

Heavy Artesian Flow Made City Growth Possible

WATER! Las Vegas!

The one is linked inseparably with the other.

A bounteous supply of artesian water has built in the middle of desert desolation the beautiful verdant oasis that is Las Vegas.

And then Las Vegas, in turn, became the base for those momentous engineering operations that will harness the water of the mighty Colorado in a hundred mile lake behind Hoover dam.

Desert dwellers who are accustomed to hauling their water for scores of miles are surprised when they see sprinklers running in all parts of Las Vegas on summer nights, keeping lawns fresh and green.

Water!

That one word, coupled with all the things it has meant to the human race since pre-historic times, has been the cause of the building of empires, the building of cities and civilizations.

Conversely, the lack or loss of it has just as surely destroyed empires, cities, civilizations. The hot, arid region around the Pyramids in Egypt was once a fertile well-watered valley; the great Gobi desert in China was likewise; loss of the water supply in both these areas caused the shifting of great masses of the population, caused untold suffering to their residents and presaged the endings of eras in world development and civiliza-

tion.

Diversion of water has caused deadly feuds lasting over generations in our own great Southwest. Adding of water to areas where it formerly was not available has opened to human use some of the greatest and most fertile farming lands the world has ever known.

Water is of prime importance to all the activities of industry, to the growing of food supplies, to housing and to maintenance of life itself.

Today, Las Vegas, Nevada, which stands on the brink of unending prosperity as a future distribution point of power for the Boulder Dam Empire, stands in a unique position as regards her own individual water supply, which has no connection with and no bearing on the water which will eventually be impounded behind the great dam in the Colorado river.

Water which supplies the do-

mestic and farming needs of Las Vegas and the immediate contiguous country, comes from some thirty or more artesian wells, in addition to many other wells using pumping facilities, the constant supply for which is the run-off from the slopes of the Charleston mountains, partially wooded, cov-

ered with snow during a portion of each year.

It is a permanent supply, not subject to variation to any great extent and consequently not subject to the possibility of constant lowering year by year as is the case in some of the great fertile interior valleys of California. This

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is due to the fact that a well-nigh impenetrable dike of bed-rock underneath the city impounds the water in a vast subterranean reservoir.

Water has played and is playing the leading role in the drama of the transformation of Las Vegas from a part-time camp for

Indians, a fort and a stopping place for the early white pioneers on the way across the country in wagon trains, to one of the most rapidly growing and prosperous cities in the entire West today.

In the early days, before the white man had ventured into the West, Indians had established

Desert Town's Big Supply Boon To Dam Project

camps near Las Vegas because of the water from many springs. Later, when pioneers were blazing a trail overland to the gold fields of California, Las Vegas was a haven of rest as a frontier settlement. Its green foliage, water and shade trees were soon made the site of a settlement.

Later, when the railroads started stretching their endless ribbons of steel in great highways across the continent, Las Vegas was chosen as a terminal and a division point, principally because water was available here. It became a headquarters between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles for the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railway company, later to become a unit of the great Union Pacific System.

Interlocked with the history of the development of Las Vegas is the power of one of the greatest railroads in the West. In 1905, the predecessor of the Union Pacific, having decided to place the town on the rail map, first bought the Stewart ranch, which had three great flowing artesian wells. This was done solely for the purpose of securing a permanent water supply and the sum of \$50,000 was expended for this purpose.

Then a plot of ground was subdivided and lots were sold at auction. A stand was erected on the present site of the Union Pacific station and the sale lasted for several days. Several of the best known business men of Las Vegas

of today were among those who attended this first auction sale of lots and made purchases at that time.

The water flowing from the wells or springs two miles north-east of the site of the city was utilized for domestic purposes in the city and for locomotives by the railroad. Settling basins were constructed at the springs and the water piped to the city until 1924, when the supply became insufficient to meet the increased demand.

The Las Vegas Land and Water company had been organized by the railroad company to administer affairs in connection with the distribution of water and the sale of land. This company drilled a 12-inch well to a depth of 635 feet, developing an artesian flow of approximately eight feet per second. (See accompanying photograph.) A concrete reservoir with a capacity of 2,500,000 gallons was constructed in connection with the well; the old 16-inch cast iron pipe which had served the city since the beginning, was replaced with a new 24-inch supply line, thus insuring an adequate supply for all purposes.

The water company, which is still owned and operated by the railroad company, has grown with and aided in the development of the city. In order to encourage

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