

Significance:

3:1 in popular vote

Suffrage activity through the Mesquite Club.

Established in 1911, the Mesquite Club provided middle-class women of Las Vegas a forum for civic improvement and social activity. The new town needed amenities and the club responded. Although avoiding politics directly, the club hosted Nevada Equal Franchise Society (NEFS) president Anne Martin; southern Nevada organizer for the NEFS, Bird Wilson; and coordinated with the state suffrage organization to bring renowned author and suffrage advocate Charlotte Perkins Gilman to Las Vegas. It also arranged speakers on women's political opportunities in 1913, the crucial year for the legislative passage of the suffrage bill. Clark County where Las Vegas is situated passed the suffrage bill in the popular referendum by 3: 1. Following passage, the club held workshops for its members on being an informed voter.

Delphine Squires, co-founded the Mesquite Club and served as president in 1913. She took a major role to get the Las Vegas club affiliated with the state Federation of Women's Clubs. A participant at state conferences, she was elected chair of the Civics and Public Health committee in 1914. The following year she was elected president of the state group. She also attended national Federation of Women's Clubs conferences during these years when suffrage was widely discussed. She presided at the 1915 Nevada annual conference at which the club endorsed woman suffrage. [note-there are different views on if it was a political trick by Wilson and Martin or if it was a clear mandate]. In addition, Squires and her husband Charles P. Squires owned the *Las Vegas Age*. It is probable that she encouraged the publication of notices about the national and state suffrage campaigns all of which were quite positive.

The Fourth Street School is the best existing site for a marker because the Mesquite Club met there for at least two years between 1912 and 1915. In 1912, Las Vegas had one school--The Las Vegas Grammar School. When a high school became necessary, separate rooms in the Fourth Street School were set aside for those students. It was in the high school rooms that the Mesquite Club met. By 1915, the Mesquite Club moved to a meeting room in the Old Courthouse. The Las Vegas Grammar School is currently referred to as the Historic 5th St. School but its address is on Fourth St.

References:

Las Vegas Age, April 20, 1912; October 26, 1912; November 2, 1912; April 19, 1913; May 31, 1913; November 29, 1913; April 11, 1914; October 3, 1914; March 13, 1915; October 9, 1915; November 13, 1915.