Southern Nevada and was one of the strongest voices for the creation of the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). He was born in Ely, Minnesota in 1896. He attended college, married, and began his career as a businessman in Minnesota, but a 1947 *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article called him a “transplanted native son” of Las Vegas. He came to Las Vegas in 1928 and purchased a Ford dealership, which he managed for 27 years before selling it in 1955. He was also involved in management of the Bank of Nevada from 1953 until his death in 1974. He was a member of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce in the early 1930s, eventually becoming the board’s president. At the same time, he worked with Nevada legislators who were writing new laws for legalized gambling and was credited with helping shape that legislation. Profits he made from real estate purchases allowed him the free time to become more involved in politics. He ran for governor in 1934, losing in a six-way democratic primary. He ran again in 1954, losing again. In between his gubernatorial bids, he served a term in the Nevada Assembly and one in the state Senate. He became chairman of the Las Vegas Housing Authority when it was created in 1947 and served in that position for 20 years. After the war, Grant turned his attention to the town of Basic (known today as Henderson).

In 1952, Grant ran successfully for the office of University of Nevada regent, which put him in the position to advocate for the creation of UNLV. Despite resistance, he helped procure land for a campus and his continued efforts contributed to the UNLV's opening in 1953 (Taylor 2014).

Mayfair Subdivision

Earl A. Honrath and Edmund A. Clark (Home Builders' Corporation)

These two men—both of whom were prominent land developers and real estate agents and brokers in Las Vegas in the late 1930s and early 1940s—were responsible for the development of the Mayfair Addition (Mooney 2003c). The most prolific of the men, Edmund Clark, was well known in Las Vegas for his 1937 campaign for the U. S. Marshal Service's (USMS) race. He was also listed as a licensed real estate broker in the *Nevada State Journal* for the years 1931, 1937, 1941, and 1943, with offices at 908 South First Street during the 1930s, and 1900 Fremont Street in the 1940s (*Nevada State Journal*, 18 December 1931; 16 April 1937; 13 May 1941; 31 March 1943).

Missouri native Earl Adolph Honrath is listed in the 1930 Federal census as residing at 518 Main Street with his wife, Donna and their two daughters Pauline and Donna Jean; his occupation at the time of the census was "real estate salesman" (Census of Population and Housing 1930). By 1940, census records indicate that Earl's wife is deceased, and he is employed as an auto court clerk. In a death announcement for Donna, Earl is described as a "prominent Las Vegas and Boulder City business man" (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 27 March 1940). An obituary for Earl also suggests that he was a merchant, operating a woman's clothing store named the Polly-Jeanne Shop after his daughters until his death in 1968 (Mooney 2003c).

A newspaper advertisement for the sale of homes within Tract No. 1 suggests that by March 1942, Honrath and Clark may have formed a corporation known as the Home Builders' Corporation to protect their joint real estate investments (see Figure 48). Although their roles are not clear, interestingly, in 1944 the corporation received a six month suspension by the Wartime Production Board (WPB) for selling project dwellings to non-war workers and also for selling the dwellings above ceiling prices. This offense, which was in direct violation of a prior agreement between the corporation and the WPB, prohibited Home Builders' Corporation from "receiving properties or delivery of building materials" until January 1, 1945 (*Nevada State Journal*, 1 July 1944). While it is unclear if the offenses involved the Mayfair neighborhood, it's interesting to note that construction within Tract No. 2 of the addition continued into the late 1940s, with some homes built into the mid-1950s (Mooney 2003c:10).

E. H. Wallace

Mooney (2003c:11) also credits Earl H. Wallace with the development of Tract No.1 of the Mayfair Subdivision. The role that E.H. Wallace played in the original development is not clear; however, he does not appear on the plats for tracts 1, 2, or 3 which were filed in October of 1941, and April and May of 1942, respectively. Interestingly, newspaper accounts confirm that on October 24 of that year, Wallace was one of 12 people killed when an army bomber collided with an American Airlines transport plane in route from Los Angeles to New York (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 24 October 1942). The crash, which was widely publicized by the media, occurred about 0.5 mile west of Palm Springs. Wallace was purportedly in route to Phoenix, Arizona at the time of the accident (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 24 October 1942).

G. “Lee” Cochran

Little information could be found for Lee Cochran, the builder responsible for the construction of homes within Tract 1 of the Mayfair subdivision. A brief obituary printed in the November 18, 1964 edition of the *Las Vegas Sun* refers to Cochran as a “custom homebuilder.” According to the obituary, Cochran was the builder for the 1963–1964 Mason Manor development, a neighborhood of 32 “executive homes” located along Mason Drive between Campbell and Cahlan Drives (*Las Vegas Sun*, 18 November 1964). He was also active in civic and charitable activities, which included serving as the King Lion of the Breakfast Club. At the time of his death, he resided at 1901 S. Seventeenth Street with his son, Harry (*Las Vegas Sun*, 18 November 1964).

Horace Shidler (Horace Shidler and Son)

According to Mooney (2003c), a newspaper article (source not provided) attributes Horace Shidler and his son Harold as being the developers of the first Mayfair Tract. A Walla Walla, Washington native, Horace graduated from the University of Toronto and relocated to Long Beach, California after joining the U. S. Navy. Shidler was one of the first pilots trained in WWI, where he became a prisoner of war after being shot down in combat over Germany (Hallas 1995:197). After returning to the United States, he moved to Los Angeles, where he became involved in the building trade and completed his first housing project. In 1942, he came to Las Vegas and continued to work in the construction industry, building numerous single-family residences (including those in the Mayfair Addition) and commercial buildings. According to a 1942 WWII Draft Registration Card, he operated his contracting business from his residence at 324 Fremont Street. He briefly left Nevada in 1948 to build a subdivision in Twin Falls, Idaho, but returned the following year after suffering a stroke. He continued to work in the construction business, and was active with numerous organizations including the Fred S. Pennington post of the Veterans of Foreign Affairs and the American Legion. He was also the founder of both the Hollywood and Las Vegas chapters of the Optimist Club, an organization dedicated to encourage children to participate in community service. Horace continued to work alongside his son in Las Vegas until July 1952, when he was hospitalized after suffering a series of paralytic strokes. Horace eventually passed away on July 6, 1952 at the age of 58 (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 10 July 1952).

Vega Verde Addition

George Franklin and John Law (Franklin & Law Developers)

These two men formed Franklin & Law Developers in 1945, and together sponsored the building of the majority of the homes in the eastern half of the Vega Verde Addition (Mooney 2003a). Franklin was employed as a mechanical and aeronautical engineer until 1929, when the stock market crash forced him to seek other means of employment. In 1934, he relocated to Las Vegas to operate a real estate business and initiate the city’s FHA program. Initially, Franklin ran his business from an office in the Federal Building on Stewart Street; however, after 1939, he relocated to a home on 1112 Fifth Place where he continued his real estate and development business and continued to serve as the city’s first FHA Commissioner.

Franklin’s partner John Law was a chief petty officer in charge of recruiting from the U.S. Navy in Las Vegas (Mooney 2003a:31). Additional information on Law was not found during the archival research effort.

Frank Beam

Frank Beam was George Franklin's partner before the 1945 founding of Franklin & Law Developers. In 1941, Beam and Franklin purchased 55 acres of land from William S. Park and LeRoy and Mary Dutton on which Franklin and Law Developers would later develop the Vega Verde Addition. A Pennsylvania native and well-known Las Vegas lumberman, Beam's partnership with Franklin was short-lived, however, as he died of a heart attack on December 16, 1941, just months after he and Franklin had purchased the land (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 December 1941). Although retired at the time of his death, Beam remained owner of the Beam Lumber Company, the supplier for most of the lumber to be used for the construction of homes within the addition (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 December 1941). Although little information could be found on Beam, it is presumed that he was an important figure in the Las Vegas community, as a building named after both he and his wife is present on the UNLV campus. The building—known as Frank and Estella Beam Hall—was built on the campus in 1983 and currently houses the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration and the Lee Business School (Gueco 2014).

Francis Griffith, Norman Winston, and Thomas A. Oakey (Realty Development Corporation)

These three men were associated with the Realty Development Corporation, a Nevada corporation, which platted the Huntridge Development. Dr. Francis Griffith was president; Norman Winston was vice president; and Thomas A. Oakey was secretary. A December 1941 article in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* states that the three men were "experienced in this type of housing project, having directed many major housing programs of the same character throughout the country" (*Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 20 December 1941). Archival research, however, did not yield any information on Dr. Francis Griffith. Preliminary research suggests that Norman K. Winston, of New York, gained wealth and notoriety as a housing developer, and subsequently married socialite Rosita Fletcher (*Life* 1947). The origin of Winston's association with Griffith and Oakey is not known, however.

In addition to Thomas Oakey's involvement in the Huntridge subdivision, he was also the owner of the Huntridge Development Corporation which contracted the development of the Huntridge Theater, which opened in 1944. Oakey was also a part owner in the theatre with Commonwealth Las Vegas Theater, Inc. According to (Lenz 1993:1), while the Commonwealth Las Vegas Theater organization dissolved, Oakey found new partners for the enterprise in actresses Irene Dunn and Loretta Young. It is clear that Oakey also continued to operate the Huntridge Development Corporation into the 1950s as city directories for the period between 1954 and 1957 list him as the president and general manager (Luskey Brothers & Co. 1954; 1957). Archival research, however, did not result in any further biographical information for Mr. Oakey.

Kenneth Jones

Painter (2005) notes that Kevin Jones—an employee of the Land Planning Division of the FHA—designed homes within the Huntridge Addition. Additional research revealed little additional information on Mr. Jones. One article in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, dating to 1940, states that Jones helped Norman Blitz Associates design the Greenfield subdivision in Reno (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 November 1940).

McNeil Construction Company

The Los Angeles, California corporation of McNeil Construction Company was responsible for the construction of the Huntridge Neighborhood, the largest of the three Las Vegas subdivisions built under the Title VI program. The corporation was founded by Nova Scotia native John Vincent McNeil, who migrated from Boston, Massachusetts to Los Angeles 1886. Prior to moving to California, McNeil worked as a carpenter and sought special instruction in architecture and building construction. He eventually became qualified to handle larger construction projects and served as superintendent of construction on various important structural enterprises in Massachusetts. During the first two years in Southern California, McNeil worked as a supervisor for a contracting company; however, in 1888, he left the company to start his own contracting company known as the McNeil Construction Company, which he operated along with his son Lawrence W. for the next 50 years.

In the first 20 years of its operation, McNeil's company erected numerous public and private buildings within the city of Los Angeles, including schools, office buildings, manufacturing plants, hotels, and residences. Notable buildings constructed by the company include the Cohn Goldwater Building (1909); Newark Brothers Building (1906); Merritt Building (1914); Chester Williams Building (1926); Sun Drug Company (1920); Orpheum Theater Building (1925); Eastern Columbia Building (1930); Ninth and Broadway Building (1929); Foreman and Clark Building (1928–1929); Union Bank/Hill Street Annex (1923–1925); Union Bank & Trust Company Building (1921–1922); Cooper Building (1923–1924); and the Main Mercantile Building (1905–1906) (v Neighborhood Planning and Land Use Committee 2015). The company quickly became one of the most successful builders in Southern California, in part because of its use of concrete and focus on heavy construction (Press Reference Library 1913).

When John passed away in July 1938, son Lawrence W. took over the company, developing it into a sizable construction concern during the WWII era. In 1941, the company completed the Linda Vista Subdivision, a large-scale defense housing project near San Diego (Figure 59). The housing development was the first project initiated in the city to be constructed under the Lanham Act and contained 3,000 single- and multi-family homes to be occupied by the workers in the city's aircraft and defense industries (Killory 1993). At the time of its completion, the project was the largest defense village in the United States and the world's largest low-income housing development with a projected occupancy of 13,000 residents (Killory 1993; *Reno Evening Gazette*, 27 November 1941).

Perhaps the most notable of the company's projects in Nevada in the 1940s was their construction of the BMI manufacturing plant and associated Basic Townsite in present-day Henderson. On September 6, 1941, the company was awarded a \$63,000,000 contract for construction of the 1.75-mile-long by 0.75-mile-wide plant (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 6 September 1941). They were also awarded a contract for the construction of the townsite, known as the Basic Townsite, to house workers of the plant. In addition to providing 1,000 "temporary" homes, the townsite also included a school, hospital, and stores (City of Henderson Redevelopment Agency, n.d.).



Figure 59. Overview of the Linda Vista subdivision, built by the McNeil Construction Company in 1941 (Image reprinted from Killory 1993).

The second largest structural steel job in the world, the BMI project employed over 16,000 workers and generated a weekly payroll of \$1,100,000 during its construction. Of these workers, more than 7,000 were employees of the McNeil Construction Company, making them the largest company on the payroll (*Nevada State Journal*, 27 January 1943). The company's work on the project was overseen by Lawrence's son Bruce who served as superintendent in charge of all operations (Cahlan 1942; *Nevada State Journal*, 27 January 1943). Upon its completion in November 1943, the facility was the world's largest magnesium plant (Nickel 2012:8). Due to the massive scale of the undertaking, numerous announcements congratulating the company of their completion of the project were published in the newspapers across the state by other local contractors also involved in its construction (Figure 60).

Following the completion of BMI and the Basic Townsite, the company went on to construct other industrial facilities across the southwest. In 1951, they submitted the lowest bid for the construction of buildings at the Frenchman's Flat atomic test range (later known as the Nevada Test Site), a project funded by the Atomic Energy Commission in southeastern Nye County (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 3 May 1951). That same year, the company was also awarded contracts for the construction of a mill on the Henderson Lake Mead Highway for Manganese, Inc. and a new unit at the Western Electrochemical Company in Henderson (*Nevada State Journal*, 25 August 1951; 25 September 1952). The company is also credited with the construction of the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas in 1955, suggesting that their portfolio expanded outside of the energy and defense industrials to include commercial development.



Figure 60. Announcement congratulating the McNeil Construction Company on their completion of the Basic Magnesium Project (Image taken from the *Reno Evening Gazette*, 24 November 1943).

Charleston Square

Lembke Construction Company

An article in the Las Vegas Evening-Review Journal suggests that Lembke Construction Company served as the building contractor for the construction of 156 homes within the Charleston Square Subdivision. The company, which was selected on behalf of Mastercraft Homes, Inc., was led by Jack Chapman, who provided much of the information on the neighborhood's development for the article. Archival research yielded no information on Jack Chapman. Annual statements for the years 1942 and 1943 printed in the *Nevada State Journal* list Charles H. Lembke as the company's secretary and Edward L. Lembke as its president (*Nevada State Journal*, 27 January 1943; 21 January 1944). The statements further indicate that the company was headquartered in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with a local office in Las Vegas. By 1952, the company had grown to include additional offices in Colorado and Idaho (Becker 2005:1–2).

Newspaper articles indicate that the company was involved in a number of federal- and city-sponsored construction projects during the 1940s and 1950s, including the construction of a 25-acre housing development for married enlisted Army personnel employed by the Las Vegas Army Air Force Gunnery School (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 December 1941). This development (presumably the Grandview Addition) consisted of 25 acres and contained 125 housing units. The contract for the development totaled \$440,334 and was funded by the Public Buildings Administration. M. J. Grewe served as general superintendent of the housing project (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 19 September 1941). They were also

responsible for the construction of an addition to the Clark County Hospital in 1944, a contract which they held with the Federal Works Agency of Washington, D. C. (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 24 April 1944). In 1951, they teamed the contracting firm of Clough and King to build a dormitory at the Nevada Proving Grounds (also known as the Nevada Test Site). Upon its completion, the building became the first permanent facilities to be constructed at the site (Becker 2005:1–2). Other buildings constructed by the company during the 1940s and 1950s include the city's first convention center (1959), McCarran Field (now McCarran International Airport) (1948), the Dunes Hotel (1955), the Fremont Hotel (1956), the auditorium at Las Vegas High School (now the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performance, and Visual Arts (date unknown), the Westside School Annex (1948), and the city's first wastewater treatment plant (1958) (Becker 2005:1–2; *Nevada State Journal*, 23 February 1958).

Beginning in the late 1950s, the company undertook numerous construction projects on the University of Nevada, Reno campus, as well as the Nevada Southern University campus in Las Vegas. Newspaper articles suggest that only one building was constructed by the company in 1959 (*Nevada State Journal*, 3 May 1959). The name of the building and its location within the campus was not provided. Projects on the University of Nevada, Reno campus included a housing complex for married students, a dining hall, a men's dormitory, and a fine arts building, all of which were awarded in fall of 1960. Interestingly, newspaper articles suggest that the university's board of directors threatened to oust the company from at least two of these projects because of delays and the fact that the company was so far behind schedule. This battle was covered by both the *Reno Evening Gazette* and *Nevada State Journal*. The outcome of the conflict was not reported, however.

Tee Construction Company

Tee Construction Company was responsible for the development of at least 58 homes within Tract No. 2 of the Charleston Square Subdivision (*Reno Evening Gazette*, 14 October 1948). The company was headed by Richard "Tony" Toleno of Las Vegas and Reuben Speckter of Los Angeles. A 1954 Las Vegas city directory lists Toleno as the building contractor for Tee Construction Company. He also served as President of the Paradise Realty Company, a company that had a net worth of \$250,000 at the time of its incorporation in 1950 (*Reno Evening Gazette* 1950). No information could be found on Speckter.

In addition to the Charleston Square Neighborhood, the Tee Construction Company was responsible for the construction of homes within at least one additional subdivision in Las Vegas. This development, known as the Paradise Park/Village Neighborhood, is a post-war subdivision generally located between Paradise Road, E. St. Louis Avenue, E Sahara Avenue, and Van Patten Place. The neighborhood was surveyed by Logan Simpson in 2012 and 2013, and was subsequently recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP as a historic district under Criteria A and C with a period of significance of 1950 to 1955 (Rayle and Ruter 2012; 2013).

SECTION III: ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) represents the Nation's official list of properties considered worthy of preservation. The National Park Service (NPS) Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, provides guidance to owners of properties, local governments, state and federal

agencies, and professionals on the eligibility criteria for listing a property in the National Register. The National Register recognizes five categories of properties: buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts. Districts, as a property type, represent collections of buildings, structures, sites and/or objects that are unified either by historical development or design (United States Department of the Interior 1989).

The National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Ames and McClelland 2002) provides the most comprehensive framework for assessing the eligibility requirements for listing residential housing. Residential subdivisions, as collections of domiciles linked through association with comprehensive planning efforts and/or architectural design render themselves particularly amenable to NRHP evaluation under the “district” property type. However, there may be instances in which individual single-family or multi-family dwellings will be individually eligible for listing.

In order to be eligible for listing in the NRHP, buildings, structures, sites, objects and/or districts must possess significance under one of the four established criteria:

- association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A);
- association with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B);
- embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, representation of the work of a master, possessing high artistic values, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to an understanding of prehistory or history (Criterion D).

In order to be eligible for listing, the subject property must also be able to convey its significance through retention of its key character-defining elements. The NRHP concept of integrity allows for the critical evaluation of the preservation of these elements in terms of seven key variables: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is important to note that these elements are weighted differently for different property types and criteria of significance. For instance, retention of integrity of workmanship may not play as important a role for a building listed for its association with an important educator (Criterion B), as it does for a building listed as a representation of the work of a master architect (Criterion C.)

The context presented in this document provides a general framework for assessing the eligibility of residential housing in Las Vegas during WWII and establishes a period of significance that encompasses residential properties that were constructed between 1940 and 1945. The beginning date of the period of significance has been established to mark the year when the U.S. began to redirect industrial production for material and munitions stockpiling, a policy decision that would have tremendous impact on the production of domestic housing. The year 1945 has been selected to mark the end of WWII and the withdrawal of combat forces from Europe and the Pacific. The period of significance is also an important benchmark for evaluating integrity; resources eligible for registration under this context must retain the key character defining features

acquired during the period of significance. Alterations introduced after the period of significance should be evaluated in terms of their impact on the property's ability to convey these character defining features.

For the most part, the context addresses significance of these resources at the local level; evaluation of the significance of these properties at the state and national levels would require additional comparative research on the development of housing in other cities designated as critical defense areas by President Roosevelt during WWII in order to demonstrate that the resource established a precedent or influenced subsequent development within a broader region or across the country (per Ames and McClelland 2002). Research conducted in the current study did not reveal the presence of resources that could be considered to possess architectural character and/or innovative principals that influenced residential subdivision design on the national level.

The following section of this document identifies associated property types for listing under each of the four National Register criteria in association with the contexts provided in this document:

- Growth of Las Vegas and WWII-era Subdivision Development
- Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII
- Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII

Individual Single-family Dwelling

Description

Single-family dwellings constructed in WWII era subdivisions predominantly consist of three architectural styles or types—Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Cape Cod/"Cottage Style"—although buildings not conforming to a particular architectural style were also noted during Logan Simpson's windshield survey of the John S. Park, Biltmore, Mayfair, and Huntridge neighborhoods. According to McAlester and McAlester (2004), Minimal Traditional type housing dates to the period between 1935 and 1950. The Minimal Traditional architectural style became common in the 1930s, in part due to the FHA's development of technical bulletins outlining guidelines for the construction of modest affordable housing. These homes proliferated during WWII as the ability of developers to acquire construction materials became restricted, resulting in a uniformity of materials and a standardization of styles. The Ranch architectural style developed contemporaneously and gradually replaced the Minimal Traditional type as its elongated floorplan readily lent itself to the growing needs of larger families. Use of these particular styles continued into the post-war era as their simplicity and uniformity allowed for expedient and large-scale production. By utilizing prefabricated building materials and streamlined assembly methods for home construction, crews could work efficiently and quickly, thereby keeping the costs of the finished homes low (Ames and McClelland 2002:66). This allowed lower to moderate-income families, as well as veterans returning from WWII, to purchase homes in the developments (Ames and McClelland 2002).

While homes constructed in the Minimal Traditional type were typically rectangular with simple, low to intermediate-pitched hipped or side-gabled rooflines, Ranch style houses were generally rectangular with U- or L-shaped variants and front or side-gabled roofs. Minimal Traditional style homes were of brick, concrete block, or wood frame construction with stucco sheathing and wood frame, double hung sash windows. Most of the homes contained five or six rooms and were between 800 and 900 ft² in size, although larger models

were available in certain developments. Additionally, some of the homes had attached single-bay carports or an attached or detached garage. In comparison, the Ranch style homes were constructed of either wood frame or concrete block and emphasized horizontality through the incorporation of wide eave overhangs and horizontal multi-lite wood frame and metal casement windows. These homes also contained six rooms, although they were typically more than 1,000 ft² in size which allowed for a more open floorplan. Similar to the Minimal Traditional type homes, attached garages and carports were also common.

Significance

Criterion A

Individual residences constructed in conjunction with any of the eight subdivisions discussed in this context would generally not be individually eligible under Criterion A for association with the growth of residential subdivisions in Las Vegas during WWII (community planning and development). As ubiquitous resources produced in conjunction with subdivision planning efforts, the significance of individual buildings is tied to their association with subdivision growth. However, an examination of the development of residential housing in West Las Vegas suggests that residential housing in this area followed a different historical pattern marked by expedient construction of individual homes without master planned infrastructure and improvements. Although many of these homes were demolished during postwar “slum clearing” efforts, systematic building inventory may reveal the presence of residences built between 1940-1945 and thus eligible for individual listing as rare remaining resources associated with the context of Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII.

Criterion B

Some single-family dwellings may be individually eligible under Criterion B if archival research identifies that the building’s development and/or use was directly associated with a significant person who made important contributions to a historical event or broad pattern of history. In order to register a property under this criterion, areas of significance must be identified that reflect the resident’s contribution to one or more fields of endeavor (e.g. government, medicine, and education). The individual must also have achieved recognition in this field while residing at the property. The period of significance for such a property would correspond to the years that the person resided in it and gained recognition in their field.

Criterion C

Applying the context of Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII to assess the individual NRHP eligibility of single-family residences under Criterion C would result in thousands of individually listed residences constructed between the years 1940–1945. It is important to note that the Criterion C significance of these properties derives from their linkage as contributing buildings in planned developments (districts), and not for their individual architectural merit. The WWII era single-family dwelling in Las Vegas has significance under Criterion C because it represents the FHA and War Production Board’s influence on housing design and construction. However, as mass-produced and ubiquitous housing units, most single-family residences will derive their Criterion C significance from their contribution to a broader district, or collection of residential architecture that is “an important example of a distinctive period of construction (or) method of construction” (Ames and McClelland 2002), rather than association with the “work of a master.” Nevertheless, although the vast majority of the single-family residences are built in the fairly common

Minimal Traditional or Ranch styles, these dwellings may be individually eligible under Criterion C if they are a particularly “exceptional example” of their type. An “exceptional example” would be a residence that has remained virtually unchanged from the time of its initial construction and possesses all of the character-defining features of its architectural style.

Additionally, a single-family dwelling may be eligible under this criterion if archival research indicates that the building is a significant example of a work of a recognized architect or master builder. The latter case may prove more common in the custom subdivisions of Charleston Square and Eastland Heights. The few remaining single-family residences in Beckley Addition and Sebec Acres may also be individually eligible under Criterion C as the last remaining examples of residences from these WWII-era subdivisions.

Criterion D

There are no contexts presented in this document to facilitate individual evaluation or registration of a single-family residence in the NRHP under Criterion D.

Integrity

Location

The significance of residential buildings under Criteria A and C is linked to the respective subdivision development from which the building derives its association. A building that has been moved would also not be eligible under Criterion B, as movement of the property would likely create a false appreciation of the significant person’s residence at a particular address. As such, in order to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under the above mentioned contexts, a single-family residence cannot have been moved from the location of its original construction.

In order to be eligible for NRHP listing, moved properties must meet the requirements established under Criteria Consideration B for moved properties.

Design

In order to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under the abovementioned contexts, a single-family residence must possess features of design consistent with Minimal Traditional or Ranch Style. These features include, but are not limited to modest sized massing with simple box, L-shape, or in the case of Ranch house, elongated floor plans, cross gabled or cross hipped roof forms, and multi-lite wood double hung windows. Additions are acceptable if their massing is subordinate to the original structure and otherwise in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles are defined by their single-story form; second story additions would make a property ineligible for listing.

Setting

Retention of setting from the period of significance is considered to be of lesser importance to the individual NRHP eligibility of single-family residences. This is because these buildings largely derive their significance from association with a broader district. Integrity of setting, however, is an important aspect of district evaluation.

Individual residences located on the margins of subdivisions where setting has been altered by the growth of the modern city may still be eligible for listing if they possess integrity of location, materials, design, and workmanship. Subdivisions such as Beckley Addition and Sebec Acres, where setting has been greatly compromised, may still contain individually eligible residences.

Materials

Single-family residences addressed under this context were constructed of concrete block, concrete block with brick veneer, and wood frame with stucco or asbestos siding. Due to imposed material restrictions, wood roofs would have been less common, and in most cases will not be original to the building. Both wood-frame and steel-casement windows were used historically, despite material restrictions. Integrity assessments should take note of the replacement of wood-frame or steel-casement windows with aluminum or vinyl windows. As ornamentation on buildings would have been rare, integrity issues often involved inappropriate applications of ornamentation or sheathing such as mosaic tile, stone veneer, and vinyl siding.

Workmanship

Single-family residences addressed under this context can be generally characterized as mass-produced, using lower grade of product (e.g. lumber); many homes were built within six months. As low cost, standardized styles of housing, minimal traditional and ranch residences generally exhibit a low degree of workmanship. However, period building technologies such as multi-lite window glazing and exposed rafter treatment and the rare elements of ornamentation such as dormers and gablets convey themselves on well-preserved examples of the styles. Assessments of integrity should make special note of these elements; however, their absence should not be construed as deleterious to the building's eligibility.

Feeling

Ames and McClelland (2002) describe the NRHP concept of feeling as an "intangible" quality "evoked by the presence of physical characteristics that convey the sense of past time and place." They acknowledge the difficulty of discriminating feeling from the other six aspects of integrity, noting that integrity of feeling derives from "the cumulative effect of setting, design, materials, and workmanship." As indicated above, loss of setting should not be considered a loss of a critical aspect of a residence's integrity for individual listing purposes. However, the building needs to have retained sufficient integrity of design, workmanship and materials to convey itself as constructed in the 1940s. It will be difficult to discriminate the "feeling" of a Minimal Traditional type or Ranch style residence constructed during the period of significance covered by this context (1940–1945) from its postwar counterpart; however, efforts should be taken to document subtle differences application of modern materials or other incremental changes that may impact the observer's overall impression of a mid-1940s residence.

Association

In order to be considered individually eligible for listing under this context, a single-family residence must maintain its original function or association as a single-family residence. Conversion to multi-family use or commercial use, as has occurred predominantly in the Beckley Addition and Sebec Acres, would disqualify a property from NRHP eligibility.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing as a WWII era single-family dwelling under this context, a building must 1) be located within the incorporated limits of the city of Las Vegas; 2) have been constructed between 1940 and 1945; 3) possess one or more criteria of significance as articulated above and 4) retain sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance.

Boundaries

The boundaries for single-family residences proposed for individual listing in the NRHP should conform to the legal boundaries of the parcel as specified on the deed of purchase or in Assessor's records.

Multi-family Dwellings

Description

The FHA recognized the need of rental housing in critical defense areas to house those workers who may not have chosen to remain in an area upon the war's conclusion. Under Title II (section 203) or Title VI (section 603), mortgage insurance was also issued for multi-family dwellings. Maximum mortgage loan amounts were higher for multi-family dwellings than single-family dwellings with the cap for four unit dwellings initially \$10,500 and increased to \$12,000 in 1942. While multi-family dwellings constructed in WWII era subdivisions followed the trends of single-family architecture, their larger sizes and elongated forms predominantly place them in the classification of Ranch style architecture. According to McAlester and McAlester (2004) Ranch architectural style developed contemporaneously with and gradually replaced the Minimal Traditional type; the elongated floorplan of the Ranch style readily lent itself to the growing needs of larger families.

Use of this particular style continued into the post-war era as its simplicity and uniformity allowed for expedient and large-scale production. By utilizing prefabricated building materials and streamlined assembly methods for home construction, crews could work efficiently and quickly, thereby keeping the costs of the finished homes low (Ames and McClelland 2002:66). This allowed lower to moderate-income families, as well as veterans returning from WWII, to rent or purchase homes in the developments (Ames and McClelland 2002).

Ranch style multi-family homes were typically one story, elongated rectangular forms. The rooflines of the building were predominantly hipped or side-gabled. The buildings were constructed of either wood frame or concrete block and emphasized horizontality through the incorporation of wide eave overhangs and horizontal multi-lite wood frame casement windows.

Significance

Criterion A

Multi-family residences constructed in conjunction with any of the eight subdivisions discussed in this context would generally not be individually eligible under Criterion A for association with the growth of residential subdivisions in Las Vegas during WW II (community planning and development). As ubiquitous resources produced in conjunction with subdivision planning efforts, the significance of individual buildings is tied to

their association with subdivision growth. However, an examination of the development of residential housing in West Las Vegas suggests that residential housing in this area followed a different historical pattern marked by expedient construction of individual homes without master planned infrastructure and improvements. Although many of these homes were demolished during postwar “slum clearing” efforts, systematic building inventory may reveal the presence of multi-family residences built between 1940-1945 and thus eligible for individual listing as rare remaining resources associated with the context of Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII.

Criterion B

Some multi-family dwellings may be individually eligible under Criterion B if archival research identifies that the building’s development and/or use was directly associated with a significant person who made important contributions to a historical event or broad pattern of history. In order to register a property under this criterion, areas of significance must be identified that reflect the resident’s contribution to one or more fields of endeavor (e.g. government, medicine, and education). The individual must also have achieved recognition in this field while residing at the property. The period of significance for such a property would correspond to the years that the person resided in it and gained recognition in their field.

Criterion C

Applying the context of Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII to assess the individual NRHP eligibility of single-family residences under Criterion C would result in thousands of individually listed residences constructed between the years 1940–1945. It is important to note that the Criterion C significance of these properties derives from their linkage as contributing buildings in planned developments (districts), and not for their individual architectural merit. The WWII era multi-family dwelling in Las Vegas has significance under Criterion C because it represents the FHA and War Production Board’s influence on housing design and construction. However, as mass-produced and ubiquitous housing units, most multi-family residences will derive their Criterion C significance from their contribution to a broader district, or collection of residential architecture that is “an important example of a distinctive period of construction (or) method of construction” (Ames and McClelland 2002), rather than association with the “work of a master.” Nevertheless, although the vast majority of the multi-family residences are built in the fairly common Ranch style, these dwellings may be individually eligible under Criterion C if they are a particularly exceptional example of the Ranch-style as applied to multi-family housing. Additionally, a multi-family dwelling may be eligible under this criterion if archival research indicates that the building is a significant example of a work of a recognized architect or master builder. The latter case may prove more common in the custom subdivision of Charleston Square where historic-age multi-family dwellings are present.

Criterion D

There are no contexts presented in this document to facilitate individual evaluation or registration of a multi-family residence in the NRHP under Criterion D.

Integrity

Location

In order to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under the above mentioned contexts, a multi-family residence generally cannot have been moved from the location of its original construction. In order to be eligible for NRHP listing, moved properties must meet the requirements established under Criteria Consideration B for moved properties.

Design

In order to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under the abovementioned contexts, a multi-family residence must possess features of design consistent with Ranch style. These features include, but are not limited to elongated floor plans, side-gabled or cross hipped roof forms, and multi-lite double hung windows. Additions are acceptable if their massing is subordinate to the original structure and otherwise in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Ranch style is defined by its single story form; second story additions would make a property ineligible for listing.

Setting

Retention of setting from the period of significance is considered to be of lesser importance to the individual NRHP eligibility of multi-family residences. Individual residences located on the margins of subdivisions where setting has been altered by the growth of the modern city may still be eligible for listing if they possess integrity of location, materials, design, and workmanship.

Materials

Multi-family residences addressed under this context were constructed of concrete block, concrete block with brick veneer, and wood frame with stucco. Due to imposed material restrictions, wood roofs and steel cased windows would have been rare, and in most cases will not be original to the building. As ornamentation on buildings would have been rare, integrity issues often involve inappropriate applications of ornamentation or sheathing such as mosaic tile, stone veneer, and vinyl siding.

Workmanship

Multi-family residences addressed under this context can be generally characterized as mass-produced, using a lower grade of construction products (e.g. lumber); many homes were built within six months. As low cost, standardized styles of housing, minimal traditional and ranch residences generally exhibit workmanship typical of "assembly line" construction. However, period building technologies such as multi-lite window glazing and exposed rafter treatment and the rare elements of ornamentation such as dormers and gablets convey themselves on well-preserved examples of the styles. Assessments of integrity should make special note of these elements.

Feeling

Ames and McClelland (2002) describe the NRHP concept of feeling as an "intangible" quality "evoked by the presence of physical characteristics that convey the sense of past time and place." They acknowledge the difficulty of discriminating feeling from the other six aspects of integrity, noting that integrity of feeling derives from "the cumulative effect of setting, design, materials, and workmanship." As indicated above, loss of

setting should not be considered a loss of a critical aspect of a residence's integrity for individual listing purposes. However, the building needs to have retained sufficient integrity of design, workmanship and materials to convey itself as constructed in the 1940s. It will be difficult to discriminate the "feeling" of a ranch style residence constructed during the period of significance covered by this context (1940-1945) from its postwar counterpart; however, efforts should be taken to document subtle differences in size and material use.

Association

In order to be considered individually eligible for listing under this context, a multi-family residence must maintain its original association as a multi-family residence. Conversion to commercial use would change the function of the building and thus impact integrity of association; however, adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to ensure retention of character-defining elements that convey historic residential use (such as floor plan and the configuration of units) could ensure that integrity of association is maintained.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing as a WWII era multi-family dwelling under this context, a building must 1) be located within the incorporated limits of the city of Las Vegas; 2) have been constructed between 1940 and 1945; 3) possess one or more criteria of significance as articulated above and 4) retain sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance.

Boundaries

The boundaries for multi-family residences proposed for individual listing in the NRHP should conform to the legal boundaries of the parcel as specified on the deed of purchase or in Assessor's records.

Residential Subdivisions

Description

Between 1940 and 1945, builders developed eight subdivisions within the City of Las Vegas, including those which were developed under FHA guidelines and those which were built on demand. This study has classified these subdivisions into two subtypes, those of the "built on demand" or custom variety and those approved under FHA Title VI guidelines. Both subtypes of subdivisions ranged in size and plan, but the majority exhibited the influence of FHA guidelines which promoted the adaptation of a subdivision layout to the topography, the adoption of long blocks to remove unnecessary streets, the elimination of sharp corners and dangerous intersections, and the general abandonment of rectilinear grids in favor of curvilinear grids. Curvilinear streets were considered advantageous because they provided visual interest and eliminated dangerous four-way intersections (Ames and McClelland 2002). Two of these subdivisions, Sebec Acres and Beckley Subdivision, are classified as custom and were platted on small, angular tracts of land which did not follow the planning methods encouraged by the FHA. The remaining six subdivisions exhibit curvilinear street patterns, which discouraged through-traffic and incorporated minimal variances in lot sizes and standard building setbacks.

The subdivisions vary in overall size and in the types of amenities offered. The Huntridge neighborhood, the largest of all the platted subdivisions, was planned with a park, school, and space for commercial

development. The 17 lot Beckley Subdivision, on the other hand, was platted on a small, triangular piece of land bounded by three major roads with an interior cul-de-sac access road.

Houses constructed within the subdivisions are by and large classified as either Minimal Traditional or Ranch style and are characteristically modest in size and in architectural detailing. Due to restrictions on building materials during the war, homes constructed in subdivisions, be they single or multi-family, possessed more standardized façades and materials of construction with differences largely characterized by building footprint and rooflines.

Types

Built on Demand (Custom) Subdivisions

Between 1940 and 1945 developers constructed four built on demand, or custom, home subdivisions. These subdivisions included the Beckley Subdivision, Sebec Acres, and the Eastland Heights Neighborhood, all of which were developed in the period between 1941 and 1942. The Charleston Square subdivision, when platted in 1945, was originally intended to be an FHA development but was later converted to custom subdivision due to rising costs of production.

As noted, the Beckley and Sebec Acres subdivisions were constructed on small, irregular-shaped pieces of land and do not exhibit FHA neighborhood planning principles. These plats of land were located adjacent to major roads and did not incorporate curvilinear interior streets. The lots of the developments were long and narrow and were not uniform in nature. Due to the erosion of historic fabric within both developments, either through demolition or demolition and re-development, the bulk of the original residential architecture styles developed within these neighborhoods is not known. Those dwellings remaining exhibit characteristics of the Minimal Traditional Style.

Eastland Heights, although developed through conventional financing, is demonstrative of the broader impact of the FHA influence upon neighborhood planning. As FHA developed standards for the assurance of long-term home values, these standards by and large were adopted industry-wide. However, it was also not uncommon for a developer to design a neighborhood with the intent of applying for FHA commitments for mortgage insurance, as was the case with Charleston Square, and then choose to alter the development to conventional financing. This particularly became the case towards the end of the war, as inflation drove up the cost of materials and construction exceeding the FHA's guidelines on loan amounts and property values. However, each subdivision adopted curvilinear street layouts which discouraged through traffic. Lots were fairly uniform in size with a standard range of setbacks. The lots, by and large were wider and shallower in nature accommodating the horizontal forms of the Minimal Traditional and Ranch style houses within the developments. Both of these subdivisions consist of multiple subdivision plats and demonstrate the continuance of neighborhood development in the post-war era. Variations between subdivisions can be noted in terms of the width of streets, the incorporation of sidewalks, curb and gutters, and landscaping.

FHA-Influenced Subdivisions

Archival research indicates that four FHA-influenced subdivisions were constructed in Las Vegas during the WWII era. These neighborhoods include the Vega Verde Addition within the John S. Park Historic District

(1941–1945; 1951); the Biltmore Addition (1941–1946); the Huntridge Neighborhood (1941–1946), and the Mayfair Homes Neighborhood (1941–mid-1950s). Whereas the Vega Verde Addition was constructed in a manner that allowed home buyers to qualify for FHA Title II financing, the other three subdivisions received funding under Title VI and were specifically developed to house non-commissioned officers and civilian employees of the Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range, as well as employees of Basic Magnesium Inc. and their families.

Each of the FHA-influenced subdivisions contained multiple plats, with the Huntridge Subdivision the largest in scale. The Huntridge Neighborhood was the first large-scale neighborhood to be designed during the war-era and is most emblematic of broader FHA neighborhood planning principles. In addition to incorporating curvilinear street patterns, standardization in lot size and building setbacks, this development was designed to function as a small-scale community with a centrally located park, a school, and space for commercial development strategically placed on the major arterial street to the north of the housing development. The Vega Verde, Biltmore Addition, and Mayfair Homes subdivisions represent smaller scale adaptations of FHA planning principles. While not designed as communities with multiple amenities, these subdivisions conformed to FHA subdivision design standards. Mayfair's layout, with plats distributed across a major thoroughfare did allow for commercial lots fronting either side of a commercial street. Internally, each plat of these subdivisions incorporated curvilinear street plans and standardized lot and building placement. The wide, shallow lots accommodated Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Cape Cod styles. Variations between subdivisions can be seen in the width of streets, the incorporation of sidewalks, curb and gutters, and landscaping.

Significance

Criterion A

Residential subdivisions discussed in this context may be eligible for listing in the NRHP as districts under Criterion A for their association with the identified contexts: the growth of Las Vegas and WWII-era Subdivision Development (community planning and development) or Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII (ethnic heritage). The eight custom built and FHA-influenced subdivisions identified in this context were developed to house an unprecedented influx of workers who came to the Las Vegas area seeking employment in the defense or service industries. These subdivisions demonstrate a range of planning and development practices; however, most reflect planning principles established and perpetuated by the FHA. Due to institutionalized discrimination in subdivision development at this time, it is important to note that residency in these eight subdivisions was limited to whites.

An examination of housing trends in West Las Vegas during WWII suggests that residential housing in this area followed a different historical pattern marked by expedient construction of individual homes without master planned infrastructure and improvements. Although many of these homes were demolished during postwar “slum clearing” efforts, a systematic building inventory may reveal the presence of residences built in the period between 1940 and 1945. If a cluster of historic-age buildings is identified that possess integrity of association (see boundary discussion below) this cluster may be evaluated as a district for its association with the context of Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas during WWII.

Criterion B

Ames and McClelland (2012) note that a neighborhood may be eligible under Criterion B if it is “directly associated with the life and career of an individual who made important contributions to the history of a locality or metropolitan area.” By and large, subdivisions evaluated under Criterion B are evaluated for their association with the developer/community builder responsible for their creation. While existing historic contexts and preliminary research indicate that there were prominent Las Vegas residents involved in the development of war-time subdivisions, additional research would need to be conducted in order to establish if these subdivisions are the best representative examples of the life and career of those individuals.

Criterion C

The WWII era subdivision in Las Vegas has significance under Criterion C because it represents the FHA and War Production Board’s influence on housing design and construction. Comprised of mass-produced and ubiquitous housing units, the districts will derive their Criterion C significance from their collection of Minimal Traditional, Ranch, or Cape Cod style residential architecture that is “an important example of a distinctive period of construction (or) method of construction” (Ames and McClelland 2002), rather than association with the “work of a master.”

Criterion D

There are no contexts presented in this document to facilitate the evaluation or registration of a district in the NRHP under Criterion D.

Integrity

In terms of assessing the eligibility of a potential historic district, National Register Bulletin 15 states that the majority of the resources of the district must maintain integrity, despite being “individually undistinguished” (National Park Service 1997). As the district, itself, is the NRHP subject property, the evaluation of integrity must necessarily focus on the district. In general, for the district as a whole to be considered NRHP eligible, at least 51 percent of its component resources must retain individual integrity, and thus “contribute” to its eligibility. However, the integrity requirements for a building to be considered a contributor to a district are often less stringent than those required for a building to be considered individually eligible for listing. Evaluations of integrity for historic districts should examine the integrity of not only the buildings that comprise the district, but also the integrity of the landscaping and streetscape (e.g., sidewalks, curb and gutter, rhythm of setback) in terms of the National Register’s seven aspects.

Location

In order for the district to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under the above mentioned contexts, the boundaries that historically defined the suburb should largely remain intact, as should the location of streets and size and shape of lots (Ames and McClelland 2002).

Design

In order for the district to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under the abovementioned contexts, the layout of housing lots should remain consistent and the vast majority of the individual houses should retain their essential form and materials. Construction of inappropriate additions and loss of original materials, if visible

on a high proportion of buildings, can erode a district's overall sense of design and thus render it ineligible for listing.

Setting

Retention of setting from the period of significance, within the boundaries of a district, is considered to be of importance to the NRHP eligibility. It is recognized that the setting surrounding a subdivision will change over time; however, the interior of the subdivision should retain the scenic quality derived from the features which defined its character during its period of significance, including but not limited to built resources, street plantings, parks and open space (Ames and McClelland 2002).

Materials

Integrity of materials in a district may refer to "construction materials of dwellings, garages, roadways, walkways, fences, curbing, and other structures, as well as vegetation planted as lawns, shrubs, trees, and gardens" (Ames and McClelland 2002). For districts deriving significance under Criteria A or B, less emphasis is placed on the retention of historic materials. For those districts significant under Criterion C (architecture), the majority of historic materials on buildings should remain intact. It is recognized that drought intolerant vegetation (such as lawns)-particularly within a desert climate- is often subject to replacement with native materials. Removal of original landscaping and replacement with xeric landscaping is not considered to negatively impact integrity of materials.

Workmanship

These residential districts are characterized by mass-produced housing, using lower grades of products (e.g. lumber). As low cost, standardized styles of housing, minimal traditional and ranch residences generally exhibit a generally low degree of workmanship and rather reflect principals of "mass-production" and "economies of scale."

Feeling

Ames and McClelland (2002) describe the NRHP concept of feeling as an "intangible" quality "evoked by the presence of physical characteristics that convey the sense of past time and place." They acknowledge the difficulty of discriminating feeling from the other six aspects of integrity, noting that integrity of feeling derives from "the cumulative effect of setting, design, materials, and workmanship." In terms of residential districts, loss of setting within the boundaries of the district, in terms of re-development purposes, is one of the largest contributors to loss of feeling. Additionally, when a majority of the houses no longer retain integrity of design and materials, a loss of feeling will occur.

Association

In order for a district to be considered eligible for listing under this context, it must maintain its historic associations. In other words, it must still reflect a residential subdivision designed under FHA principles. Large-scale conversion of the development for commercial use or loss of historic design elements through demolition would disqualify the district from NRHP listing. Conversion of properties from residential to commercial use on arterial roads is not uncommon; if these occur on the periphery of the district

consideration of drawing the boundary to exclude them is warranted. Individual properties located within the boundaries of a district which were converted to commercial use should be assessed as non-contributors.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing as a WWII era residential district under this context, the district must 1) be located within the incorporated limits of the city of Las Vegas; 2) have been constructed between 1940 and 1945; 3) possess one or more criteria of significance as articulated above and 4) retain sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance.

Boundaries

The standard method of suburban neighborhood development involved subdivision of land through a plat which effectively established the geographical boundaries of the neighborhood, the number and size of lots, easements, utilities, and the circulation pattern of roads and streets. In terms of defining the boundaries of a residential subdivision, Ames and McClelland (2012) note that:

Boundaries are typically defined by the extent of a historic subdivision or group of contiguous subdivisions, particularly where significance is based on design. Factors such as identity as a neighborhood community based on historic events, traditions, and other associations may be more relevant and should be considered when defining the boundaries of neighborhoods important in social history or ethnic heritage.

The WWII era subdivisions identified within this context will principally be evaluated under Criterion A for community planning and development, and C for architecture and/or planning. In these cases, the boundaries should be based what the Bulletin defines as the “extent of a historic subdivision,” typically the original plat boundary for the neighborhood. However, as may be the case for Westside Las Vegas, a district may be defined for its association with ethnic heritage, with boundaries based upon community identity, rather than the principles of formal community planning and development.

SECTION IV: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The geographical area is within the corporate limits of the city of Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada.

SECTION V: SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This submission consists of a technical report with three historic contexts and three property types. These contexts are: 1) Growth of Las Vegas and WWII-era Subdivision Development; 2) Racial Segregation and the Development of West Las Vegas; and 3) Residential Architecture of Las Vegas during WWII. The document includes subdivisions and neighborhoods platted between 1940 and 1945. These dates were selected to cover the onset of defense production in the United States and the conclusion of the country’s role in WWII. Property types include single- and multi-family dwellings and residential subdivisions.

Four of the neighborhoods included in this context were the subject of intensive-level architectural surveys between 2002 and 2014. Beginning in fall of 2002, 20th Century Preservation, a local historic preservation consulting firm under contract with the city of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department, conducted

comprehensive pedestrian surveys of two FHA-Influenced Subdivisions—the Mayfair and Biltmore Tracts—as well as the John S. Park Neighborhood (comprised of the Park Place and Vega Verde Additions). In all, 444 individual properties within the three neighborhoods were documented on Nevada SHPO Historic Resource Inventory Forms (HRIFs) and with black-and-white photographs. It is not known how many of these properties are residential, however. For the Biltmore Addition, Mooney (2003b) recommended that buildings within the first three phases should be considered for a more in-depth study in order to determine if the neighborhood constitutes an NRHP-eligible historic district. In comparison, the Mayfair Homes subdivision was recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP due to alterations to individual homes (Mooney 2003c). The John S. Park Neighborhood was subsequently listed in the NRHP as historic district in May 16, 2003.

In 2005, Painter Preservation and Planning was hired by the city of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department to survey Tract Nos. 1 and 2 of the Huntridge Neighborhood, and Tract No. 3 was subsequently inventoried by ICF International in 2014. A total of 282 single-family residences—some of which have been converted for commercial use—were documented during these inventories. Both consultants concluded that the Minimal Traditional and Ranch style homes remaining within the development had been altered significantly and no longer retained sufficient integrity necessary for individual listing in the NRHP (ICF International 2014; Painter 2005). They also noted that the amount of change in individual houses precluded the subdivision from having the number of contributing resources necessary for a historic district and concluded that inventories of the remaining tracts (Tract Nos. 4 and 5) were unnecessary (ICF International 2014; Painter 2005).

Logan Simpson conducted a windshield survey of the other four subdivisions included in this context in February 2015. The primary purpose of the survey was to examine existing historic-age buildings within the boundaries established in the historic context report; to define common property types associated with specific historic contexts; and establish registration requirements for subsequent NRHP nominations of individual properties and/or historic districts.

Subdivisions built within this context’s selected period of significance (1940–1945) were identified using plat maps available electronically from the Clark County Recorder’s Office. During the windshield survey, the architectural style and character-defining features of properties selected for documentation were noted and digital photographs of selected properties were taken. Additionally, a visual inspection of historic streetscapes within the identified neighborhoods was conducted to assess such features as building setback, landscaping and vegetation, sidewalks, curb and gutter treatment, and roadway width and condition.

Upon completion of the survey, Logan Simpson conducted archival research at the Nevada State Museum; Lied Library on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) campus; the city of Las Vegas Planning Department; and the city of Las Vegas Building and Safety Department. The primary goals of this research were to identify the FHA’s role in shaping Depression era and WWII era neighborhood planning and architectural trends, and to elucidate how these trends influenced the development of war-time housing in Las Vegas. Additionally, research was conducted on the growth of defense related industries in the Las Vegas area in an effort to address war-time population growth. Goals of research also included the

identification of the types of residential subdivisions developed during the war (i.e., government funded, FHA insured, or “custom-built”) and the developers and/or architects involved in their planning and construction). Primary and secondary documents, historic maps, oral histories, and manuscript collections housed at these Nevada repositories provided information on historic patterns of land usage and development of the Las Vegas Townsite, as well as the architects, builders, and developers initially responsible for filing the WWII era subdivision tracts and the design and construction of houses in those subdivisions. A search of building permit records at the Clark County Assessor’s Office was also conducted for all subdivisions except the Vega Verde Addition; however, original permits for the WWII era subdivisions were not available.

Extensive research was also conducted using online resources such as the Internet Archive (<https://www.archive.org>); the HathiTrust Digital Library (www.hathitrust.org); the *Las Vegas Age* newspaper digital collection (<http://digital.lvcld.org>); ancestry.com; and newspaperarchive.com. Particularly useful were the UNLV Library Digital Collections (digital.library.unlv.edu) and Henderson Libraries’ Digital Collections (digitalcollections.mypubliclibrary.com) and [Historicaerials.com](http://historicaerials.com). Whereas the digital collections provided historic photographs of BMI and Henderson, historic topographical maps for various years and aerial photographs dating to 1950, 1965, 1973, 1983, 1990, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2005 were examined on [Historicaerials.com](http://historicaerials.com). Property-specific records available online through the Clark County Assessor’s Office also provided information on original construction dates for buildings within these subdivisions, as well as building sketches which illustrated their physical dimensions.

SECTION VI: CONCLUSION

Residential subdivision development in the U.S. was generally limited during the period between 1940 and 1945 due to a lack of available funding as well as construction materials reserved for military use, as the Federal government geared up for entry into the war. Prior to the U.S. housing crisis during WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) under the legislative umbrella of the 1934 National Housing Act (NHA). The agency’s role was to provide an incentive for private developers to construct new subdivisions. Rather than provide loans or subsidies for housing, the FHA provided insurance on two types of mortgage loans—those for the repair, remodeling, and redecorating of existing structures (as identified in Title I of the NHA) and those for the construction of new buildings (as identified in Title II). In 1938, an amendment to Title II of the act was passed in order to encourage the development of “small homes.” The FHA allowed for insurance on mortgages up to 90 percent of the property value for owner-occupied homes, whereas the former Title II guidelines limited insurance to 80 percent. This new Title II program was limited to loan amounts of \$5,400 but it served as a great stimulus to the housing construction sector.

WWII began in Europe in 1939 and the U.S. began increasing production of materials to support allied forces in 1940. Certain areas within the country, such as Las Vegas, were designated as centers for war time production, which created population booms and concomitant housing shortages. One of the federal responses to this crisis was enactment of the Title VI amendment to the NHA in 1941. This amendment authorized the FHA to insure mortgages up to 90 percent of the home value on one- to four-unit dwellings for both owner-occupied and builder-owned properties in locations defined as “critical defense areas.” Las

Vegas was designated a critical defense area in June of 1941 which facilitated the development of new residential subdivisions.

Three Title VI neighborhoods have been previously identified through survey in the city and include the Biltmore, Mayfair, and Huntridge Neighborhoods. West Las Vegas has also been subject to an intensive level survey (Mooney 2003) as has Vega Verde, a Title II subdivision that was subsequently listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the John S. Park Historic District in May 2003. In addition to these neighborhoods, this study documents four custom or “built-on-demand” subdivisions, including Beckley, Sebec Acres, Eastland Heights, and Charleston Square. Logan Simpson proposes that the city of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Officer, in consultation with the city’s Historic Preservation Commission, develop a work plan to prioritize further inventory and evaluation of these subdivisions according to the following recommendations.

Vega Verde Subdivision

The Vega Verde Subdivision was also previously identified as a FHA Title II development by the city during preparation of a NRHP nomination for the John S. Park Neighborhood. As the Vega Verde Addition is currently listed in the NRHP as part of the John S. Park Historic District, no further work is recommended to assess NRHP eligibility of this neighborhood and its resources.

Biltmore Addition

For the Biltmore Addition, Mooney (2003b) recommended that buildings within the first three phases should be considered for a more intensive study in order to determine if the neighborhood constitutes a city of Las Vegas or NRHP eligible historic district. Based on the preliminary archival research and reconnaissance level survey conducted for this project, Logan Simpson concurs with this recommendation. As the historic resource survey and inventory was conducted more than ten years ago and buildings were evaluated for their individual eligibility only, Logan Simpson recommends that the addition be resurveyed and that the existing HRIFs be updated in order to account for changes in integrity that may have occurred since the original survey in 2003. Additionally, Logan Simpson recommends that the addition be viewed as a potential historic district with an evaluation of contributing and non-contributing resources to determine if the district as a whole possesses the necessary integrity to be NRHP eligible.

Mayfair Homes Subdivision

In comparison, buildings within the first two Tracts of the Mayfair Homes Subdivision were recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP due to alterations (Mooney 2003c). While the individual eligibility of buildings within the neighborhood cannot be ruled out based on the research undertaken for this context, Logan Simpson recommends that subdivision as a whole be resurveyed as a potential historic district with an evaluation of contributing and non-contributing resources. HRIFs will also need to be updated, as the initial survey and inventory was conducted in 2003 and is now more than 10 years old.

Huntridge Neighborhood

In the case of the Huntridge Neighborhood, both consultants concluded that the Minimal Traditional and Ranch style homes remaining within the development had been altered significantly and no longer retained

sufficient integrity necessary for individual listing in the NRHP (ICF International 2014; Painter 2005). They also noted that the amount of change in individual houses precluded the subdivision from having the number of contributing resources necessary for designation of a historic district, rendering inventories of the remaining tracts unnecessary (ICF International 2014; Painter 2005). As Tract Nos. 4 and 5 were also platted in 1942 and contain 305 lots—or half of the total number of lots within the broader neighborhood—Logan Simpson recommends that continued survey of the development is necessary in order to determine if it is eligible for listing in the NRHP as a historic district. Additionally, residences within these two additional tracts might also be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria B or C and should be evaluated.

In addition to these four developments, Logan Simpson identified four other neighborhoods through archival research, all of which are examples of “built-on-demand” or custom subdivisions developed by private investors during the WWII era. These neighborhoods include the Beckley Subdivision (1941), Sebec Acres (1941), Eastland Heights (1942), and Charleston Square (1945). Limited archival research was conducted on all of these developments and a reconnaissance level survey of residential properties within these neighborhoods was completed by Logan Simpson in 2015.

Beckley Subdivision

Logan Simpson recommends that the Beckley Subdivision has no further research potential under this context. The subdivision has been redeveloped for entirely commercial use and little remains of its original lot configurations.

Sebec Acres

Although platted during the WWII era, Sebec Acres does not exhibit FHA planning principles and information on file at the Clark County Assessor’s Office suggests that the majority of the residences remaining in the neighborhood were built in the post-WWII period, between 1948 and 1964. For these reasons, additional intensive-level evaluation of Sebec Acres as a historic district is not recommended. However, as a few residences dating to the initial development of the subdivision remain, Logan Simpson recommends that these properties be evaluated for their individual eligibility only under Criteria B and C.

Eastland Heights Neighborhood

The first plat of the Eastland Heights Neighborhood was platted in 1941, with additional plats filed within 1945, 1957, and 1959. Although Tract No. 2 was filed within the WWII era, Clark County Assessor’s records indicate that the first residence within this tract was not constructed until 1949, with build out occurring as late as 1958. For this reason, Logan Simpson recommends that only those buildings within Tract No. 1 be subject to an intensive level survey and inventory to determine if individually eligible properties are located within the subdivision. The neighborhood should also be viewed as a potential historic district with an evaluation of contributing and non-contributing resources.

Charleston Square Neighborhood

Unlike the other three custom subdivisions, the Charleston Square Neighborhood is unique in that its platting occurred at a pivotal point in the U. S. housing market—the transition between the development of defense housing and the housing boom to accommodate returning WWII veterans. Initially planned as a subdivision

for returning war veterans, the development was eventually converted to a strictly non-veteran project after the first 31 homes within the neighborhood were constructed. The neighborhood consists of four tracts (Tract Nos. 1–4), the first of which was filed in 1945. The remaining tracts were filed in 1948 and 1949, respectively. Although records on file at the Clark County Assessor’s office suggest that the earliest home in Tract No. 1 were constructed in 1947, historic newspaper accounts suggest that buildings were constructed as early as 1945. Logan Simpson recommends that buildings within the tract be subject to an intensive historic resource survey and inventory in order to determine if the tract constitutes a city of Las Vegas or NRHP eligible Historic District. The buildings should also be evaluated for their individual eligibility under Criteria B and C. Due to the uniqueness of the neighborhood, additional tracts should be evaluated as a Historic District under Criterion A (event) for its association with Land Usage: Townsite Development/City Planning, as a representative example of post-WWII subdivision development in Las Vegas.

West Las Vegas

Mooney’s 2003 intensive level survey of West Las Vegas recommended additional intensive survey of West Las Vegas “beginning with the remaining historic buildings within the survey boundaries where the oldest and most valuable resources exist” (Mooney 2003d). The report notes that loss of historic fabric in West Las Vegas renders the existence of a historic district unlikely, but notes that “gems” of individually eligible properties are likely to exist. In addition, the presence of a relatively large number of religious properties and social clubs was cited as potentially indicative of a subset of properties that could be listed under a Multiple Property Cover Document. While the current context does not provide the level of documentation to support a multiple property listing of West Las Vegas properties under a “social history” area of significance, it does provide substantiation of unique trends influencing residential development in this part of the city during WWII that warrant further archival and field research.

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