

# UNLV Special Collections in the Twenty-First Century

Thomas Sommer

University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Special Collections is consistently striving to provide several avenues of discovery to its diverse range of patrons. Specifically, UNLV Special Collections has planned and implemented several online tools to facilitate unearthing treasures in the collections. These online tools incorporate Web 2.0 features as well as searchable interfaces to collections.

The University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Special Collections has been working toward creating a visible archival space in the twenty-first century that assists its patrons' quest for historical discovery in UNLV's unique Southern Nevada, gaming, and Las Vegas collections. This effort has helped patrons ranging from researchers to students to residents. Special Collections has created a discovery environment that incorporates several points of access, including virtual exhibits, a collection-wide search box, and digital collections. UNLV Special Collections also has added Web 2.0 features to aid in the discovery and enrichment of this historical information. These new features range from a What's New blog to a digital collection with interactive features.

The first point of discovery within the UNLV Special Collections website began with the virtual exhibits. Staff created the virtual exhibits as static HTML pages that showcased unique materials housed within UNLV Special Collections. They showed the scope and diversity of materials on a specific topic available to researchers, faculty, and students.

One virtual exhibit is "Dino at the Sands" (figure 1), a point of discovery for the history not only of Dean Martin but of many Rat Pack exploits.<sup>1</sup> The photographs in this exhibit come from the Sands Collection. It is a static HTML page, and it provides information and pictures regarding one of Las Vegas' most famous entertainers. This exhibit contains links to Rat Pack information and various resources on Dean Martin, including photographs, books, and videotapes.

A second mode of discovery within the UNLV Special Collections website is its new "Search Special Collections" Google-like search box (figure 2). This is located on the homepage and searches the manuscript, photograph, and oral history primary source collections.<sup>2</sup> The purpose is to aid in the discovery of material within the collections that is not yet detailed in the public online catalog. In the past researchers would have to work through the Special Collection's website to locate the resources. They can now

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Figure 1. "Dino at the Sands" exhibit



Figure 2. UNLV Special Collections search box

go to one place to search for various types of material—a one-stop shop. The search results are easy to read and highlight the search term (see figure 3).<sup>3</sup>

The third point of access is the digital collection. These collections are digital copies of original materials located within the archives. The digital copies are presented online, described, and organized for easy access. Each collection offers full-text searches, browsing, zoom, pan,

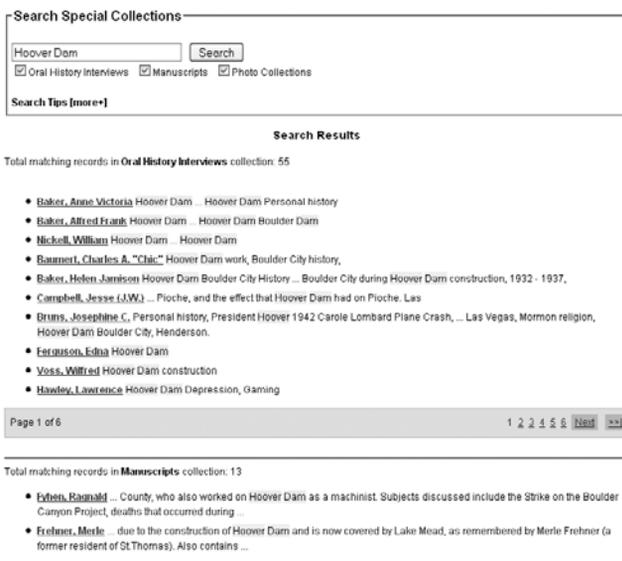


Figure 3. Hoover Dam search results

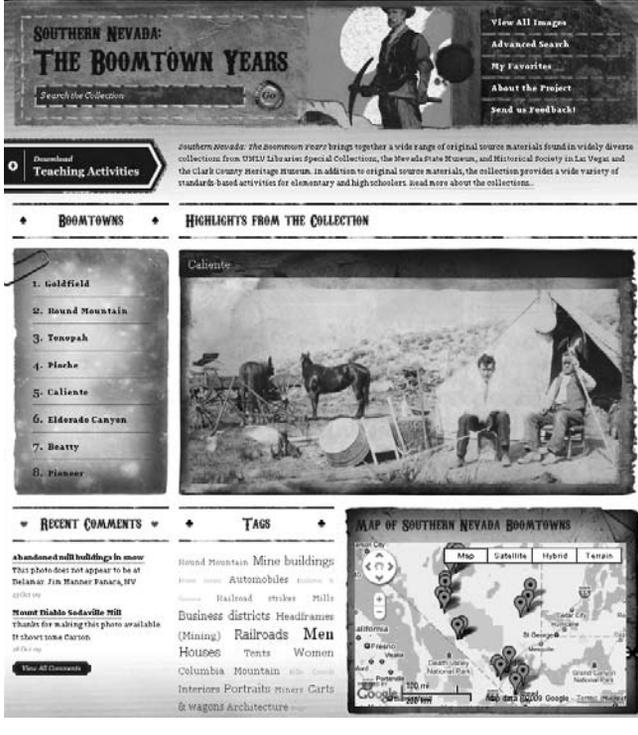


Figure 4. "Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years" digital collection

side-by-side comparison, and exporting for presentation and reuse. The newest example of a digital collection is "Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years" (figure 4).<sup>4</sup> This collection

## What's New in Special Collections

News and Announcements from UNLV Special Collections

### Asian-Pacific Entertainers in Las Vegas Exhibit

By [Su Kim Chung](#) on May 8, 2009 5:10 PM | [Permalink](#)

In celebration of Asian-Pacific Heritage Month, Special Collections has created an exhibit featuring historical photographs and documents on Asian-Pacific entertainers in Las Vegas over the years. Materials on display on the 3rd Floor of Lied Library include items such as this original program from the China Doll Revue which appeared at the Thunderbird Hotel and Casino in 1959. Please stop by and take a look!

### New Digital Project: Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years, 1900-1925

By [Su Kim Chung](#) on May 8, 2009 5:09 PM | [Permalink](#)

Our latest digital project - Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years, 1900-1920-1925 -- is now live. Access this fabulous collection of digitized photographs, correspondence, maps, ledgers, and more -- along with a teacher's guide providing activities for grades 3-12 in eleven subject areas -- at: <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/boomtown>

Figure 5. "What's New" blog

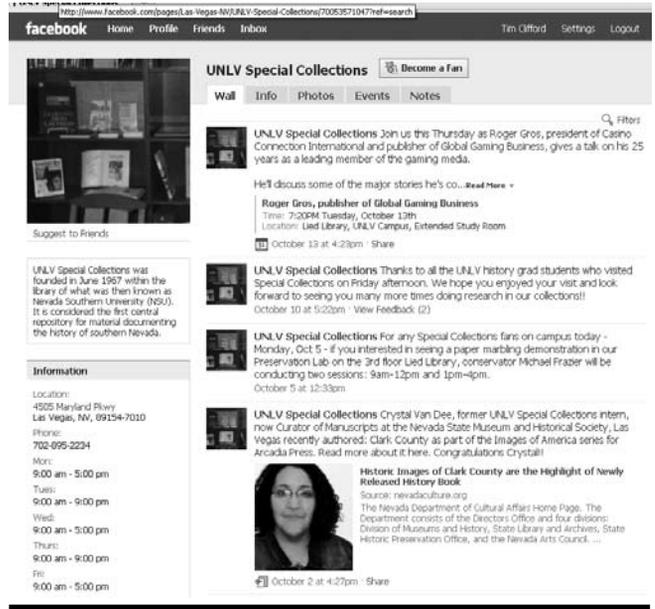


Figure 6. UNLV Special Collection Facebook page

brings together a wide range of original materials from various collections located within UNLV Special Collections, the Nevada State Museum, the Historical Society in Las Vegas, and the Clark County Heritage Museum. It even provides standards-based activities for elementary and high school students.

This project was funded by the Nevada State Library and Archives under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) as amended through the Institute of Museum

Comments

There are no comments yet. Be the first to comment below!

**Comment on this object**

Your Name:

Your E-mail:

Your Comment:

What's 4 + 7?

(Allowed HTML tags: a br h4 h5 p ul ol li span)

**Figure 7.** Comments section for Aerial View of Hughes Aircraft Plant photograph

*Welcome Home, Howard!*

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ADVANCED SEARCH  
MY FAVORITES

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Aerial view of Hughes Aircraft plant



Rating: 4 / 5 (3 ratings)

**Figure 8.** "Rate It" feature for Aerial View of Hughes Aircraft Plant photograph

and Library Services (IMLS). UNLV Special Collections Director Peter Michel selected the content. The team included fourteen members, four of whom were funded by the grant. Christy Keeler, PhD, created the educator pages and designed the student activities.

New collections are great, but users have to know they exist. To announce new collections and displays, Special Collections first added a What's New blog that includes an RSS feed to keep patrons up-to-date on new messages (figure 5).<sup>5</sup> Another avenue of interaction was

*Welcome Home, Howard!*

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Grid List Tile On

	Title	Description
1	<a href="#">Aerial view of Hughes Aircraft plant</a>	Aerial view of the Hughes Aircraft Culver City plant.
2	<a href="#">Aerial view of Spring Mountain Ranch</a>	Overhead shot of the ranch house and pool at Spring Mountain Ranch, outside of Las Vegas, Nevada. The property was purchased by Howard Hughes from Vera Krupp as a house for his wife, Jean Peters, who never followed her husband to Las Vegas.
3	<a href="#">Air combat scene from Hell's Angels (film)</a>	Air combat scene from the motion picture Hell's Angels.
4	<a href="#">Artist's conception of Robots</a>	Artist's conception of futuristic undersea Robots -- remote controlled handling devices envisioned by Hughes Aircraft scientists, 1959.
5	<a href="#">Blimp advertising The Outlaw (film)</a>	Blimp used to promote the motion picture The Outlaw, produced by Howard Hughes' RKO Productions, Jan. 1950. The blimp is seen in a hangar, with a truck apparatus underneath its front. Advertising reads: "The Outlaw. Kept off the screen for 3 years, it's coming at last! Jane Russell."
6	<a href="#">Desert Inn Hotel and swimming pool</a>	Daytime photo of the outdoor swimming pool at the rear of the Desert Inn Hotel. Two women in swimsuits are by the pool. The pool is surrounded by artificial turf. The back of the hotel is visible in the distance.

**Figure 9.** RSS feature for the index to the "Welcome Home Howard" digital collection

implemented in April 2009 when Special Collections created its own Facebook page (figure 6).<sup>6</sup> Students and researchers are encouraged to become fans. Status updates with images and links to southern Nevada and Las Vegas resources lead the fans back to the main website where the other treasures can be discovered.

Special Collections has implemented various Web 2.0 features within its newest digital collections. Specifically, it added a comments section, a "Rate It" feature, and an RSS feature to its latest digital collections (figures 7, 8, and 9). These latest trends enrich the collections' resources with patron-supplied information.<sup>7</sup>

As is apparent, UNLV Special Collections implemented several online tools to allow patrons to discover its extensive primary resources. These tools range from virtual exhibits and digital collections with Web 2.0 features to blogs and social networking sites. Special Collections has endeavored to stay on top of the latest trends to benefit its patrons and facilitate their discovery of historical materials in the twenty-first century.

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As previously mentioned, these easy-to-use tools can allow screencast videos and screenshots to be integrated into a variety of online spaces. A particularly effective type of online space for potential integration of such screencast videos and screenshots are library "how do I find . . ." research help guides. Many of these "how do I find . . ." research help guides serve as pathfinders for patrons, outlining processes for obtaining information sources. Currently, many of these pathfinders are in text form, and experimentation with the tools outlined in this article can

empower library staff to enhance their own pathfinders with screencast videos and screenshot tutorials.

## Reference

1. "UNLV Libraries Strategic Plan 2009–2011," [http://www.library.unlv.edu/about/strategic\\_plan09-11.pdf](http://www.library.unlv.edu/about/strategic_plan09-11.pdf) (accessed July 30, 2009): 2.

## UNLV Special Collections *continued from page 186*

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1. Peter Michel, "Dino at the Sands," UNLV Special Collections, <http://www.library.unlv.edu/speccol/dino/index.html> (accessed July 28, 2009).

2. Peter Michel, "UNLV Special Collections Search Box." UNLV Special Collections. <http://www.library.unlv.edu/speccol/index.html> (accessed July 28, 2009).

3. UNLV Special Collections search results, "Hoover Dam," [http://www.library.unlv.edu/speccol/databases/index.php?search\\_query=hoover+dam&btS=Search&cols\[\]=oh&cols\[\]=man&cols\[\]=photocoll&act=2](http://www.library.unlv.edu/speccol/databases/index.php?search_query=hoover+dam&btS=Search&cols[]=oh&cols[]=man&cols[]=photocoll&act=2) (accessed October 27, 2009).

4. UNLV Libraries, "Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years," <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/boomtown/> (accessed July 28, 2009).

5. UNLV Special Collections, "What's New in Special Collections," [http://blogs.library.unlv.edu/whats\\_new\\_in\\_special\\_collections/](http://blogs.library.unlv.edu/whats_new_in_special_collections/) (accessed July 28, 2009).

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7. UNLV Libraries, "Comments Section for the Aerial View of Hughes Aircraft Plant Photograph," <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/hughes/dm.php/hughes/82> (accessed July 28, 2009); UNLV Libraries, "Rate It" feature for the Aerial View of Hughes Aircraft Plant Photograph," <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/hughes/dm.php/hughes/82> (accessed July 28, 2009); UNLV Libraries, "RSS feature for the index to the Welcome Home Howard Digital Collection" <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/hughes/dm.php/> (accessed July 28, 2009).

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