

Sunset Regional Park

Water in Paradise Valley

Before 1907, only part of Duck Creek and a few scattered springs, such as Cow Spring a few miles east of Sunset Park, flowed above ground. Paradise Valley appeared to have little water to attract ranchers.

The railroad provided water only to its Las Vegas townsite, and the land outside Las Vegas remained undisturbed. This changed after the Vegas Artesian Water Syndicate drilled its first successful well in 1907, and the underground waters of Paradise Valley were tapped in 1908.



Ed and Mary Von Tobel at the well on their property located south of Sunset Park in about 1910.
— Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV



A cowboy breaks a horse on Bill Morgan's ranch at Cow Spring, a few miles east of Sunset Park in the early 1900s.
— Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV

Partners Ed Clark and C.C. Ronnow drilled the first artesian well in Paradise Valley in 1908. Here the families walk their newly-planted orchard. The farm was directly across what is now Eastern Avenue from the Miller Ranch, the future Sunset Park.
— Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV



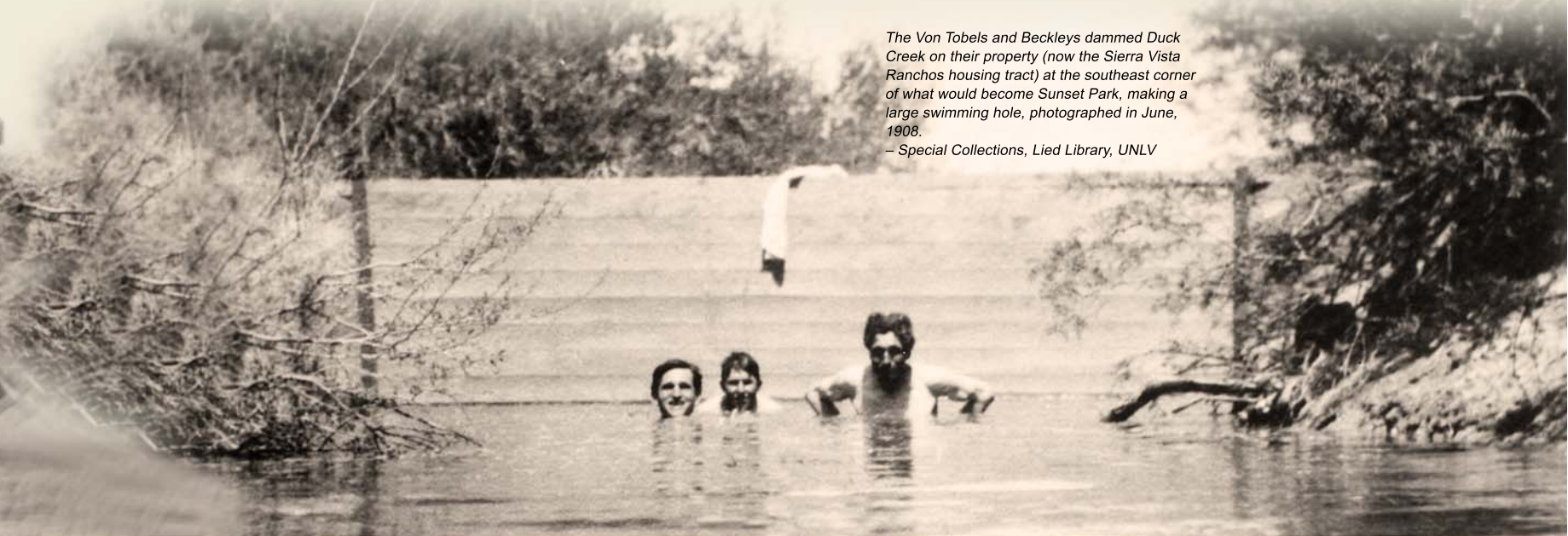
Water meant free government land to those who would develop wells and raise crops. As a result, people rushed to file on land in Paradise Valley. By 1912, nearly 100 wells were dug, but the wells could irrigate only 640 acres and only a few ranches produced crops. Most of the Paradise Valley “ranchers” continued to live in the city, and used their ranches as weekend retreats.

People marveled at the amount of water under pressure that naturally gushed from the ground, creating artesian wells. These wells did not require pumps. The water flowed freely until 1940, when the state ordered the wells to be capped.



The Wixson Ranch well gushed forth a prodigious amount of water irrigating many acres of crops.
— Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV

The Von Tobels and Beckleys dammed Duck Creek on their property (now the Sierra Vista Ranchos housing tract) at the southeast corner of what would become Sunset Park, making a large swimming hole, photographed in June, 1908.
— Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV



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