

# *FABULOUS* LAS VEGAS, AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

1900-2000

## SYNOPSIS

### PURPOSE

The objective of this six frame postcard exhibit is to provide a pictorial history of Las Vegas and the Strip from its founding until the start of the 21st century. It is a history of the city and the Strip's development as a tourist mecca during that period. It does not cover the social or political history of the area. The focus is on resort development and activities promoted to support and attract customers to those businesses.

### SCOPE

Though the first 100 years are presented, the emphasis of the exhibit is from 1900 - 1980. This was the period when the character of the city was formed and the era of the most colorful city leaders and visionaries. The 80's were a lull for Las Vegas and the 90's a period of huge rapid development by large companies - plenty of money, but not much personality. While the focus is on resorts, the exhibit covers other aspects that are identified with the city and contribute to its personality and to tourism.

### ORGANIZATION

As with most histories, material is presented chronologically with minor exceptions. The story is told, roughly, a decade at a time. Headings and subheadings are used on each page with each new topic shown in red. Maps and timelines are used. Components of the timeline or map that are newly discussed in the current chapter are in red. With very few exceptions, views are from the period being discussed.

### MATERIAL

While Las Vegas postcards are plentiful, some of the cards required to tell a complete story were surprisingly difficult to acquire. Early real photos are always difficult no matter what the topic, but some hotel cards from the 50's-70's appear to be very scarce. While one view might be available, alternative views of a particular hotel would very elusive. Though there are many cards with many different subjects, the number of publishers is somewhat limited consisting of large souvenir shops and agencies whose purpose was to promote Las Vegas. Most hotels would publish their own cards. A wide range of production techniques are represented as would be usual for any postcards in a given time period. There are no pioneer cards in the exhibit since the story begins when their time had passed. I am not aware of the existence of any pioneer cards with Las Vegas as the subject. The exhibit is a result of a Las Vegas postcard collection accumulated over 25 years.

### OMISSIONS

Not every hotel and casino in Las Vegas (on the Strip or downtown) are represented. To do so would be redundant, and they are not essential to the Las Vegas story. Focus is on those facilities that have a strong identification with the city and helped push its history forward. Since it is a history of Las Vegas, no time is spent on resorts that developed surrounding the city and the Strip as examples Lake Las Vegas, Primm, Red Rock. Because most early photographers were itinerant, there is little on the identification of these men on early cards.

### REFERENCES

While there are many books and publications that deal with Las Vegas' history, a simple web search of "Las Vegas history" will reveal a wealth of information.