Reno at the Crossroads: A Sesquicentennial Exhibit

On all five floors of the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center through December, 2018
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Captions for images on gallery walls flanking the atrium, floors 2-5

These captions, provided by our curator, Alicia Barber, describe the images above them. Most of the images are from Special Collections. We thank the individuals and organizations that provided additional images to help tell the stories in each area. Beneath each Special Collections image is an Image ID. These numbers can be used to order high-resolution digital copies of the images using the order form. The processing fee is $12 per image. Please contact Special Collections with questions.

North end of 2nd floor – From Crossing to Crossroads

Created by Cyrrinus B. McClellan in 1882, this painting shows Myron C. Lake and local tribal members in front of his Lake House and bridge in 1862. The original hangs in the dining room of Arts for All Nevada’s Lake Mansion in Reno. Image courtesy of Arts for All Nevada

The original Reno town site platted by the Central Pacific Railroad in 1868. The railroad tracks run left to right through the center, just north of Commercial Row. Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society

UNRS-P0130-6
Myron C. Lake donated the land to construct the red brick Washoe County Courthouse (left) immediately adjacent to his hotel, the Lake House. The courthouse was completed in 1873. The iron bridge seen here replaced Lake’s earlier wooden structure in 1877. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Several different depots have stood alongside the railroad tracks. The second, constructed in 1879, included this hotel with three tower-like cupolas, a wooden balcony, and an adjacent park. It burned down in 1889. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Commercial Row was bustling with activity on July 4, 1910, the day Reno hosted the famous prizefighting match between Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A view ca. 1915 looks southward over the Truckee River at (left to right) the Carnegie Free Public Library (opened in 1904), the Washoe County Courthouse (1911), and the Riverside Hotel (1906). A streetcar crosses the bridge, bound for Moana Springs. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Early automobiles on Virginia Street, ca. 1910. On the left is the Masonic Temple and on the right, the Federal Building and Post Office. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Horses and buggies share Virginia Street with what was said to be Reno's first or second automobile, ca. 1905. Looking north from First Street, buildings of note include, at the left (with tower) the Washoe County Bank and the Grand Theatre on the right. Image courtesy of Special Collections

South end of 2nd floor – Outward and Upward

Charles Lindbergh lands at the first Reno airfield in his monoplane, the Spirit of St. Louis, on September 19, 1927. The field, established in 1920, stood at the site of the current Washoe County Golf Course on Plumas Street between Plumb and Moana Lanes. Image courtesy of Special Collections

A visit to the first Reno airfield in November of 1926 by the Josephine Ford, the Fokker Trimotor airplane that Richard Byrd flew to the North Pole on his 1926 polar expedition. Image courtesy of Special Collections
In 1928, the Boeing Company established Reno’s new airfield, named Hubbard Field after a Boeing executive, amid the pastures and ranches east of the city. It was later renamed the Reno Municipal Airport. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A view of the Reno Arch looking south along Virginia Street with the Riverside Hotel in the center distance. Neon lighting was added to the arch’s lettering in 1934. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A 1946 view looks southeast across the railroad tracks to Commercial Row. Note the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot to the left and the Reno Arch near the photo’s center. *Image courtesy of Neal Cobb and Jerry Fenwick*
Looking northward from around Rylan Street ca. 1948, South Virginia Street is lined with car dealerships, service stations, and the Tower movie theater, with the Mapes Hotel in the distance. One branch of the Lincoln Highway ran south along Virginia Street to Carson City. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Crowds arrive at Steamboat Springs in 1950 for the final run of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad before the line was abandoned and the tracks removed. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

South Virginia Street, in the area known today as Midtown, was widened in 1965 to make way for increased traffic. Most of the buildings seen here still stand today, just south of Mary Street. *Image courtesy of Nevada Department of Transportation*

North end of 3rd floor—Reno’s Economy
The Riverside Flour Mill was built in 1872 on E. Second Street, the current site of Greater Nevada Field. It milled products like Gold Medal flour and Carnation brand cereals. The building burned and was rebuilt several times, and remained standing through the mid-1980s. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

The Flanigan Warehouse was constructed in 1901-1902 and still stands at 701 E. Fourth Street. The 38,000-square foot warehouse was used to store wool and other goods for Patrick L. Flanigan’s sheep and cattle business, and also for wholesale trade, distribution, and general storage. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

*UNOH 139-7*

Reno Iron Works is pictured at 234 Chestnut Street in 1939. The longstanding business began as a blacksmith shop and was run for many years by cousins John and Andrew Ginocchio. It grew into a thriving structural steel and fabrication company. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The Commercial Soap Factory (pictured in 1921) was constructed at the current intersection of St. Lawrence Avenue and Forest Street in 1906 after operating near Virginia City for 30 years. Sold in 1932, the vacant complex burned in 1935 and was torn down soon after. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*
A worker manufactures soap flakes at an unknown location in Reno, possibly the Commercial Soap Factory. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Ed Chism and his daughter Alice Jane pose with a Chism’s delivery truck in 1921. The Chism family operated a large dairy farm on the west side of town beginning in the 1880s. Ed Chism founded the Chism Ice Cream Company in 1905. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The Nevada Packing Company at 759 E. Fourth Street in the 1940s. Founded in 1902, it contained a slaughterhouse and other facilities to serve local cattle ranchers. It closed in 1947 and was replaced by the El Rancho Motel No. 2. *Image courtesy of Nevada Department of Transportation*

Worker Carl Burbott fills and caps bottles inside the Reno Brewing Company Bottling Plant at 900 E. Fourth Street in the 1950s. Built in 1940, the building still stands, although the main Reno Brewing Company building, which opened in 1903, is gone. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*
Many lumber companies had logging operations in the mountains, with planing mills and storage yards in the valleys below. The Reno Mill & Lumber Company, founded in 1889 on East 4th Street, was serviced by spur tracks from both the Central Pacific and Nevada-California-Oregon Railroads. Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society

Workers pose outside Nevada Engineering Works around 1912. The company, founded on East 4th Street in 1902, operated a boiler shop, blacksmith shop, and pattern shop that produced machinery, pipe, and tanks like this 13,000-gallon-capacity one featured in a postcard from 1912. Image courtesy of Special Collections

South end of 3rd floor – Ahead for Business

The Nelson & Petersen Cash Store and the California Market, a butcher shop, are pictured ca. 1900. They shared a building with what looks like an upstairs rooming house on the 300 Block of N. Virginia Street, the current site of the Eldorado Resort Casino. Image courtesy of Special Collections
Businesses on Virginia Street ca. 1910 included the Wiley B. Allen Co. piano store and Clifford and Wilson Co., druggists on the ground floor of the Masonic Temple, the Gray, Reid & Wright department store just beyond them; and Hudson Cyclery on the right. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

Dorothy Bartlett (at rear) opened the Atlas Realty Company in the mid-1930s. The daughter of prominent judge and lawyer George A. Bartlett, she served many of his divorce clients who were in need of temporary housing. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A truck carrying bottles from the Crystal Springs Ice Company drives east along West Second Street in the 1940s. Beyond the Senator Hotel stands the Saviers Building (home to the Savier paint and electrical businesses), and behind it, St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral. *Image courtesy of Nevada Department of Transportation*
Les Lerude opened the Wigwam Coffee Shop on the busy northeast corner of Sierra and Second Streets in 1934. Seen here ca. 1945, the restaurant was widely known for its hot apple pie. The Victory Theatre and Blondy’s Bar are on the right. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The Savage & Son plumbing building at 628 S. Virginia Street ca. 1950, with the Dietz Dodge Plymouth Motor Company just to its left. The Dodge building opened as Osen Motor Sales in 1923. Both buildings still stand today. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

The interior of Nevada Sporting Goods at the northwest corner of Douglas Alley and Virginia Street, ca. 1927. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The Reno Pet Food Market, run by the Combs family, opened at 745 South Virginia Street in the mid-1940s. The building, which still stands, predated the store, having opened as a grocery in 1923. The Pet Food Market had a drive-through window and petting zoo. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
3rd floor. Opposite south gallery wall:

Dr. William Lee Samuels and Dr. John LaRue Robinson, M.D., pose in Robinson’s office in the Masonic Temple on Virginia Street around 1912. Dr. Robinson helped lead the campaign to convert the county hospital into a general hospital, later called Washoe Medical Center and eventually Renown.

*Image courtesy of Special Collections*

West-facing Wall, 3rd floor – A Gambling Mecca

Saloons and gambling houses including the Louvre, the Oberton, and the Wine House lined East Commercial Row in 1910. Opened by the Fancovich family in 1874, the Wine House was one of the first establishments to be licensed after gambling was legalized in 1931. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The Willows was the most exclusive gambling house and speakeasy in Nevada. It originated as Rick’s Resort, which shady characters Bill Graham and Jim McKay purchased in 1922. Located west of town on the Old Verdi Road, The Willows burned down on June 14, 1932. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Parallel to Commercial Row, Douglas Alley once ran east from Peavine (now Evans) Street all the way to West Street. Pictured here in the 1940s, it was lined by casinos including Harrah’s Plaza Tango, Reno Casino, the Wine House, Bank Club and Harolds Club. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

The signs of Reno’s casinos were getting bigger by the late 1940s, as seen in this view of North Virginia Street looking south, ca. 1947. The Riverside Hotel can be seen in the distance, with the Mapes Hotel under construction to its left. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Harolds Club opened in 1935. For decades, its mural was one of the most prominent features of Virginia Street, measuring 70 feet long by 35 feet tall. After the casino closed in 1999, the mural was saved and reinstalled at the Reno Livestock Events Center. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
The 12-story Mapes Hotel-Casino became the tallest building in Nevada when it opened in December of 1947. Its crown jewel was the 12th floor Sky Room, with entertainment, dining, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The building closed in 1982, and was imploded on January 30, 2000. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

The Riverside Hotel expanded in 1950 with 84 rooms, a swimming pool, a theater-restaurant, casino, and dance floor. Its stage featured some of the top acts in show business. It closed in 1987, and the original structure was converted into artist lofts. *Image courtesy of Neal Cobb and Jerry Fenwick*

The Primalonna Club, seen ca. 1975, was the first casino allowed on the west side of Virginia Street. Club owner Ernie Primm sued the city in 1952 for refusing to issue him a gaming license. Although he lost, the City finally granted his license in 1955. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A new Reno Arch graced Virginia Street in 1964. By then, casinos lined both sides of the street, although not yet reaching north of the railroad tracks. The Silver Dollar Club at the right was demolished in 1974 to make way for Fitzgeralds Casino-Hotel. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
3rd floor Opposite west-facing gaming wall:

Located over a mile east of downtown, the MGM Grand Hotel-Casino opened in 1978. Its gambling area was the size of two football fields, and its stage was the largest in the world. The building survives today as the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino. Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society

The Harrah’s name now tops resorts from California to New Jersey, but it all began with a series of small casinos and bingo parlors opened by Bill Harrah in Reno, starting in 1937. Harrah’s Bingo Club, pictured here, opened at 207 North Center Street in 1953. Image courtesy of Special Collections, UNLV Library

North end of Fourth Floor – Building Community

Congregants gather to lay the cornerstone of the First United Methodist Church on the northwest corner of First and West Streets on March 30, 1926. The towers of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (later Cathedral) are visible through the trees. Image courtesy of Special Collections
Adults and children pose in front of the Majestic Theater around 1925. The theater stood at the northwest corner of W. First and Center Streets. It operated from 1910 to 1974, when the Mapes family replaced it with a parking lot. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Owners and staff stand in front of Harvey’s Q-ne-Q diner, once located at the corner of Stewart and S. Virginia Streets. Harvey Majors opened it as a root beer stand in 1928. A local favorite, it was widely recognized as the area’s first drive-in restaurant. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Reno Garage owner Jack Threlkel founded a ballpark between Reno and Sparks in 1930. The park hosted semi-pro teams like the one named for his business. He poses here with the team’s players in front of the wooden stands in 1940. *Image courtesy of Jerry Fenwick*
Women and children pose in front of the Masonic Temple during a Red Cross clothing drive, likely during the First World War. The first branch of the Red Cross formed in Reno in 1898, when its primary goal was to provide care and comfort to soldiers. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Crowds gather at the Virginia Street Bridge for a Reno Rodeo parade in the 1930s. Note the Granada Theatre and Elks Club on the left. On the ground floor of the Masonic Temple are Brundidge’s Art Supplies, Reno Sporting Goods, and Wilson’s Drugs. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

Bill Fong opened the New China Club on Lake Street in 1952. It catered to Asian and African American customers, who were excluded from many mainstream casinos. Fong sponsored his club’s first Keno Queen contest in 1958. The winner was Ruby Roberts of Oakland, California. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Members of Zenbat Gara, the University of Nevada, Reno Basque Folk Dance Ensemble, stroll through Rancho San Rafael Park. The group was founded in 1989, the same year as the dedication of the National Monument of the Basque Shepherd, visible on the hill behind them. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

**4th floor pillars opposite north gallery wall:**

![Image of people](UNRA-P3664-0014)

The first class to graduate from the Orvis School of Nursing stands in front of St. Mary’s Hospital in 1958. Front row, left to right: Marie Haddad, Sister Seraphina, Helen Gilkey, Sister Noel, unidentified, Dorothy Button. Middle row, left to right: unidentified, Tracy [?], Barris Nordlof, Carolyn Swinney, Ann Thorburn Conyard, unidentified. Back row, left to right: Louis Clark, Bertha Mack Mullens, unidentified, Jill Stratton Campbell, Carolyn Mather. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

![Image of Virginia Street](UNRS-P2006-05-004)

Crowds gathered to watch the dousing of a fire on Virginia Street on August 3, 1910. Sparked by a gas explosion, the fire damaged or destroyed three buildings near the corner of Douglass Alley housing R. Herz & Bro. Jewelers, Stork & Jacobs tailor shop, the Montana Saloon, and Scott’s Palace Barber Shop. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

**South end of Fourth Floor – Living and Learning**

A rare early photo reportedly shows the simple wooden structures of Reno’s Chinatown. The community was located for many decades along the Truckee River near the intersection of First and Lake Streets. A Joss House remained in that vicinity until 1958. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*
In 1889, Francis Newlands became the first of many wealthy residents to construct a home high on the bluff overlooking the south bank of the Truckee River. Newlands, a U.S. Senator from 1903-1917, later founded the tree-lined neighborhood known today as the Old Southwest. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Adults and children work on a lot across Evans Avenue from Orvis Ring Elementary School. This photo may be documenting an Arbor Day activity in 1913, when students cleared two lots adjacent to the new school to plant corn. The school was demolished in 1978. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Two horses pull a wagon along Mill Street around 1915. Looking east from the point where Mill and Lake Streets intersect, this photograph depicts the stately homes that once lined the south side of the river, east of Virginia Street. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Children stand in front of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony church in a photo appearing in a scrapbook owned by Winona James. Many children living in the Colony attended the Stewart Indian School in Carson City, while others attended Reno’s Orvis Ring Elementary. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Photographer Gus Bundy captured this shanty town along the Truckee River in an undated photo. Originally from New York City, Bundy settled in Northern Nevada in 1941, and his photographs document a wide swath of life in the region. Image courtesy of Special Collections

The Reno High School located today on Booth Street opened in 1951. This photo of the school’s art room dates to its earliest years. The new school was considered modern in every respect. Large windows provided abundant light for art instruction. Image courtesy of Special Collections

Members of Delta Delta Delta gather on the front porch of their sorority house in 1980. The University of Nevada’s Theta Theta chapter of Tri Delta was founded in 1913. Image courtesy of Special Collections

4th floor opposite south gallery wall
Students participate in a swim class at the pool in Idlewild Park in 1929. Originally encompassing the historic Bennett, Murray, and Ferris ranches, the 49 acres that now encompass the park were purchased by the City of Reno in 1921 from James Newlands, Senator Francis Newlands’ nephew. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A float from Reno Sky Ranch passes under the Reno Arch on Virginia Street during a Reno Rodeo parade. Reno Sky Ranch, an airfield located seven miles north of Sparks, was used for training Navy and Air Corps pilots during World War II. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

**North end of Fifth Floor – a River Runs Through It**

The network of irrigation ditches diverting water from the Truckee River and area creeks enabled the cultivation of an additional 20,000 acres. By the 1960s, most downtown ditches were covered. Many ditches are now owned by the City and used for flood control and drainage. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

An iron bridge spanned the Truckee River at Virginia Street from 1877 until a new concrete one was built in 1905. This view looking north from the south bank shows a stone retaining wall on the north side and lush foliage in the foreground. *Image courtesy of Neal Cobb*
Beginning in 1911, the Belle Isle resort, current site of Wingfield Park, featured a dance hall, a 700-seat open air theater, and small boat rentals. Visiting carnivals installed temporary Ferris wheels and other amusement rides there. A footbridge connected to the north bank. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

4 POSTCARD CLUSTER

UNRS-P1992-03-1093

UNRS-P1992-03-1104

UNRS-P1992-03-1147

UNRS-P1992-03-1156
Four postcard views from around 1910 to 1940 capture the scenic beauty of the Truckee River as it winds it way through the center of Reno. Featured buildings include the Mission-style McKinley Park School and early and later versions of the Riverside Hotel. *Images courtesy of Special Collections*

Winters were much colder in the early 1900s than they are today. Occasionally, the Truckee River froze solid enough to allow local residents to enjoy ice skating safely, as in this photo from around 1919. *Image courtesy of Nevada Historical Society*

Children wade and fish under the Virginia Street Bridge in a photo originally featured as half of a stereographic view. The river's naturally occurring Lahontan cutthroat trout were fished so aggressively and the river was so engineered that they are now a threatened species. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

By the time this photograph was taken in the 1950s, the course of the Truckee River had been engineered into a defined channel in order to enable the construction of roads on either side. Many of those roads are now restricted to pedestrian use only. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
The 1950 Truckee River flood was devastating to downtown Reno. Here, waters surge past the entrance to Reno City Hall on the left. Across the street, the Reno Garage occupies the site that would later house the AT&T Building. *Image courtesy of Neal Cobb and Jerry Fenwick*

5th floor pillars opposite north gallery wall

Reno’s Whitewater Park was constructed in two channels on either side of Wingfield Park in downtown Reno from 2003 to 2004. Seven thousand tons of smooth rocks and boulders were installed along the river banks and in-stream for easy public access, spectators, and kayaking maneuvers. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

A winter view looking southwest from the intersection of West First Street and the Arlington Avenue bridge (built in 1920) shows the west end of Wingfield Park, the large houses of Court Street on the left, and on the right, a row of trees planted by the city along Riverside Drive. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

**South End of Fifth Floor – Shaping the Land**
These Native American dwellings were likely inhabited by individuals working on the Caughlin Ranch. Many local tribal members found work on area ranches. The land they were granted by the federal government to found the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony was not suitable for agriculture. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

Boys play around 1905 on "University Pond," the man-made rancher’s pond that preceded Manzanita Lake. The lake was created in 1911 as part of a campus beautification plan by damming up the Orr Ditch, which still runs through the south end of campus. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

William Caughlin and his daughter Syrene pose with workers on the sprawling Caughlin Ranch west of town around 1910. The "lower ranch" was located around Mayberry Drive where the ranch house still stands. Much of the ranch became the Caughlin Ranch housing development in the 1980s. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

As part of a campus beautification project funded by Clarence Mackay in 1908, the field north of Morrill Hall was turned into a grassy quadrangle complete with pathways and rows of trees. The Mackay School of Mines Building stands at the rear, around 1911. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Golfers enjoy the new Washoe County Golf Course between Moana Lane and Urban Road. The golf course was expanded in the 1930s into the space formerly occupied by Reno’s first airfield, with the aid of Federal Relief Program funds. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

![Image](UNRS-P0870-1)

Keston Ramsey opened the Sky Tavern ski resort, just off the Mt. Rose Highway that runs between Reno and Lake Tahoe, in December of 1945. The resort featured a hotel and restaurant, a T-bar lift, and several rope tows. It remains in operation today. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

![Image](UNRS-P1992-03-0951)

Sam L. Laughton bought a natural hot springs west of Reno in the 1880s, built a hotel, and turned the site into a popular resort. The springs fed a large swimming pool enjoyed by residents and tourists alike, as seen in this photo from around 1945. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*

![Image](UNRA-P3529-0027)

A photo taken during the annual Great Reno Balloon Race in September of 2005 provides a remarkable view of the carpet of planted trees—and houses—stretching from one side of the valley to the other. *Image courtesy of Special Collections*
Fifth floor pillars, opposite south gallery wall

Students walk up Peavine Mountain to participate in the annual whitewashing of the “N” on Peavine Peak in 1929. The practice of adding a fresh coat of white paint to the rocks that form the letter “N” has reportedly been a Nevada tradition every autumn since 1913. Image courtesy of Special Collections

In cooperation with the City of Reno, laborers working for the CWA, NERA, and WPA—all federal New Deal programs—dug and laid more than 12,000 feet of sewer lines within city limits, mostly in outlying areas. Considerable home building development resulted from this work. Image courtesy of Special Collections