

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Places Associated with Latinos in Nevada, 1864-2000

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1630 South Commerce Street

City or town: Las Vegas State: Nevada County: Clark

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

SOCIAL/Meeting hall

Current Functions

SOCIAL/Meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

NO STYLE

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: CONCRETE

Roof: ASPHALT

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The subject property is located at 1630 South Commerce Street in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada. It consists of seven buildings constructed between 1956 and 2005 and a paved surface parking lot across 2.66 acres. The property is sited north/northwest of the Las Vegas Strip, an iconic stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard that features numerous resort hotels, restaurants, and retail and entertainment venues that provides employment for many members of the Culinary Union. The primary contributing building on the property is known as the Culinary Workers Union Local 226 Headquarters Building (Culinary Union Building), which was constructed in 1956 with major alterations in 1974. The Lil' House is a secondary contributing building located at the southern end of the lot, and is a former residence constructed in c.1960 and later converted to an office. There are five noncontributing buildings on the property, including three prefabricated buildings which serve as additional meeting space and for maintenance purposes, and two storage sheds.

Narrative Description

Site History

Prior to construction of the Culinary Union Building in 1956, the property was platted as part of the Meadows Addition to the city of Las Vegas. At the time this area was developing primarily as apartment buildings, with a few scattered single-family houses, located between the booming Strip in unincorporated Clark County, and the more established, older downtown Las Vegas. A 1950 historic aerial photograph shows commercial or industrial, as well as residential, development within the current property's parcel boundaries.¹ A building located to the north of the current headquarters building was extant until 1966, after which it was demolished. The 1950 historic aerial photograph also shows one or more houses located at the south-central portion of the parcel along New York Avenue, which remained on-site until 1973 (they are not extant by 1974).² The surrounding area experienced an economic downturn through the 1970s, with much of the city's growth at this time occurring elsewhere.

The original headquarters building was completed in January 1956 by Fazio Construction Company, which may also have been the architect of the building (see Figure 1). At the time, Commerce Street was known as 'A' Street, with the original address being 1630 South A Street. The new building was referenced as "modern and functional" by a *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article announcing the building's opening, with a description of certain spaces and their uses:³

¹ *Aerial Photograph of 1630 S. Commerce St., Las Vegas, Clark County, NV, 1950*, Photograph, 1950, Historic Aerials by NETR Online, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

² "Aerial Image: Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 1973," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, n.d., <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>; "Aerial Image: Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, 1974," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, n.d., <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

³ "New Headquarters Building Open for Culinary Workers," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, January 18, 1956.

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The club room for members includes a snack bar and lunch counter and a regulation bar for parties. These facilities are for members only. There are two separate TV lounges for men and women members in beautiful décor. Above the offices is an ultra modern meeting hall with facilities to accommodate more than 400 persons. The hall, which has a private entrance, will be open to the public on a rental basis. ... On Feb. 15, the health club will be open to both members and the general public. All services will be available. With separate departments for men and women. ... A parking lot for some 50 cars soon will be in operation.⁴



Figure 1. A c.1960 photograph of the Culinary Union Building as constructed in 1956.⁵

The building was remodeled between 1970 and 1974 based on alterations designed by Harry Hayden Whiteley, an important architect with a legacy of designs constructed in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Whiteley's drawings for these changes are dated 1967 (see Figure 2). The building retains most of the features from this remodel. Whiteley died in 1970.⁶

⁴ "New Headquarters Building Open for Culinary Workers."

⁵ *Culinary Workers Union Building, c.1960*, Photograph, c 1960, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections, Digital Collection, <https://special.library.unlv.edu/search?keys=pho020483-001>.

⁶ "Private Rites in San Diego Slated for Harry Whiteley," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 25, 1970.

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Figure 2. Sketch of building remodel by Harry Hayden Whiteley, dated 1967.⁷

A c.1960 residence at the southeast corner of the property has been converted to office and meeting space, and is currently referred to by the Culinary Union as the “Lil’ House.” The building was likely acquired by the Union and converted in the 1970s, but available permit information could not confirm this. Building permit records show that five modular and prefabricated buildings were placed on the site in the 1990s and 2000s: a maintenance building (1991), two prefabricated sheds (1994), and two modular offices (1997 and 2005) (see the Site Plan in Additional Documentation).⁸

Overview

The property encompasses the southern half of a city block bound by South Commerce Street to the east, West New York Avenue to the south, and Fairfield Avenue to the west; a range of

⁷ *Sketch of Building Remodel, by Harry Hayden Whiteley, 1967*, Photograph, 1967, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections, Digital Collection, <https://special.library.unlv.edu/search?keys=pho020483-001>.

⁸ City of Las Vegas Building & Safety, “Permit No. 05004663: Temp Office Trailer” (City of Las Vegas, May 19, 2005); City of Las Vegas Department of Building and Safety, “Permit No. 04019334: Non Work C of O, Child Care Facility for Culinary Union Personnel Only” (City of Las Vegas, August 26, 2004); City of Las Vegas Department of Building and Safety, “Permit No. 162-04-710-009: Temporary Office Trailers” (City of Las Vegas, December 6, 1996); City of Las Vegas Department of Building and Safety, “Permit No. 91-121230 Replace Gas Line & Gas Test” (City of Las Vegas, September 30, 1991); City of Las Vegas Department of Planning & Development, Zoning, Permits, & Inspections, “Plumbing Permit Application Number 321988-0” (City of Las Vegas, September 23, 1998); City of Las Vegas Central Permits, “Permit No. 98019589: Onsite Sewer” (City of Las Vegas, September 24, 1990); City of Las Vegas Central Permits, “Permit No. 96025344: Temp Classroom Trailer” (City of Las Vegas, December 6, 1996); City of Las Vegas Central Permits, “Permit No. 97023093: Reroof Class A Roof Built Up” (City of Las Vegas, November 17, 1997).

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commercial properties and associated parking lots are to the north. A paved and fenced parking lot is north of the buildings, and limited landscaping lines the Culinary Union Building and the surrounding streets. The city parcel, which also serves as the historic boundary, corresponds to the back edge of the sidewalk to the east, south, and west, and to the rear lot line of the commercial properties to the north (see the Site Plan in Additional Documentation).

Headquarters Building

The headquarters building is situated at the southeast corner of the property. This building has undergone numerous additions and alterations over time, which are summarized in Table 1. The building features concrete-block construction with a flat roof and metal coping. Its plan generally consists of three connecting portions: 1) a two-story rectangular portion to the southeast comprised of the original 1956 footprint; 2) a 1970 rectangular addition to the west; and 3) a one-story E-plan addition to the north, giving the building an irregular-shape footprint.

As constructed in 1956, the southernmost portion of the building (marked Building 1.1 on the Site Plan and shown in photographs 1, 2, and 5) was one and two stories tall, with the one-story portion at the corner of Commerce Street and West New York Avenue (see Figure 1). A 1970 two-story addition to the west elevation almost doubled the building's footprint (marked Building 1.2 on the Site Plan), and a 1974 addition extended the second story at the east end (marked Building 1.3 on the Site Plan). The southernmost portion of the building features protruding and recessed geometric elements, which are faced with a combination of concrete block and stucco. The walls display culinary union-themed signage on each elevation. Windows are fixed, hung, and sliding-sash aluminum units; those at street level have metal security bars or shades. The Commerce Street entrance is recessed on the east elevation and a post supports the recessed southeast corner. Two metal and concrete staircases access entrance balconies with flat awnings on the south elevation.

Historic aerials confirm the northern addition was constructed in 1974 (marked Building 1.4 on the site plan and shown in photographs 1, 3, and 4). The addition has a wide sign board at the roofline. Boxy overhangs mark three separate glass-vestibule entrances on the north elevation, and five aluminum-framed windows with metal security shades and one entrance are on the east elevation.

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Table 1. Building 1 Construction History

Building No. on Site Plan/ Building Portion	Date of Construction/ National Register Recommendation	Use	Construction History
1.1/ Southernmost portion, east end	1956 – original portion of building/ contributing	Reception, offices and meeting space	c.1960 photo from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Special Collections show that the building originally was one and two stories tall (two stories on the west side, one-story portion at east end had wide overhanging eaves, metal multi-light windows, multiple entrances)
1.2/ Southernmost portion, west end	1970 addition/ contributing	Offices	Historic aerials and permit history indicate construction took place between 1970 and 1972. Remodel features recessed and protruding geometric exterior elements.
1.3/ Southernmost portion, east end second story	1974 addition/ contributing	Primary meeting hall, reception area	As part of 1970-1974 remodel, the second story of the original southernmost building was extended to the east end. Remodel features recessed and protruding geometric exterior elements.
1.4/ Northernmost portion	1974 addition/ contributing	Offices and meeting space	Historic aerials show this portion of the building was added in 1974.

Interior

Within the southernmost portion of the building, the first floor generally houses reception areas, office space, and a technology center. Three parallel hallways, with offices lining the outer two, provide access to the northernmost portion of the building, creating two atrium spaces. In addition to office space, two small meeting spaces and a conference room are housed on the first floor of the northernmost portion.

Within the second-story space (in the southernmost portion), the primary meeting hall occupies most of the eastern half, while the west end houses offices, a conference room, and a break room. The primary meeting hall is a large rectangular room with restrooms and a reception area at the east end and a stage at the west end (shown in photographs 7 and 8). Furnishings are flexible to accommodate several hundred people, and include folding tables and chairs. Walls are lined with photographs and posters depicting past Culinary Workers Union events.

The Lil’ House

The c.1960 former single-family house known as the “Lil’ House” is at the southwest corner of the lot (marked Building 2 on the site plan and shown in photograph 9). It is a one-story, L-plan building faced with stucco. The complex roof is clad in composite shingles. Fronting West New York Avenue, the main entrance is flanked by aluminum-framed fixed windows with security

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bars. Secondary entrances are on the east and west elevations and the building has no other fenestration. A storage shed with exterior access has been constructed in the ell (west elevation).

Interior

This building houses three main suites. The main entrance opens into a flexible meeting space (shown in photograph 10), which in turn accesses an office to the west and hallway to the north. A larger meeting space is at the northwest corner of the building, while restrooms and a kitchen line the east interior of the Lil House. Permit history for the building indicates that a suite in the building was remodeled in 2004 to serve as a daycare facility for Culinary Worker Union staff only. Modest finishes include simple moldings and carpeted floors.

Additional Associated Buildings

Other associated buildings on the property (marked Buildings 3-7 on the site plan and shown in photographs 11-13) include three prefabricated buildings (a maintenance building [1991] and two office annexes [1997 and c.2005]), plus two prefabricated storage sheds (1994). The prefabricated buildings are rectangular-plan, flat-roof buildings with composite wood panel siding and metal skirting, and metal-framed hung windows. The storage sheds are also rectangular in plan with side-gable roofs and composite wood panel siding.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Period of Significance

1991-1997

Significant Dates

1956
1991
1997

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Hispanic

Architect/Builder

Fazio Construction Company
Harry Hayden Whiteley (1970, 1974 remodel)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

This nomination for the Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters (Culinary Union) is submitted under the MPDF “Historic Places Associated with Latinos in Nevada, 1864-2000” under the area of significance of Ethnic Heritage, and with the theme of Labor History under the supporting area of significance of Social History. The Culinary Union Headquarters Building, built in 1956, demonstrates significant Latino labor history in Nevada between 1991 and 1997, related to labor union organizing in support of workers in the gaming and tourism industry. Through the historic

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context of significant Latino contributions to Nevada history, the building conveys exceptional importance as it relates to the state's labor history, and meets National Register *Criterion A* for listing at the state level of significance under the MPDF, applying *Criteria Consideration G* for properties that have achieved significance less than 50 years ago.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Notes on Terminology

Throughout this National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nomination, the term "Latino" is used to refer to individuals of Latin American heritage, and reflects the terms used in the related National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form "Historic Places Associated with Latinos in Nevada, 1864-2000" (MPDF), under which this property is nominated. The authors recognize there are a multitude of terms individuals of Latin American heritage use and each term can contain its own personal, social, and cultural connotations. The decision to use "Latino" was made to create a uniform flow throughout the document and is not an attempt to remove individual identities associated with the terms Latino/a/x/e, Hispanic, Hispano, Indigenous, Mestizo/a, Mexican American, Mexicano/a, or Bracero (a brief description of these terms and their social/cultural significance is provided in Section H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods of the MPDF). The authors recognize this list may not be comprehensive and there are likely additional terms that individuals of Latin American heritage use to describe themselves.

Historical Background

Introduction

Unions have played a major role in the labor structure of Las Vegas since the birth of Nevada's gambling-driven economy. Heated contract negotiations between labor unions and employers in Las Vegas have been a regular occurrence since the mid-twentieth century. Many times negotiators did not leave the bargaining table with a mutual agreement, resulting in labor strikes in downtown Las Vegas and on the Las Vegas Strip. Some of these strikes resulted in multi-million-dollar losses for casinos.

Perhaps Nevada's most well-known labor union is the Culinary Workers Union Local No. 226 (hereafter referred to also as the "Culinary Union" or just "the Union"), which has a history of effective labor negotiating tactics from its beginnings in the 1930s. Its more recent history has demonstrated prominent Latino leadership through major labor strikes of the 1990s. The Las Vegas headquarters of the Culinary Union at 1630 South Commerce Street, the subject property, is the nucleus of these efforts, and the central place where leaders conducted planning for negotiations and monumental strikes during the late twentieth century.

The strikes of the 1980s and 1990s were monumental for employees of the casino, restaurant, hotel, and tourism industries of southern Nevada—and especially for Latinos. While the Culinary Union initiated other labor movements in previous decades, the involvement of Black and

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Latino—and specifically Latina—leadership in these later events had lasting importance on the union’s history, and on the socioeconomic wellbeing of traditionally underrepresented communities in Las Vegas. These strikes and their leadership demonstrated the union’s power shift from “front of the house” men—who were mostly white—to “back of house” women of color—primarily Latina and Black.⁹ For many Latinas in the Culinary Union, participating in strikes became the means for fighting to retain a reasonable standard of living, securing their benefits, and instilling a sense of pride among themselves, their children, their family, and their community. The Union’s regained strength in the 1980s is agreed by historians as attributed to the contributions of Black women and Latinas, who rallied their fellow members to stand in solidarity with one another.

While this nomination acknowledges the breadth of history related to the Culinary Union—such as for association with the important contributions of Black women in the fair labor movement and growth of the Culinary Union, especially Sarah Hughes, Ruby Duncan, Rachel Coleman, and Hattie Canty—this study is focused on contributions of Latino individuals, and specifically Latina involvement, in union organizing in the 1990s for this nomination under the MPDF.

Important aspects of the histories of Las Vegas and the Culinary Union are presented in this narrative and context to provide background on how the local economy led to transformations in the union membership demographics through the twentieth century.

Early History of the Culinary Union

In the early 1930s gambling became legalized in Nevada, a moment that would ignite profound impacts on the state’s economy and labor history for decades to come. This was also the decade when the Culinary Union provided its first representation to the ever-growing number of hotel and restaurant workers in the Las Vegas area—growth that would parallel that of the state’s casino industry. The early history of both the Culinary Union and the state’s Wide Open Gambling Law are important for understanding multifaceted changes that played out in Nevada’s economic and social history for decades to come, culminating with significant Latino contributions to critical labor events of the 1990s.

Gambling legalized in Nevada

In 1931 the Nevada Legislature passed the Wide Open Gambling Law as a way bring in some needed tax revenue to a Depression-stricken state. In the decades that followed, legalized gambling spurred tremendous changes to the state’s economy, image, and demographics, leading to monumental impacts on Nevada’s economic structure, continuing through the present day.¹⁰

At the time the law was passed, Las Vegas remained a relatively small town with a population of approximately 8,000.¹¹ The community’s economy was still relying on its first industry—the railroad—with local labor primarily related to train servicing and cargo handling. Historian

⁹ Sara Mosle, “How the Maids Fought Back,” *New Yorker*, February 26, 1996, 148.

¹⁰ Gambling in Nevada had previously been legalized and regulated to certain extents between 1869 and 1910.

¹¹ Thomas Rodriguez, “A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020,” 2020, MS-01017 Box 04, University of Nevada, Las Vegas - Special Collections.

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Corinne Escobar analyzed 1930 census records, showing 657 Mexican individuals counted in Clark County.¹²

While the Wide Open Gambling Law allowed for certain previously illegal gaming operations to take place in a state-regulated environment, it also included discriminatory clauses regarding who could work in such an industry, and in what manner. The law prohibited anyone who was not a United States citizen from holding a gaming license, operating any sort of gambling machine, or working as a dealer on a casino floor. For the next 36 years this law prevented many Latinos from owning or managing casinos, and banned them from working in any position relating to gaming operations.¹³ Discrimination in the gambling law was not surprising, as Jim Crow practices were active in Las Vegas from the town's founding, manifesting in racial segregation of residential neighborhoods and business patronage during its growth through the mid-twentieth century.¹⁴

Founding of the Hotel and Culinary Workers Union Local 226

Established in 1938, the Hotel and Culinary Workers Union—known by the shorter moniker, the Culinary Union—organized to provide workers in hotels and food services with a say in employment rights, labor practices, fair pay, and benefits. However, for decades higher paying jobs were restricted to white men, with women and Black individuals relegated to lower-paying positions. The Culinary Union grew in parallel to the growth of Las Vegas, with a new tourism industry leading to greater demand for labor, followed by union recruitment of non-represented employees.

Las Vegas in the 1940s and 1950s: A New Resort Town

In the 1940s Las Vegas became a desert resort town drawing tourists with gambling activities and entertainment. With its economic rise came an immense demand for service labor, often accompanied by higher wages in proportion to similar positions in major cities and other tourism centers of the time. This labor pull would continue to drive people to the Las Vegas area, seeking job opportunities with sustainable wages, many of which were attained through collective bargaining efforts on the part of the Culinary Union. While discrimination continued to be present in the job market, and within Culinary Union-related positions, the region's opportunities were still desirable, first drawing Blacks from the Jim Crow south, followed by Latinos from Los Angeles and those immigrating from Central and South American countries.

Ten years after the Wide Open Gambling Law was passed, the El Rancho opened in Las Vegas in 1941, becoming the city's first major hotel and casino. In contrast to casinos that had been developed in downtown Las Vegas near the town's historic origin, the El Rancho was the first casino-hotel to be built along what would become known as the Las Vegas Strip (the Strip), a stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard South located in unincorporated Clark County, south of the

¹² Corinne Escobar, "Mexican Identity in Clark County, Nevada: A Visual Ethnohistory, 1829-1960" (Master's Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1997), 60.

¹³ Phil Tobin, *Wide Open Gambling Bill, 1931 Nevada Statute 165*, 1931.

¹⁴ Susan Chandler and Jill B. Jones, *Casino Women* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 48.

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cluster of downtown Las Vegas casinos.¹⁵ The El Rancho's 1941 opening heralded Clark County and Las Vegas's identity as a resort destination, which would be collectively referred to simply as "Las Vegas."

Las Vegas attracted a sizable labor force during the area's casino development boom in the 1940s and 1950s, but labor discrimination continued as it had in much of the country. Blacks were relegated to back-of-house positions, and Nevada's original gambling law continued to prohibit many Latinos from working on the casino floors and kept Latinos in low-paying positions.¹⁶ In theory the Wide Open Gambling Law would not impact the rights of Latino citizens of the United States, but discrimination against Latinos played out regardless, as the industry was not too concerned with distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens.¹⁷ Claudio Silva was reported to be Nevada's first Latino dealer when he began working on the gaming floor of the Golden Nugget in downtown Las Vegas in 1948.¹⁸ Born in Phoenix, Arizona, Silva was a United States citizen, qualifying him for a gaming-related position at a casino.¹⁹

During the early 1950s many Latino entertainers "played in the lounges, and performed at local restaurants and clubs."²⁰ Latinos also publicized "various shows playing in Las Vegas and wrote many articles about Latino entertainers" through the magazine *Fabulous Las Vegas*, founded by Jack Cortez, who was of Cuban descent.²¹ While some Latinos were thriving in an otherwise discriminatory environment, Nevada legislation passed in 1953 reinforced the discriminatory clause against non-United States citizens in an amendment to the state's gambling law, once again explicitly prohibiting "aliens" from holding gaming operation licenses or positions.²²

With the exception of management and dealers, casino workers were often brought under Culinary Union representation for casino properties that participated, along with hotel workers including bellmen and women, banquet servers, and guest room attendants.²³ With this broad scope of occupations covered under the Union membership, strikes had devastating impacts on the economy of the Las Vegas area, as they were effectively able to shut down the area's biggest industry, resulting in substantial revenue losses.²⁴ This was in contrast to more focused unions such as musicians, where strikes would cause only one part of the area's industry to pause, rather than shuttering entire hotel and casino properties.²⁵

¹⁵ Escobar, "Mexican Identity in Clark County, Nevada: A Visual Ethnohistory, 1829-1960," 95.

¹⁶ Rodriguez, "A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020."

¹⁷ Escobar, "Mexican Identity in Clark County, Nevada: A Visual Ethnohistory, 1829-1960," 95.

¹⁸ Rodriguez, "A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020."

¹⁹ "United States WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947 for Claudio Florez Silva," December 3, 1945, Ancestry.com.

²⁰ Rodriguez, *A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020*, 15-16

²¹ Rodriguez, *A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020*, 16

²² Robert D. Faiss and Gregory R. Geminani, "Nevada Gaming Licensing: Qualifications, Standards, and Procedures," *Center For Gaming Research Occasional Paper Series* 11 (October 2011).

²³ James P. Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 55-56.

²⁴ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56.

²⁵ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56.

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As Las Vegas continued to grow through the 1950s, the Culinary Union expanded its membership base to become the most influential union in southern Nevada.²⁶ The relative success of the Culinary Union during this time is widely acknowledged by historians to be partially attributed to the leadership of union secretary-treasurer Elmer “Al” Bramlet, the Mafia-ownership of many Strip casinos, and the amicable relationship between Bramlet and these casino owners.²⁷

Influence of Elmer “Al” Bramlet on later minority-majority membership

Prior to the racial and ethnic minority leadership of the latter decades of the twentieth century, Bramlet had been the face of the Culinary Union. At the request of the local bartenders union in Los Angeles, Bramlet moved to Las Vegas in 1946 to assist the Culinary Union with increasing membership through persuasion, before being appointed secretary-treasurer of the union—its highest post—in 1954.²⁸ Amicable to the Mafia and making inroads with politicians, Bramlet became one of the most influential figures in Nevada during the mid-century decades.²⁹

Bramlet led the union as secretary-treasurer from 1954 until 1977, raising its influence in the local political sphere.³⁰ During these years he became the face of the Culinary Union, building its membership base and working to expand influence.³¹ While Bramlet is said to have shared working-class background of the Culinary Union’s members, others have cited him as not effectively addressing problems identified by Black union members.³² Others celebrated Bramlet’s legacy in later years as a force of change in racial disparities, citing influence in promoting (or hiring) Black workers to positions previously held exclusively by whites. The subsequent Black union leadership that prevailed in the subsequent decades undoubtedly provided a helping hand to Latinos that would follow as the Culinary Union’s primary organizers.

The Culinary Union commissioned construction of a new headquarters building in the mid-1950s, which was completed in 1956. At that time the Union had 4,000 members, making it the largest labor union in Nevada at the time.³³ The union hall was a major place of action, serving as the primary center where resorts were hiring labor, despite compulsory union membership being outlawed in Nevada.³⁴ While this situation may appear odd on its face, management and the Culinary Union benefitted by supplying qualified labor to maintain satisfaction on both sides,

²⁶ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 55.

²⁷ Mike Davis, “Class Struggle in Oz,” in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 178; Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 50, 52.

²⁸ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56.

²⁹ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56–57.

³⁰ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56.

³¹ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 130–31.

³² Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 56.

³³ “New Headquarters Building Open for Culinary Workers.”

³⁴ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 50.

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especially as Las Vegas experienced unparalleled growth in its resort industry during the 1950s.³⁵

Racial Equality and Corporatization of Las Vegas Casinos in the 1960s

By the end of the 1950s the Culinary Union had grown to become the largest labor union in Nevada and was soon to experience an even more dramatic growth in membership in the 1960s—surpassing 10,000 members that decade—and changing methods for handling employer practices and members representation. Several factors played into the 1960s changes, including the enactment of labor and discrimination-focused state and federal policies, and various societal shifts related to race relations and treatment of minorities.

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, a landmark policy aimed at dismantling a national culture of racial discrimination.³⁶ At this time, the Culinary Union was the only labor union in Las Vegas with racial diversity among its membership—often referred to as an “integrated union”—and it was around this time that leadership began to show some transition.³⁷ While leadership remained primarily white men working “front-of-house” positions, Black workers started to enter leadership positions at the Culinary Union in the 1960s.³⁸ Rising Black leadership is important to note here, as it would ultimately help Latinos in maintaining momentum for the union in the 1980s, when their demographic was growing to become the largest demographic in Culinary Union membership in the following decade.³⁹

Labor discrimination continued, with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filing complaints with the Equal Rights Commission on several Las Vegas employers and two unions, one of which was the Culinary Union. However, as Black workers continued to work mainly under white supervisors, they were expected to show deference to their white managers and counterparts.⁴⁰ Racial discrimination was also witnessed within the Culinary Union, with leaders receiving pushback from some Black members during this decade. A public instance of this internal disgruntlement occurred in 1963, when the *Las Vegas Sun* published an open letter by “West Las Vegas Citizens Who Are Members of Local #226” (penned by Alanzo Watson), to Al Bramlet with Black union leaders in copy, regarding racial discrimination keeping Black workers in low-paying positions relative to whites.⁴¹

The sanctioned segregation in Nevada’s gaming industry formally ended in the 1960s with passage of the Corporate Gaming Law, state legislation that removed barriers to non-citizens

³⁵ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 50–51.

³⁶ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 126.

³⁷ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 127.

³⁸ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 128.

³⁹ Culinary Workers Union Local 226, “Our Union History,” n.d., <https://www.culinaryunion226.org/union/history>.

⁴⁰ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 128.

⁴¹ Alanzo Watson, “An Open Letter To: Al Bramlet c/o Sarah Huges and Silvester Fennel,” *Las Vegas Sun*, May 13, 1963.

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participating in Nevada’s gambling industry.⁴² However, the intent of this policy change was not about equalizing employment at Nevada casinos, but rather worked to accommodate major corporations that wanted to enter the state’s gambling industry. It worked as such: many corporations are publicly owned by shareholders, who may or may not be United States citizens, presenting a conflict with Nevada’s existing gambling laws, which prohibited non-United States citizens from owning a casino and holding a gambling license. The new law permitted large corporations such as Hilton and MGM to build major hotel-casino properties, which in turn fueled the growth of the Las Vegas and Reno gambling industries. As such, the law had a much greater impact on the local economy than it had on improved employment opportunities for Latinos and other minority groups in the state.⁴³

For the Culinary Union, the Corporate Gaming Law had little effect, as the Union did not represent dealers. Rather, the legislation’s most critical impacts would soon be realized in the form of major corporations with money and power to use as leverage while negotiating with the Culinary Union.

Increased Latino Immigration to Nevada

Beginning in the 1960s the United States experienced an increase in the rate of immigration, partly due to major shifts in federal immigration law. The two policies that had the greatest impact during this decade were the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which together led to a nationwide increase in Latino immigration. The general significance of these laws on Latino immigration to Nevada are detailed in the related MPDF, but their impact on the increase in Latino membership of the Culinary Union is noteworthy.

The 1960s mass migration of Cubans to the United States was the result of Cubans fleeing the newly installed communist regime led by Fidel Castro.⁴⁴ In Nevada, this decade of Cuban immigration had a substantial influence on the Latino share of the state’s two major metropolitan areas: Las Vegas and Reno. The gaming and tourism atmosphere of Las Vegas and Reno reflected that of pre-Castro Havana, giving many Cuban refugees who worked in Havana’s casinos an advantage for employment when they arrived in Nevada.⁴⁵ Nevada’s Cuban-born immigrant population grew from 24 in 1960 to 1,018 in 1970, showing the state’s dramatic increase of this group, compared with other Latino immigration to Nevada at this time.⁴⁶ Rather, during the 1960s, available population data showed a 363 percent increase in Mexican-born

⁴² Rodriguez, “A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020.”

⁴³ Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 53–54.

⁴⁴ Emily L. McIlveene, “Adelante Nevada: A Case Study of Latino Political Incorporation in a New Immigrant Destination” (Master’s Thesis, University of Miami, 2014), 34.

⁴⁵ Thomas Rodriguez, “Mexicans and Other Hispanics in Nevada,” July 1989, 25, MS-01017 Box 01, University of Nevada, Las Vegas - Special Collections.

⁴⁶ Nevada State Data Center, *Place of Birth for the Nevada Foreign-Born Population 1860-2000* (Nevada State Library and Archives, n.d.), https://nsla.nv.gov/ld.php?content_id=38070875. Immigration from other Central American countries did not experience the same surge until the 1980s.

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individuals arriving to Nevada, but Mexican natives still only represented approximately 0.3 percent of the state's overall population at this time.⁴⁷

The Culinary Union in the 1970s

The Culinary Union remained strong through the early 1970s, with the Las Vegas resort industry avoiding the economic decline and job displacement plaguing the nation's industrial-heavy cities.⁴⁸ By the start of the decade the Union enjoyed its position and benefits earned through collective bargaining in years previous, including health and welfare programs, medical services, and retirement pensions, as well as life and disability insurance.⁴⁹ However, radical shifts in the country's economic structure and politics by the late 1960s forecasted difficulties that would prevail with labor unions by the mid-1970s.⁵⁰ Much of these changes were caused by the new corporate interest in casinos, with this new type of resort ownership signaling changes in union negotiations.⁵¹ Amicability faded between Las Vegas casino owners and the Culinary Union, as the new corporate-focused structure of resorts focused on maximizing profits. However, at the same time, casinos preferred to prevent any work stoppage or any long-term damages from disputes with the Culinary Union out of fear for bad press, loss of revenue, and harm to their brand's image.⁵²

In 1977 Bramlet was murdered as a result of a money dispute involving union-affiliated bombings earlier that year, leaving the Culinary Union with a leadership gap. As Bramlet also served as the president of the Nevada American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) at the time of his death, the state's unions were put in an unsettling position of uncertainty. The Culinary Union did not show a strong leadership rebound, which hurt the Culinary Union's influence until a turnaround in the 1980s.⁵³

1980s Transition from Front-of-House to Back-of-House

The 1980s demonstrated a change in the tide for the Culinary Union, showing that its might was in its membership, rather than just those at the top. During this decade Black leadership motivated Latino individuals in the Union to grab the reins, which signaled a shift in the union's power from primarily white men working front-of-house jobs to those working in back-of-house positions—most of whom were traditionally underrepresented in society.

Latino immigration to the U.S. and Nevada

Like other parts of the United States, Nevada experienced a surge in immigration from Mexico and other Central American countries in the 1980s. For the "Silver State," this had wide-reaching effects on demographics, and radically changed the racial and ethnic makeup of both southern

⁴⁷ Nevada State Data Center, *Place of Birth for the Nevada Foreign-Born Population 1860-2000*. Immigration from other Central American countries did not experience the same surge until the 1980s.

⁴⁸ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 37.

⁴⁹ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 51.

⁵⁰ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 53–54.

⁵¹ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 53.

⁵² Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 54.

⁵³ Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," 151; Davis, "Class Struggle in Oz," 178.

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and northern Nevada (see the MPDF for details on 1980s Latino immigration to Nevada). Like many Central Americans fleeing turmoil in their home countries in the 1980s, Cuban-born individuals again immigrated to the United States in the 1980s in numbers not seen since the 1960s. Between 1980 and 1990 the Cuban-born population of Nevada increased by 63 percent, suggesting many were *Marielito* refugees who eventually migrated from Florida to the Silver State.⁵⁴

With the Culinary Union representing a substantial number of jobs in Las Vegas, it was an important entity for many Latino immigrants searching for work in Nevada in the 1980s. Latino immigrants not proficient in English found jobs in back-of-house positions at casino-hotels in Las Vegas, such as food preparation, janitorial services, dishwashing, and room attending (hotel housekeeping), but were typically left out of any jobs involving customer interaction such as restaurant servers.⁵⁵

Applying for employment as a housekeeper at a casino hotel was very common for immigrant Latinos—primarily Latinas—in Las Vegas and Reno in the 1980s.⁵⁶ This kind of job was relatively easy to get, and did not require proficiency in English, making it a typical first leap into the labor market for newcomers to the two biggest cities in Nevada. This does not mean that those who took housekeeper positions were good fits for the job; rather, many immigrant Latinas were overqualified, having substantial experience in other industries in their countries of origin, sometimes as professionals with postgraduate degrees.⁵⁷ One example is Raquel Marquez, who is described in *Casino Women* as a teacher and graduate student in her home country of El Salvador. When Marquez was forced to flee as a political refugee in 1980, she arrived in Reno to find there were very few job opportunities that would capitalize on her education and professional experience, because she lacked proficiency in English. Ultimately, Marquez accepted a job as a housekeeper, one of the few jobs available to her.⁵⁸ In contrast, bilingual applicants were often favored for higher paying positions in management, or as a dealer on the casino floor, as they could interact with English- and Spanish-speaking staff and customers.⁵⁹ This was advantageous for many Latinos, especially bilingual children of immigrants, who had the potential for upward mobility not attainable by their parents.

For many Nevadans, employment at casinos was seen as a way to rise to the middle class through higher paying jobs, or through positions that provided opportunities for promotion. Latinos revered jobs that could help them climb the economic ladder, such as parking attendants (valets), restaurant servers and bartenders, and other positions where wages were substantially increased by tips or generally higher pay. Also, when the jobs were connected with the Culinary Union, additional benefits such as healthcare provided many of Latino workers in Las Vegas

⁵⁴ Nevada State Data Center, *Place of Birth for the Nevada Foreign-Born Population 1860-2000*.

⁵⁵ M.L. Miranda and Thomas Rodriguez, *Hispanic Profiles in Nevada History: 1829-1991* (Las Vegas: Latin Chamber of Commerce of Nevada, 1991).

⁵⁶ The job of “housekeeper” is often referred to as “maid” or “room attendant.”

⁵⁷ Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 20.

⁵⁸ Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 20.

⁵⁹ Miranda and Rodriguez, *Hispanic Profiles in Nevada History: 1829-1991*.

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with the necessities to maintain a stable job. Mario Sandoval summarized the uniqueness of the union's role for the working class in Las Vegas in his oral history interview as part of the Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada project by the UNLV Oral History Department: "Here in Las Vegas, we are very lucky. Where in this country can you get a job as a dishwasher and you work on a pension at the same time?"⁶⁰

Late Twentieth Century Strikes: Greater Minority Influence

A series of strikes in the mid-1980s through the 1990s were monumental for casino workers, especially Latinos. While the Culinary Union initiated other important strikes in previous decades, the involvement of Black and Latino—and specifically Latina—leadership in these later events had lasting importance on the labor union's history, and for the socioeconomic security of traditionally underrepresented communities in Las Vegas. For many Latinas in the Culinary Union, participating in strikes became the means for fighting to retain a reasonable standard of living, protect their employment benefits, and instill a sense of pride among themselves, their children, their family, and their community.⁶¹

This was at a time when Black labor icon Hattie Canty led the Culinary Union's negotiation and organizing efforts for its members. As immigration in the 1980s brought on numerous new Latino members to the union, Canty worked to earn their support, persuading them to act in solidarity for the union's membership. Canty's efforts were also critical in the transition to Latina leadership that would take hold in the following decade. As journalist Sara Mosle put it in the 1996 *New Yorker* magazine article "How the Maids Fought Back," Canty worked to instill "new power and prominence to the women of 'the back of the house'"—a move continued by Latina leadership empowered by Canty's word.⁶²

For these major strikes of the 1980s and 1990s, the Culinary Union headquarters property was the nucleus of planning, training, and social activity among union employees and members. As described by labor historian James P. Kraft in *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, labor union headquarters served as "gathering places where union leaders disseminated information and set up rudimentary child-care and picketer-care centers as well as 'strike kitchens.'"⁶³ For the Frontier strike (discussed in detail below), the Lil' House served as the Culinary Union's strike kitchen, where union members and those in solidarity prepared meals to sustain picketers during work stoppages, and where union members and partners produced signs for strikers.

⁶⁰ Mario Sandoval, An Interview with Mario Sandoval, interview by Claytee D. White, Transcript, 2018, 29, Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada, The Oral History Research Center at UNLV, University of Nevada - Las Vegas Digital Collections.

⁶¹ Mirabel Estrada Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas" (Master's Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2019), 51, 55–56.

⁶² Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," 148.

⁶³ Kraft, *Vegas At Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy*, 51.

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1984 citywide strike

In the 1970s owners of major casinos formed an alliance to negotiate with the Culinary Union to agree to a mutual contract, leading to a citywide standard for contracts among unionized casinos. In 1984 these citywide union contracts expired, and a perfect storm of internal divisions among allied casino owners led to a major disagreement in how much to negotiate with various local unions for the subsequent contracts.⁶⁴ While half of the casinos settled new contracts with the Culinary Union, the other half—represented by the Nevada Resort Hotel Association (NRHA), including Hilton Hotels and MGM—did not settle.⁶⁵

The NRHA hoped to use the expiration of existing contracts to negotiate new terms in its favor to increase casino profitability by lowering wage and benefit obligations. This was countered by the Culinary Union, which aimed to retain labor benefits from the previous citywide contract that were no longer supported by the casinos, such as retention of the 40-hour work week, tip guarantees, and union health care funds. Negotiations between the two sides broke down, and a two-month strike ensued.⁶⁶

At this time the Culinary Union represented 20,000 workers, so the resulting 1984 walk-out was a major blow to several casinos on the Las Vegas Strip, leading to an economic loss of more than \$100 million and the arrests of 900 strikers.⁶⁷ The Union was not successful in its efforts, however, and the strike was ended without a deal. Although the strike showed resiliency among the union members, it resulted in losing unionized contracts for six smaller casinos. However, the conflict was a wakeup call for the Union, and was a rallying cry for members to persevere for when the next labor battle unfolded. This second chance was presented with major challenge and tests of solidarity to come in the 1990s.

The 1990s: A Critical Decade

Longtime union member Hattie Canty was elected president of the Culinary Union in 1990. Canty was a powerful figure in Nevada's union structure, and was already seen as having made major contributions as a Black woman to the nation's labor history. As shown in the Frontier Strike of the 1990s, Latinas built on the foundation of change set in the 1980s, and answered Canty's call for unity when labor negotiations failed.⁶⁸ These Latinas demonstrated valor and unity among one another during these long labor rights challenges, turning to face unthinkable risks of fallout such as job termination or, for some undocumented immigrants, the fear of deportation.⁶⁹ With an immense share of the city's jobs represented by the Culinary Union, the Latinas met these conflicts with a need to fight for retention of Las Vegas's unique path to the middle class for all who chose to work for and stand in solidarity with their fellow union

⁶⁴ Courtney Alexander, "Rise to Power: The Recent History of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas," in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 147.

⁶⁵ Alexander, "Rise to Power: The Recent History of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas," 146.

⁶⁶ Alexander, "Rise to Power: The Recent History of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas," 146.

⁶⁷ Alexander, "Rise to Power: The Recent History of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas," 149–50; Myram Borders, "Strike Ends on Las Vegas 'Strip,'" *United Press International*, June 15, 1984.

⁶⁸ Chandler and Jones, *Casino Women*, 74.

⁶⁹ Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," 150.

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members.⁷⁰ By the end of the 1990s, many union members revered the Latina leaders and Hattie Canty as the inspiration for their perseverance.⁷¹

1991-1997 Frontier labor strike

The most critical Culinary Union strike in recent history was the New Frontier Labor Strike (Frontier Strike) of the 1990s, which gained nationwide attention, and set the stage for lasting Latina leadership in the Culinary Union. For six years Canty's guidance inspired Latina leadership to organize those who walked out on the job, to show relentless motivation to assemble hesitant members, and to encourage perseverance among those affected by the work stoppage. Ultimately, Latinas empowered their fellow union members—mainly Latina housekeepers—to stand in solidarity with one another, for each other, and for each other's families, empowering minority communities who had previously felt voiceless in the traditional white male-dominated corporate structure of the Las Vegas hotel-casino industry.

The conflict that led to the Frontier strike began in 1989, when union contracts at the New Frontier Hotel and Casino (the Frontier) were set to expire.⁷² Without a subsequent agreement in place, uncertainty put unionized workers at risk, including those organized under the Culinary Union, as well as four other unions: Bartenders Union Local 165, Teamsters Union Local 995, Operating Engineers Local 501, and Carpenters Local 1780.⁷³ The existing contracts had been in place since before the Elardi family (owners of the Frontier at the time) purchased the casino in 1988.⁷⁴

The Elardi family did not attempt to renegotiate a new contract with the Culinary Union—or any other partner unions—but instead ended union employees' pension plans, reduced their wages, and slashed benefits such as health insurance.⁷⁵ Not only did these actions ignite an aggressive battle between the five unions and the Elardis, but some of these actions were later found to be illegal under the National Labor Relations Act.⁷⁶ According to the owners, these cuts were necessary for the hotel-casino to stay in business. Additionally, the Elardis would not make union agreements on-par with other active contracts in Las Vegas, claiming the Frontier's small business structure could not compete with big-name corporate mega-resorts in Las Vegas that

⁷⁰ Gina Rose Digiovanna, "Exhibit Hails Union That Took Its Signs, Walked The Lines," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 4, 2014.

⁷¹ Joanne L. Goodwin, "'She Works Hard for Her Money': A Reassessment of Las Vegas Women Workers, 1945-1985," in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 255.

⁷² Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," 151–52.

⁷³ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 30–31.

⁷⁴ Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," 152.

⁷⁵ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 15–16.

⁷⁶ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 16.

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had already agreed to new union contracts.⁷⁷ The unions did not accept this rationalization and held a vote in the Culinary Union Building on whether or not to strike. On September 19, 1991, votes were tallied and the Union decided to walk off the job and organize picket lines in front of the Frontier.⁷⁸

The lead organizer of this strike was Geoconda Argüello-Kline, a Nicaraguan immigrant who worked as a housekeeper represented by the Culinary Union before joining union staff in 1990.⁷⁹ Along with other Latinas, Argüello-Kline played a major role in organizing the strike, boosting morale among fatigued picketers, all while persuading non-union workers to join for benefits that could be secured through member unity.⁸⁰ Many immigrant Latina workers at the Frontier were initially uncertain about becoming unionized workers, for fear that turning against their employer would cause more harm than good—especially after the struggles they endured to arrive in the United States and secure a job.⁸¹ However, strong Latina leadership persuaded a great number of these immigrants to enroll, showing solidarity with one another, and ultimately joining the picket lines at the Frontier.⁸²

Escaping political and economic turmoil in Nicaragua, Argüello-Kline immigrated to the United States in 1979 and settled in Las Vegas in 1983. Like many Latinas first arriving in Las Vegas, she acquired employment as a housekeeper represented by the Culinary Union. Historian Mirabel Estrada Calderón explained the role of Latinas in similar fights for fairness to put the Frontier Strike, and Argüello-Kline’s leadership role, into context:

Serving as the lead organizer on the Frontier picket line, Argüello-Kline had also worked as a housekeeper. Having a Latina as a leader during the strike was not uncommon. In fact, during the twentieth-century, Latinas increasingly played leading roles in labor organizing efforts throughout the nation. Like many other Latinxs in the picket line, Argüello-Kline was an immigrant. Fleeing from the violence of the Nicaraguan revolution, Argüello-Kline and her family immigrated to Florida, where she lived for four years before moving to Nevada in 1983. By the time she moved to Las Vegas, her mother worked at the Hilton as a guest room attendant and her father as a kitchen worker at Harrah’s Hotel and Casino. While a guestroom attendant at Fitzgeralds Hotel and Casino, Argüello-Kline met Kevin Kline, a coworker who organized Fitzgeralds employees to go on strike. The two married. Argüello-Kline later became a union organizer in multiple casinos, including the Tropicana, the Horseshoe, Binion’s, and the Frontier. Frontier

⁷⁷ *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session* (Las Vegas, Nevada: United States Government Printing Office, 1994), 2.

⁷⁸ Calderón, “The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas,” 17.

⁷⁹ “Head of Culinary Union in Las Vegas Retires,” *Las Vegas Sun*, February 11, 2022.

⁸⁰ Calderón, “The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas,” 9.

⁸¹ Calderón, “The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas,” 18.

⁸² Calderón, “The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas,” 39.

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strikers became like her family. Contrary to the widely held view of women as passive historical actors, Latinas, like other American women in the twentieth century, actively strove to overcome economic oppression.⁸³

Argüello-Kline's immigrant background and rise-to-leadership story were common among Culinary Union members: one defined by struggle and loss, then by a shifted perspective on opportunity and fair labor rights through their connection to the Culinary Union. Like Argüello-Kline, these Latinas—many of whom were housekeepers—regained pride and acquired a sense of duty to picket the Frontier in solidarity with fellow union members, despite their fears of employer backlash.

The Frontier Strike received support from unions throughout the country, with many traveling to march on the picket lines, even for just a few days.⁸⁴ It also presented an uncommon perspective on labor in Las Vegas, as stated by Calderón:

Las Vegas hospitality workers managed to expose the economic circumstances of those whose labor powered one of the most famous centers of entertainment in the world. They made it clear that the tourist industry was more than just extravagant statues, attractive exhibits and shows, fancy dining venues, glittering lights, and crystal chandeliers. The tourist industry also featured labor exploitation, low wages, financial difficulties, safety hazards, and arguments between workers and employers. Workers demanding a decent wage, a pension, and health care services kept the Las Vegas Strip running for tourists to enjoy.⁸⁵

On August 14, 1992, the Frontier strike was bolstered by a rally and speech by César Chávez, one of the founders of the National Farm Workers Association and a nationally renowned labor rights champion. Chavez had historically been most involved with reforming labor rights as it applied to exploited Latino farm workers, and the Frontier strike represented a similar group of individuals for whom Chavez historically supported.⁸⁶ The strikers also received support from some unlikely allies as well, including William G. Bennett, chairman of the Circus Circus, Excalibur, and Luxor casinos—all union-employed casinos in Nevada. During the strike Bennett donated three hot meals per day, every day, to those on the picket line.⁸⁷

External assistance and notable supporters were helpful to the cause, but did not garner enough attention to the strike. On Labor Day in 1992, some of the Frontier strikers sat in the middle of

⁸³ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 56.

⁸⁴ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 43.

⁸⁵ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 43.

⁸⁶ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 57–58.

⁸⁷ "Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session," 8.

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Las Vegas Boulevard South, blocking traffic along the Las Vegas Strip for about two hours. This resulted in the arrests of between 170 and 200 strikers.⁸⁸ The following year, in 1993, the Culinary Union captured national attention when the United States Congressional House Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations put the Frontier Strike in the spotlight, as the face of its investigations of labor relations in the entertainment and gaming industry.⁸⁹

The congressional subcommittee met in a boardroom at the Thomas & Mack Center at UNLV in Las Vegas to discuss the state of the nation's labor relations, putting the New Frontier Hotel negotiations breakdown as the forefront example for discussion. Members representing the Culinary Union were present to testify, but the Elardi family declined repeated invitations to speak. Subcommittee Chairman Honorable Pat Williams called the hearing to order and introduced items for discussion by acknowledging that the Frontier Strike "represents one of America's most outstanding failures in labor-management relations."⁹⁰ On the purposes of the hearing, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey stated, "what we learn today we will use as we rethink labor law."⁹¹

Latina leadership in the union strike on the Elardis, a wealthy white family, emphasized the class struggle that existed alongside the battle for fair labor, which was demonstrated in front of the Congressional subcommittee. Frontier hospitality worker (and Latina) Gloria Hernández spoke at the hearing on the owner's unfair treatment of the Frontier employees.⁹² Hernández was the only woman to speak on behalf of the Union, and one of two hotel workers to testify.⁹³ As historian Calderón stated, Hernández's testimony "shed light on her identity as a Frontier worker, a mother, an immigrant, and a Latina."⁹⁴ Below is an excerpt from her prepared speech:

The Elardis have always treated their employees at the Frontier horribly. They never demonstrated any respect for us, and they broke the law in an effort to destroy our Union. ... A large percentage of the Frontier strikers are Latinos; many of us are single parents trying to raise our children with decent values and a good standard of living. We also want our children to have a sense of pride about themselves and their families. The

⁸⁸ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 44.

⁸⁹ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 47-48.

⁹⁰ "Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session," 1.

⁹¹ "Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session," 4.

⁹² Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 1.

⁹³ "Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session," 4.

⁹⁴ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 50.

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unstoppable lawbreaking on the part of the Elardis makes our job with our kids that much harder. They look at the system and think it is a joke.⁹⁵

Between 1993 and 1997 the Union continued to strike at the New Frontier Hotel. Holiday seasons were spent together on the picket line, with strikers bonding over a sense of solidarity.⁹⁶ However, many left their Frontier jobs when the strike hit the three-year mark, feeling discouraged that a deal would not be made, and with financial difficulties bringing them and their families to the breaking point.⁹⁷

The Union helped to support its members during this strike, helping to feed families and dole a small wage while they picketed.⁹⁸ Some children of culinary members remember their parents' expressing gratefulness for the Union during this time. Edith Fernandez recalls this from her childhood, as documented in her oral history interview as part of the Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada project:

I remember my father was in the Culinary Union. Without realizing it, my identity around being a culinary kid was something that I didn't realize until I got older. My mom would say, 'The Culinary.' I just remember it was a constant word that came up; that we should be thankful that we have Culinary. 'We're going to be okay because we have Culinary,' and, 'The Culinary is going to help,' and, 'My dad is going to a culinary meeting.' Again, now as an adult I reflect that that was a big part of our life. ... I never felt like I went without. I had no perspective of being poor or poorer or lower class. I didn't realize that because I never needed anything. I had a loving family and we had Culinary. I got braces because of Culinary. That was a big part of our identity and my dad's identity, the whole family, was Culinary. I'm a culinary kid.⁹⁹

This anecdote is not unique; it was expressed by many individuals with an association with the union in one respect or another who were interviewed as part of this oral history project. Health benefits were also revered, as recalled by Irene Cepeda in her oral history interview:

If it wasn't for the Culinary Union, we wouldn't have—growing up we had great health care. ... They did a lot for our family, all families. I saw it when it came to our health care

⁹⁵ "Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session," 25.

⁹⁶ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 60.

⁹⁷ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 60.

⁹⁸ Edith Fernandez, An Interview with Edith Fernandez, interview by Marcela Rodriguez-Campo, Transcript, 2018, 11–12, Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada, The Oral History Research Center at UNLV, University of Nevada - Las Vegas Digital Collections.

⁹⁹ Fernandez, An Interview with Edith Fernandez, 11–12.

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and when my mom got sick how she was able to get care and not have to forego one or the other, forego food over medicine, even though we were a low-income family.¹⁰⁰

Others directly benefited from opportunities provided by the Union itself, such as classes or childcare. Training was conducted at the Culinary Union Building to teach about the operations of the Union, union contracts, and worker's rights, as well as classes to prepare workers for certain job responsibilities such as housekeeping or hospitality.¹⁰¹

In February 1997 AFL-CIO (the largest federation of unions in the United States) President John Sweeney traveled to Las Vegas to attend a rally at the Culinary Union headquarters. Sweeney stated, "just as surely as New York set the (labor standards) for the past 100 years, Las Vegas will be setting them for the next 100 years."¹⁰²

The Culinary Union's efforts prevailed in October 1997, led by a substantial number of Latinas leading and acting in solidarity. After six years the Elardis sold their property to Phil Ruffin, a hotelier, who collaborated with union organizers to draft a contract like what the larger corporate casinos had agreed to at the beginning of the decade. The Frontier workers continued striking until the sale was officially finalized.¹⁰³ This marked the end of one of the longest labor strikes in U.S. history.¹⁰⁴ The Culinary Union's success was owed in large part to the Latina leadership contributions to the cause. This momentous level of Latina activism was previously unrealized in the history of labor rights in Nevada, and perhaps the United States until this time. The Frontier Strike is of exceptional importance in the context of Latino contributions to labor history in Nevada, and the years that mark the beginning and end of the strike—1991 and 1997, respectively—are significant dates under this context.

Across the United States, the Frontier strike victory was seen as a major win for labor rights, serving as a light of inspiration for others to persevere in similar fair labor negotiations.¹⁰⁵ Reflecting on the successes of the union's battles in the 1990s, labor writer Steven Greenhouse

¹⁰⁰ Irene Cepeda, An Interview with Irene Cepeda, interview by Monserrath Hernández, Transcript, 2018, 16, Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada, The Oral History Research Center at UNLV, University of Nevada - Las Vegas Digital Collections.

¹⁰¹ Kit Miller, "Inside the Glitter: Lives of Casino Workers," in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 226; Sandoval, An Interview with Mario Sandoval, 24; Peter James Guzman, An Interview with Peter James Guzman, interview by Claytee D. White, Transcript, 2018, 3–4, Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada, The Oral History Research Center at UNLV, University of Nevada - Las Vegas Digital Collections.

¹⁰² Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 63.

¹⁰³ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 64.

¹⁰⁴ The Frontier hotel was demolished in 2007, ten years after the union's longest battle.

¹⁰⁵ Calderón, "The Frontier of the Labor Movement: Latinas and the Longest Strike in Twentieth-Century Las Vegas," 66.

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called Culinary Union Local 226 “unusually farsighted” and the “most successful local union” in the country.¹⁰⁶

Post-2000 years

In more recent years the Culinary Union has founded programs to assist its members in a social capacity. The organization established the Immigrant Workers Citizenship Project in 2001 to aid members who sought United States citizenship. In the first 20 years of operation the program has helped more than 18,000 workers become citizens, most of whom are Latino.¹⁰⁷ The Culinary Union efforts have made massive economic impacts through the entire Las Vegas area, and for Latinos who otherwise are traditionally relegated to low-paying jobs and unable to acquire solid employment without proficient English language skills. Latinos are able to achieve homeownership in Las Vegas, pay for their children to go to college, and enjoy benefits of the Union’s health care benefits—now with a pharmacy for members that is currently the biggest pharmacy in the state.¹⁰⁸

In 2002 Argüello-Kline was elected president of the union—the second-highest elected post—the first Latino in this position, and the second woman behind Hattie Canty.¹⁰⁹ Ten years later she was elected the first woman and first Latino secretary-treasurer of the Union—the organization’s highest elected position, which she held until retiring in 2022.¹¹⁰ The Culinary Union embodies Argüello-Kline’s story, and all other Latino and Latina union members who have struggled as immigrants, finding the Union and its fellow Latinos lifting one another for fair labor practices and an honest opportunity to reach the middle-class in Las Vegas.¹¹¹

The Culinary Union Building remains on the corner site at South Commerce Street and West New York Avenue in Las Vegas, just north of the Las Vegas Strip. In 2023 it remained the largest union in Nevada, and continues to show substantial Latino and Latina leadership, with other traditionally underrepresented groups such as Blacks, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders serving their fellow union members as leaders.

Reflecting on the challenges and successes of the 1990s, the Culinary Union’s Latina leadership built off the foundation set by Hattie Canty in the 1980s and prevailed during the Frontier Strike of the 1990s—one of the country’s longest and most monumental strikes in modern history—led by Latina strike organizer Geoconda Argüello-Kline. While there is still substantial Latino and Latina leadership at the Union, it has been supported by contributions of influential Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other traditionally underrepresented groups. The Culinary

¹⁰⁶ Steven Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 178.

¹⁰⁷ Rodriguez, “A History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada: 1829-2020.”

¹⁰⁸ Liz Benston, “In-House Pharmacy Helps Cut Culinary Union Workers’ Costs,” *Las Vegas Sun*, May 27, 2004.

¹⁰⁹ Howard Stutz, “Former Housekeeper, Refugee Chosen Culinary Union Chief,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 12, 2012.

¹¹⁰ “Head of Culinary Union in Las Vegas Retires.”

¹¹¹ Mosle, “How the Maids Fought Back,” 155–56.

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Union property continues to serve as a space that leads, negotiates, trains tens of thousands of workers in Las Vegas, and motivates their members—many of which are Latino or represent other minority groups—to take risks to stand together to maintain and improve the atypical labor structure the Culinary Union has secured for employees of Las Vegas’s most important industry.

National Register Evaluation

This nomination for the Culinary Union headquarters property is submitted under the National Register MPDF “Historic Places Associated with Latinos in Nevada, 1864-2000,” with evaluation under the areas of significance of Ethnic History and Social History, and associated with the Social History theme of Labor History in the MPDF. The Culinary Union Building meets National Register *Criterion A* for listing at the state level of significance and satisfies *Criteria Consideration G* for properties that have achieved significance less than 50 years ago.

The Culinary Union Building is located in Las Vegas, with construction of the primary building completed in 1954, and with subsequent additions to the building and construction of auxiliary buildings occurring in later decades. The property demonstrates a direct and important association with Latino labor history by serving as the primary place for Latinos to organize and strategize significant labor strikes of the 1990s, and to lead the Union’s planning for collective bargaining. It retains integrity to its 1991-1997 period of significance (as discussed below) and satisfies the registration requirements for a labor union property type under the MPDF. Under the MPDF the Culinary Union Building qualifies under the following Social History - Labor History category: “Administrative offices for significant labor unions or organizations with Latino leadership,” and is evaluated under MPDF registration requirements for the union hall property type under *Criterion A*.

Significance under *Criterion A*

The Culinary Union Building property demonstrates significance for its association with Latina leadership in Nevada’s labor union history, and is eligible under *Criterion A* in the area of Ethnic Heritage, with Social History as a supporting area of significance. The property conveys significance at the state level, as it is associated with Latino labor history that has manifested in the economic and labor structure of the Las Vegas area and greater Nevada.

Not only does the Culinary Union property convey a very deep and significant labor union history with Las Vegas, but the 1990s history of the Culinary Union demonstrates a wave of new rank-and-file Latino leadership growing more powerful and confident during the 1980s, driving the Union to challenging but victorious strikes in the 1990s—most importantly, the Frontier Strike. Latinas accepted the baton from Black leadership during this time, and propelled the Union’s movement forward by boosting support of members from traditionally underrepresented communities to continue to fight for retention of the hard-won economic opportunities for themselves, their families, and future members of the Union.

In summary, the Culinary Union property is significant for Latino involvement in the broad patterns and events around labor history in the state and is eligible under National Register *Criterion A*.

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Period of Significance

The period of significance coincides with the six-year span of the Frontier Strike—one of the largest strikes in Las Vegas history, where Latinas began to demonstrate greater involvement in Culinary Union leadership. It begins in 1991 with the beginning of the strike, and extends to 1997 with the end of this monumental strike, marking the end of the Latina’s rise to leadership in Nevada’s largest labor union.

Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within The Last Fifty Years

Since the Culinary Union property achieved its significance within the last 50 years (with a period of significance of 1991-1997), it needs to meet National Register *Criteria Consideration G*, which states “A property achieving significance within the last fifty years is eligible if it is of exceptional importance.”¹¹² For background, the National Park Service presents the reasoning for the 50-year age threshold:

Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This consideration guards against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest and ensures that the National Register is a list of truly historic places.¹¹³

As demonstrated in the context and evaluation, the Culinary Union property demonstrates exceptional importance for its association with Latina leadership during labor conflicts of the 1990s. The Frontier Strike was a critical period for Latino history in Las Vegas and the state of Nevada, and undoubtedly resulted in significant impacts on the nation’s labor history generally. The Culinary Union headquarters is the singular property that conveys this exceptional importance in the state. As such, the significance of the Culinary Union property as evaluated under the contexts of the MPDF qualifies under *Criteria Consideration G*.

Integrity

The Culinary Union property is significant under *Criterion A* under the areas of significance of Ethnic Heritage and Social History, with a period of significance of 1991-1997. The MPDF registration requirements related to integrity discuss that properties found significant under *Criterion A* in the area of labor history under the Social History supporting area of significance should be recognizable as labor-related resources that convey association with Latino history. Aspects of integrity that are most critical under *Criterion A* are location, setting, feeling, and association. Less critical aspects are design, materials, and workmanship, and more flexibility can be given to these aspects particularly if the integrity of other aspects remains high.

¹¹² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C., revised 1997 1990), 41, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

¹¹³ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 41.

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Given the building is a labor union hall without any design elements suggesting Latino member association, the property's integrity is assessed to the building itself and its composition from the period of significance: 1991-1997. The seven aspects of integrity are discussed below:

Location

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The Culinary Union served as the central gathering place for negotiations and support for the strikes that occurred during the 1990s, with the headquarters building serving as the primary administrative area and the Lil' House serving as the strike kitchen and sign-making place. While strike events are inherently located at specific places of employment, the Culinary Union property is the common nucleus location for planning these events. The Culinary Union property remains at its original headquarters location between the Strip and Downtown Las Vegas—a location it retained through the period of significance. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of location.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.

The setting of the Culinary Union property is a mix of industrial properties, multi-family residential properties, and some vacant lots in a location where the high-rise casinos of both the Strip and Downtown Las Vegas are visible to the south and north, respectively. While some additional casino buildings have been constructed in both locations and are visible from the Culinary Union property, they do not detract from the setting of the property that existed during the period of significance. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of setting.

Feeling

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

While the Culinary Union property has experienced construction and placement of some small buildings since the period of significance, the overall size and design of the headquarters building and Lil' House remain intact and recognizable from the period of significance, along with the property's associated parking lot. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of feeling.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

As the Culinary Union property continues to serve as the primary union hall, and was the central place for planning and assistance during labor strikes, it continues to convey its association with

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the important labor events that occurred during the period of significance. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of association.

Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The Culinary Union property largely retains its building designs from the period of significance, continuing to reflect the headquarter building's alterations in the 1970s. Despite experiencing construction and placement of an auxiliary building in 2005, the property as a whole continues to demonstrate its design from the 1990s. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of design.

Materials

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The buildings on the Culinary Union property that were extant during the period of significance remain intact with respect to materials, conveying the majority of materials applied or used in the construction of the union hall from its 1970s renovation, and which were present during the property's period of significance. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

As the Culinary Union property does not deviate from its design or materials present during its period of significance, it continues to demonstrate workmanship in its changes originating from its 1970s alterations. Therefore, the Culinary Union property retains integrity of workmanship.

Recommendation

The Culinary Union property retains all seven aspects of integrity to convey significance for Latino contributions to labor history under *Criterion A* from its period of significance of 1991-1997. As the property retains integrity, it is eligible for individual listing in the National Register under the related MPDF, with significance under *Criterion A* and a period of significance of 1991-1997.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.66

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates.

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Zone: 11N | Easting: 665788.5353 | Northing: 4002344.582 |
| 2. Zone: 11N | Easting: 665913.1241 | Northing: 4002343.45 |
| 3. Zone: 11N | Easting: 665908.8827 | Northing: 4002253.783 |
| 4. Zone: 11N | Easting: 665782.2793 | Northing: 4002261.333 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property encompasses the southern half of a city block bound by South Commerce Street to the east, West New York Avenue to the south, and Fairfield Avenue to the west. The boundary corresponds to the back edge of the sidewalk to the east, south, and west, and to the rear lot line of the commercial properties to the north to correspond to the city legal parcel.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the same as the city legal parcel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Brian Matuk, Chad Moffett, and Liz Boyer
organization: Mead & Hunt, Inc.
street & number: 180 Promenade Circle, Suite 240
city or town: Sacramento state: CA zip code: 95834
e-mail: brian.matuk@meadhunt.com, chad.moffett@meadhunt.com, liz.boyer@meadhunt.com
telephone: 916-971-3961
date: September 29, 2023

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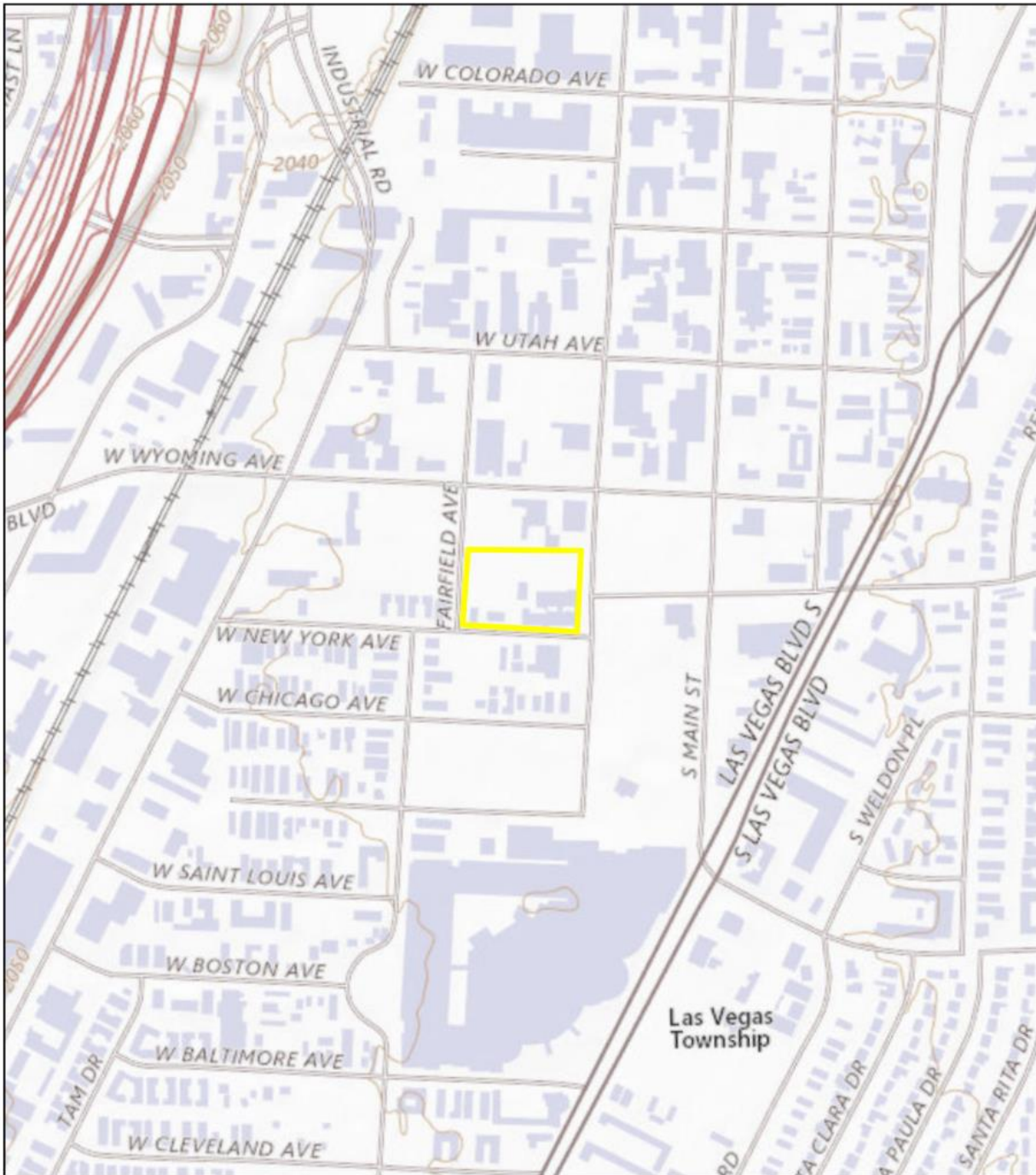
Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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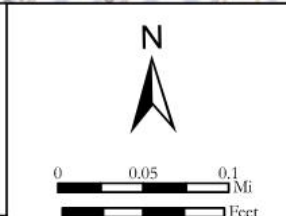
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Parcel Location Map
1630 South Commerce Street, Las Vegas

Author: Mead & Hunt, Inc.
Date: 09/29/2023

Legend
■ Parcels



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

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Photographs

Name of Property: Culinary Workers Union, Local 226

City or Vicinity: Las Vegas

County and State: Clark County, California

Photographer: Mead & Hunt, Inc.

Date Photographed: March 28, 2023

Site Plan

Photograph 1 of 13

Overview of Culinary Union, featuring front (east) facade and side (south) elevations. View facing northwest.

Photograph 2 of 13

Detail of south end, front facade. View facing west.

Photograph 3 of 13

Front facade and side (north) elevations. View facing southwest.

Photograph 4 of 13

Three entrance vestibules on side (north) elevation. View facing southeast.

Photograph 5 of 13

Detail of exterior staircase to entrance balcony on side (south) elevation. View facing northwest.

Photograph 6 of 13

View of side (north) rear (west) elevations. View facing southeast.

Photograph 7 of 13

Interior of main meeting hall, Culinary Union building. View facing northwest.

Photograph 8 of 13

Interior of main meeting hall, Culinary Union building. View facing southeast.

Photograph 9 of 13

View of Lil House, front (south) facade. View facing north.

Photograph 10 of 13

Interior view of flexible meeting space at south end of the Lil House. View facing northwest.

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Photograph 11 of 13

The Annex, associated modular building west of the Culinary Union building. View facing north.

Photograph 12 of 13

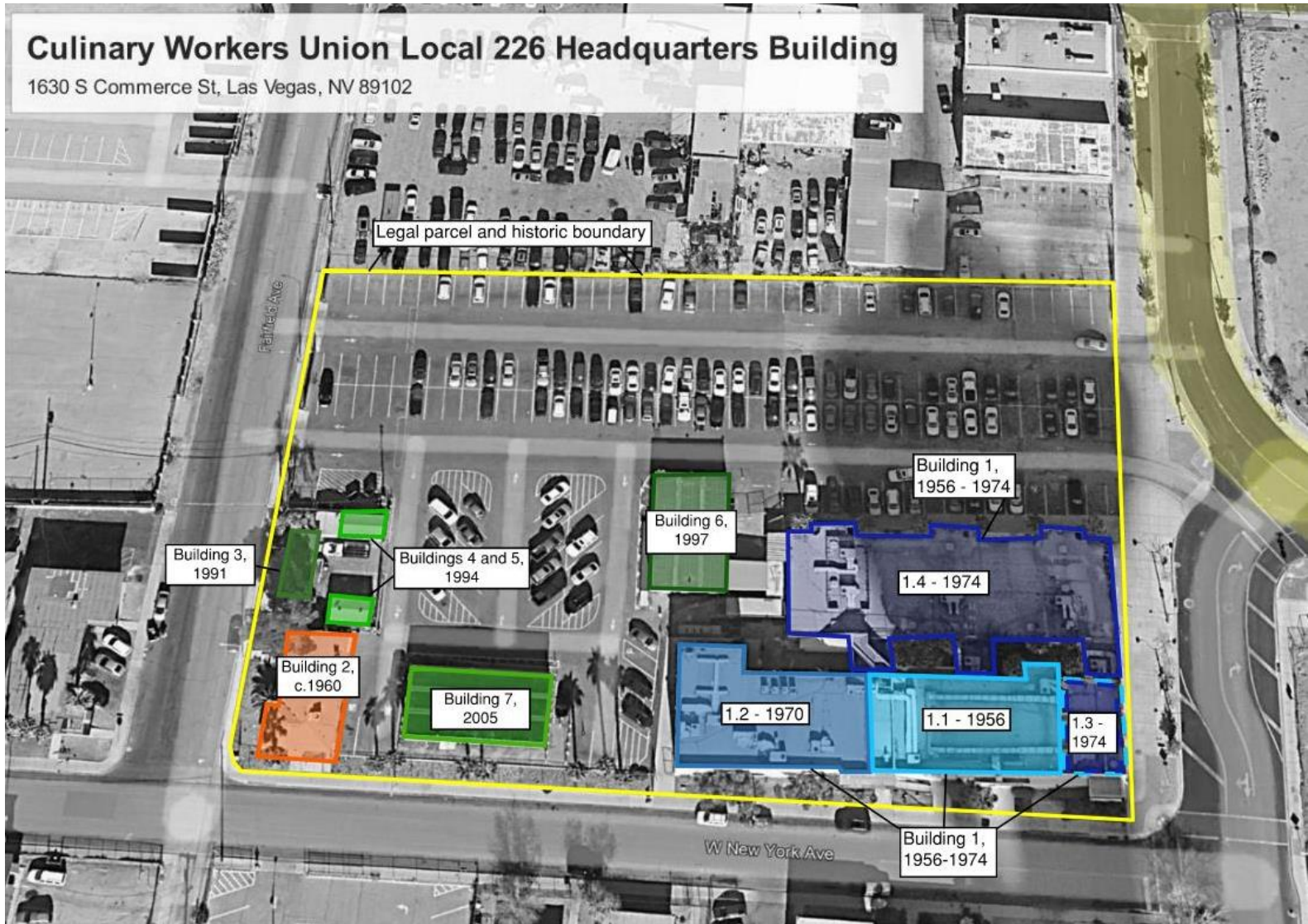
View of associated modular building, southwest of the Culinary Union building. View facing north.

Photograph 13 of 13

View of associated modular maintenance building, flanked by two storage sheds, all located west of the Culinary Union building. View facing west.

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Site Plan

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County and State



Photograph 1 of 13



Photograph 2 of 13

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 3 of 13



Photograph 4 of 13

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 5 of 13.



Photograph 6 of 13.

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 7 of 13.



Photograph 8 of 13.

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 9 of 13.



Photograph 10 of 13.

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 11 of 13.



Photograph 12 of 13.

Culinary Union Local 226 Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State



Photograph 13 of 13.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.