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# Las Vegas: An Unconventional History



## Synopsis

From Mormon missionaries to mega-casinos, from Bugsy Siegel to Wayne Newton, and from natural springs to atomic blasts, this companion book to a three-hour PBS "American Experience" documentary presents 100 years of sin, gin, and din. 250 images.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

"Las Vegas" provides interesting photos and verbiage covering Las Vegas from its initial start, through the building of Boulder/Hoover Dam, establishment as a "suburb" of L.A., attraction for "quickie" (6 week) divorces, the mob's influx, atomic testing, the "Rat Pack," attraction as a "marriage mill," Howard Hughes, Steven Wynn, imploding old landmarks, and finally the building of new hotels with unique tourist attractions (eg. volcano, pirate ship, art displays, fountains).lves also provides several interesting statistical tidbits - Las Vegas slot machines have paid out as much as \$40 million to a single winner, and by '04 provided about 2/3 of Las Vegas casino revenue; in '76 nearly half the gross revenue of the 163-hotel Hilton chain came from its 2 L.V. properties; L.V. has 20 of the world's largest 23 hotels; and during the '90s non-gambling revenues began exceeding gambling revenues in Las Vegas.

I haven't seen the PBS documentary that spawned this companion book, but the book is worth reading and having if you're interested in the history of Las Vegas. The book covers the founding of Vegas as a town, the construction of Hoover Dam, the flourishing of the Mob, the testing of the atom bomb (120 detonations around 65 miles of Vegas throughout the 1950s!), the Rat Pack, the Howard

Hughes period and the Disney-fication of Sin City. The obligatory PBS Politically Correct chapter on African Americans in Vegas was actually very fascinating. I knew that Sammy Davis Jr. wasn't allowed to stay in the hotels where he performed in the '50s--which was shameful enough--but to read that the Flamingo drained the pool after the gorgeous Dorothy Dandridge swam in it and Lena Horne's sheets were burned rather than put in the laundry ("We don't want to offend the Texans," was the hotel's lame excuse) is shocking and disgraceful. Definitely a coffee table book with great photos and thick pages. I wish there had been more photos though. As a regular Vegas visitor, I know that town could provide many, many more.

... and an awesome book in and of itself. I was recently married, and my then fiance (now husband) and I wanted a non-traditional guest book for the reception. Since our wedding was in Las Vegas (although on a private lake off-strip), we thought that a coffee table book about Las Vegas would be an awesome idea. So I looked at the books that had to offer, comparing reviews, content, and size, and decided on this one -- and it was a perfect choice! The book is full of fascinating facts about the history of Las Vegas. The pages are thick, the book itself a wonderful 'coffee table book' size, and overall well constructed. Thanks to these things, combined with the notes and signatures of our wedding guests, we now have a priceless guest book that we can proudly display on our coffee table for years to come. A note on 's Customer Service: We ordered this book only about a week prior to our departure for Las Vegas. The first book arrived in minimal packaging that did not protect the book completely - there were some dings and a tear on the slip cover - something that I normally would not complain about. However, in this situation, I did send a message to about the damaged book and requested that a new one be sent to us in more substantial packaging. Two days later, there it was, a perfect copy, in a larger box with more 'padding', just in time to pack and bring with us to Las Vegas! \*This\* is why I shop at .com. Thank you, !

If you are new to the Las Vegas area, and you plan on staying in the Las Vegas area then you should buy this book. There is so much interesting history to this City and the state of Nevada. It is well worth having this book on your coffee table.

I bought this book about a year ago when I moved to Las Vegas. It is an extremely interesting and thorough history of the town and it is an easy read. Great reference material for my library. I couldn't put it down. Definitely worth the \$40 I paid - a steal at the bargain price.

I have watched the PBS video several times and gave this book a try. Very pleased that I made the purchase. Although the text often times reads verbatim to some segments of the film, there are photographs that are not shown in the film. The right combination of text and photos, allowing either in depth and insightful read or a quick and interesting scan you will find in a good coffee table book.

I love Las Vegas, even as a non-gambler. It was great to learn the background and the very roots of "Sin City". This book will tell you volumes about the history and current development of Las Vegas, a truly unique spot on the globe, to which we return again and again to see shows and experience new restaurants, and generally get a "big-city" fix. A great guide to Vegas.....

Excellent history of Las Vegas that doubles as a coffee table pictorial. Perfect for folks who are looking for a visual history with factual stories from the turn of the 20th century to the present.

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