

# Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 2) ✖

(rs) In our last report we have seen how the Casinos have been set up at the beginning of the 20.th Century. At its beginning there were rather wild Gambling Halls and Backyard-gambling-localities, so it all developed gradually towards that, what we nowadays have to understand under a Casino. With the Assembly Bill that came into force in 1931 there has been created a legal frame and a basis for the organised and regulated Casino-existence.

If there is in a State the allowance for game of chance, then it should be allowed anywhere, so the thesis of the above all freedom-loving Americans. Everywhere, that means also that within the jails it should be legal, too. Yes, exactly. This assumption was represented by some fans and already after a short period of time there has even been a Casino legalised in the state jail of Carson City. The Bull Pen Casino, led and run by Casino-inmates, offered the prisoners the possibility during their time behind the barred window grid to stay in spite trustful to their game of chance.

Gambling should be by means of relaxing and as leisure-time activity. One prerequisite however, and that was one of the conditions that the Casino owner of the Bull Pen (who himself is a jail-inmate) would have to have enough capital available in order to guarantee for the paying-out of all-due profits. This Casino, that did in the year 1932 obtain a concession had to fulfil still one other condition, namely that one part of the winnings should have to be given by the owner to a Charity-fund for former prisoners. The following games were offered at the Bull Pen Casino: Craps, Black Jack, Roulette and Poker, also games that are still today very well known to us. Furthermore there has been also still a counter, where one could stake on horse races and other sportive events, also a

little betting office. That this whole concept was however not welcomed by all sides and it had always again strong resistance was comprehensible. In 1967 eventually, to the disappointment of many prisoners, the Bull Pen Casino of Carson City was closed down. Simultaneously outside the prison's walls a real boom took place. Las Vegas grew and grew, and important pioneers of the hotels-business began to invest in game of chance.

The first namely known luxury hotel of Las Vegas opened its doors on 2nd May, 1932: The Meadows Supper Club. With an own landing strip for rich fortune's knights, 100 hotel rooms, but without an air-conditioning-system, this place became the new point of attraction in Las Vegas. This hotel cast like a magnet and attracted the gamblers in droves. It was the absolute Night Spot. This Casino has been founded and led by Tony Cornero and his both brothers Frank and Louis. The idea with this hotel and casino was to receive, beside the possibility of running a casino, also the monopole for the prostitution. The district that was called „Block 16“, the area between Fremont and First Street in Downtown, here should everything be allowed. But the prostitution in Las Vegas has never been legalised. In the Meadows' Supper club was the motto in how „Every Saturday Night is New Years Eve“.

Nevertheless, this hotel was intensely proved by fate and already after less than one year of working experience then the house fully burnt down. The firemen disobeyed to extinguish the fire, because at that time it stood outside in the outskirts of the town so that they did not feel obliged. A second try to bring the hotel back to black digits failed. 1937 the Meadows Supper Club went bankrupt and was sold to an Investor from California. Tony Cornero, the original owner of the Meadows' went back to California and started a casino on a ship on the pacific. The guests were brought with little supplying-ships to the SS Rex, until it became just to be too much for the officials in 1939. In a considerable action with

more than 200 agents the Casino-boat has been taken over and the business stopped. Tony Cornero paid for his liberty and lived from that time on like a gambler. In 1955 he had a heart attack at a Craps table in the Desert Inn in Las Vegas, from which he died. A gambler until his last minute lived his dream until his last sigh.

Beside Tony Cornero there have been also other pioneers within the Casino business, whose attention is needed. Raymond Smith was one of them. Together with his son he founded 1935 with a minimal investment of some lousy 500 Dollars the Harold's Club in Reno. Originally a room, that was only some 7 meters wide but always it has been invested in, to enlarging it, so the Harold's Club was until the 70ies one of the largest Casinos in Nevada.

A very sensational idea was it that the casino had to be built directly at a street with a lot of traffic, with enough parking places so that the gambler could jump in for a game. Earlier the gambling localities were usually situated a bit hidden, in the backrooms or upstairs of the saloons. Raymond Smith understood very quickly the meaning of these important marketing concepts. „Pappy“, so he was called also in the gambler's scenery, was also known as the inventor of the Mouse Roulette. A Mouse was been let gone from one hole to the middle of the Roulette wheel on the pot and started to run anywhere. There where it finally has had gone in one of the 38 numbered fields, this was then the winning number.

1937 Bill Harrahs opened like one further pioneer a Casino in Nevada. It has been the Bingo club in Reno. Harrahs was one of the first Casino owners with management philosophies for the Gaming Industry. Up to the middle 70ies Harrah's Reno and Harrah's Lake Tahoe developed to become the most successful casinos of the U.S.A. Today Harrahs' is among others the most successful company with uncountable casinos, also in Las Vegas. These are among others the Harrahs', just at the Strip, in front of the Mirage Hotel, or the Rio, that is located at

the Flamingo West, in front of the Gold Coast Hotel and the Palms Casino and Hotel.

Las Vegas was always a little town with less than 20.000 inhabitants. But the whole should soon change. How it came to the establishment of Las Vegas Boulevard and what ideas Bugsy Siegel else had, more of this you will find in my next report.

**See also:**

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Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 1)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 3)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 4)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 5)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 6)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 7)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 8)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 9)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 10)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 11)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 12)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 13)

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 14 – End)

**Walk through Las Vegas**