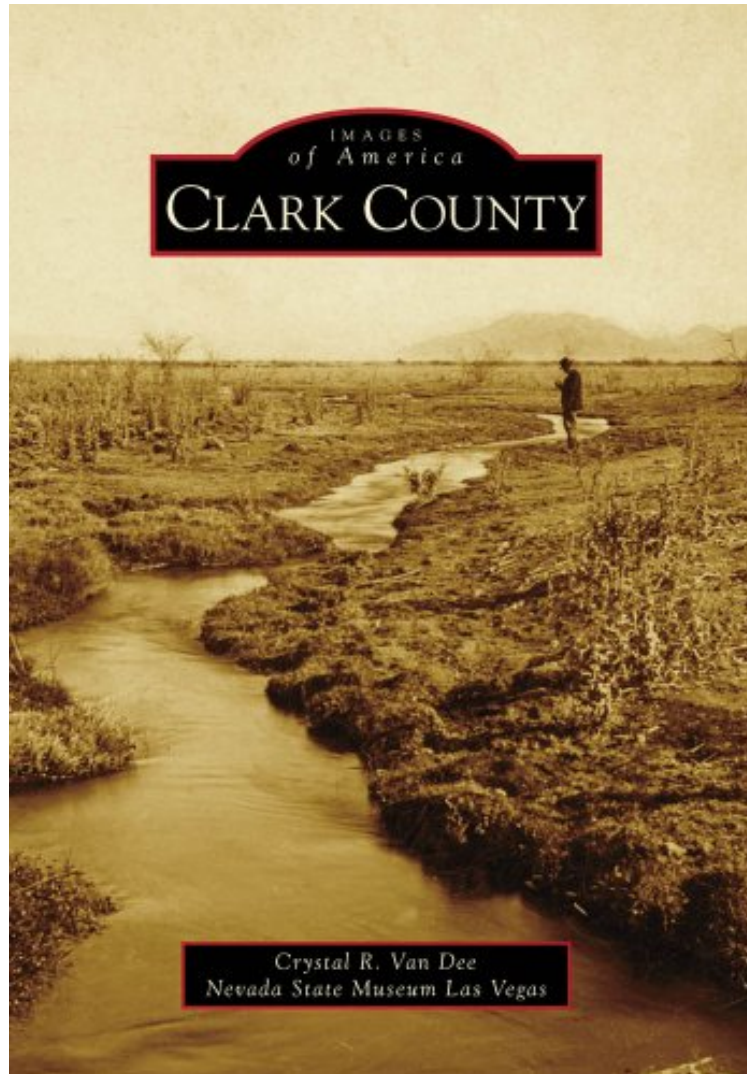


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Clark County (Images of America)

Crystal R. Van Dee, Nevada State Museum Las Vegas

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Crystal R. Van Dee, Nevada State Museum Las Vegas : Clark County (Images of America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clark County (Images of America):

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In 1902, Sen. William Clark purchased a large portion of the Las Vegas Ranch to create a rail stop for his latest business venture, the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad. On May 15, 1905, a land auction was held, officially marking the birthday of Las Vegas. Situated in Lincoln County, Las Vegas was located over 200 miles from the county seat of Pioche, making it difficult to conduct official business from so far away. Politicians lobbied for the creation of a new county, and Clark County, named after Senator Clark, was established in 1909 with Las Vegas as the county seat. In the following century, the county developed again due to the construction of Hoover Dam, the growth of the gaming industry, and the later introduction of Basic Magnesium Industries in what would become Henderson. More than a tourist destination, Clark County is now the most populous county in Nevada and represents a diverse cross-section of the United States.

Title: Clark County history now published in book
Author: Connie Mancillas
Publisher: Traveling Nevada
Date: 8/28/09
Crystal Van Dee, Curator of Manuscripts for the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, will be autographing her new book, Clark County, at a reception at the museum on Saturday, September 19, 2009, at 2 pm. Clark County was published by Arcadia Publishing as part of its "Images of America" series. 2009 marks the centennial of the creation of Clark County when, as Van Dee writes in her introduction, "political and economic pressure from prominent southern Nevadans" in 1909 persuaded the state legislature to cut Lincoln County in half. Southern Nevada at the time was booming: the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad had established the city of Las Vegas in 1905; lucrative mining was underway in surrounding areas; and agriculture in the nearby Moapa Valley and on ranches in the Las Vegas Valley was at its peak. The distance between the county seat in Pioche and the growing south made conducting business and government increasingly difficult--a round trip to Pioche from Searchlight was nearly 500 miles. Van Dee--who recently completed a book on the letters of Helen J. Stewart, the "First Lady of Las Vegas" on whose land Las Vegas was founded--notes that the public perception of Clark County has long been dominated by the growth of Las Vegas, which is only a part of the county's history. Working almost entirely in the photo archives of the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, Van Dee has produced a visual history of Clark County which includes not only the rise of Las Vegas from a small division point on the railroad to a world-renowned resort, but celebrates the "unique, diverse, and little-known aspects of the county's history." Van Dee traces the history of Clark County from its agricultural and mining roots in the 1900s-20s, through construction of Hoover Dam in the 1930s, establishment of Basic Magnesium and Nellis Air Force Base in the 1940s and '50s, and the post-war resort boom of Las Vegas. Among the images Van Dee has unearthed are several photographs of the home of W. S. Mills, manager for the Southwest Mining Company at Eldorado Canyon in the early 1900s. The well-furnished home sits on the banks of an undammed Colorado River. The dining room table is set with expensive china and crystal, while seen through the open door are the muddy Colorado and the barren peak of Mt. Davis. Van Dee includes images of the artesian springs and streams that laced the Las Vegas Valley in the early 20th century, as well as images of the mining towns of Searchlight and Goodsprings, and the town of Henderson, born during World War II on the flats between Las Vegas and Boulder City. Van Dee's most intriguing images are those that reflect community life in Clark County: the Las Vegas Hostess Club [1910s]; an automobile expedition from Las Vegas to Eldorado Canyon [1915]; packing cantaloupes for shipment in Logandale [1925]; a crowd of unemployed men hoping for work at Hoover Dam [1931]; the school at Blue Diamond [1942]; and dining and gambling at Searchlight's El Rey Club [1950s]. For those who identify Clark County with Las Vegas alone, Crystal Van Dee's book provides a wide-ranging and thorough photographic history of Nevada's most populous and diverse county. For more information about the Nevada State Museum-Las Vegas
About the Author
Crystal Van Dee has lived in Clark County for almost 10 years and is the manuscripts curator at the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas. She enjoys studying the cultural and social aspects of history and has selected photographs that represent the unique spirit of Clark County.