

Sunset Regional Park

John F. Miller Ranch Developer from 1909 to 1939

John F. Miller, first owner of the land that later became Sunset Park, came to Las Vegas on the first train in 1905. He built Hotel Nevada, later named the Sal Sagev (Las Vegas backwards) and now called the Golden Gate, on land purchased at the Las Vegas Townsite auction. Miller lived in Las Vegas with his wife and seven children.

Like other prominent Las Vegas businessmen, Miller took advantage of free federal land for agricultural development. Miller drilled nine wells on his 440-acre ranch. The water flowed into three large reservoirs, but since some of the wells were not very productive, only 100 acres could be irrigated.

In 1929 Miller tried to sell the ranch, but times were hard, despite the boom created by the construction of Hoover Dam. The ranch did not sell until 1939, when it was purchased by Las Vegas Club owner J. Kell Houssels, Sr.

Miller Ranch caretaker, Bert Gibbs, hired in 1932, moved to the property with his wife, Cecilia. Their sons, Delbert "Sonny" and Rollie, were born while the family lived at the ranch. The Millers raised horses, turkeys, goats, chickens and geese.

John F. Miller, 1865-1957
- Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV



Bert Gibbs, caretaker of the Miller Ranch, and his son Delbert or "Sonny."
- Gibbs Family Collection



Cecilia Gibbs feeding the turkeys on the Miller Ranch.
- Gibbs Family Collection



"Sonny" Gibbs swimming in a reservoir on the Miller Ranch in 1934.
- Gibbs Family Collection



Goats eating hay on the Miller Ranch. Note the mesquite wood fence in the background.
- Gibbs Family Collection



John Miller built Hotel Nevada in 1906 at Main and Fremont. When gambling became legal in 1931, he added a casino and renamed it Hotel Sal Sagev (Las Vegas spelled backwards). Now it is known as the Golden Gate.
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Alfalfa grown on the ranch fed the livestock.
- Gibbs Family Collection

