

Guide to the Underground House of Las Vegas Collection

This finding aid was created by Christina Molina, Ian M. Baldwin, and Melise Leech. This copy was published on May 23, 2019.

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Underground World Homes Corporation
Contributor:	Henderson, Jerry (Girard B.)
Contributor:	Swayze, Jay
Title:	Underground House of Las Vegas Collection
ID:	MS-00594
Date [inclusive]:	1964-2004
Physical Description:	1.30 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)
Physical Description:	1.08 Linear Feet
Physical Description:	4 Digital Files (0.00103 GB)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Underground House of Las Vegas Collection (1964-2004) consists of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, books, photographic prints, and digital images detailing the construction and history of Girard "Jerry" B. Henderson's "Underground House," a Las Vegas underground dwelling completed in 1978.

Preferred Citation Note

Underground House of Las Vegas Collection, 1964-2004. MS-00594. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Historical Note

The Las Vegas Underground House, located in Las Vegas, Nevada at 3970 Spencer Street, was the personal home of Girard B. "Jerry" Henderson and his wife, Mary. The couple lived full-time in the underground structure from 1978 until Henderson's death in 1983.

Plainsview, Texas building contractors, Jay and Kenneth Swayze, built the house. Jay Swayze developed the "ship-in-a-bottle" building concept after being commissioned by Plainview officials to build a demonstration fallout shelter in 1961. Unconvinced that humans would survive the Cold War, he believed that the surface of the earth would one day be uninhabitable and proposed everything from underground homes to

underground schools and shopping malls. Soon after the completion of the Texas "Atomic House," called the "Atomitat," the brothers formed World Underground Homes Corporation.

An underground home was a natural step for Jerry Henderson, who had a long interest in home safety and security. He contacted the brothers in 1963 and commissioned his first underground home outside of Boulder, Colorado. The same year, Henderson bought a fifty-one percent share of the Swayze's Underground World Homes Corporation and financed an underground house exhibit for the 1964 World's Fair in New York City, New York.

In 1968, Jerry and Mary Henderson moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1971, Henderson commissioned his second underground home, the Las Vegas Underground House. Planning commenced in 1973, and the dwelling was completed in 1978. The Las Vegas Underground House served as the Henderson's primary residence until Jerry's death in 1983. In 1985, Mary built a smaller conventional home on the property above the underground house, living there until her death in 1989.

Source:

Taylor, F. Andrew, "Underground Home Was Built As Cold War Hideaway," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 17, 2013.

"Girard Brown Henderson, February 25, 1905-November 16, 1983," accessed April 17, 2019, <http://hendersonfamilytree.com/Jerry/Jerry.html>

The Underground Home: New York World's Fair, 1964-1965, accessed April 18, 2019, <http://www.worldsfairphotos.com/nywf64/booklets/underground-world-home.pdf>

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Scope and Contents Note

The Underground House of Las Vegas Collection (1964-2004) consists of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, books, photographic prints, and digital images detailing the construction and history of Girard "Jerry" B. Henderson's "Underground House," a Las Vegas underground dwelling completed in 1978.

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Arrangement

Materials remain as they were received.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information.

Publication Rights

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Reproductions and Use](#) on the UNLV Special Collections and Archives website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

Aquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2012 by Karen Gordon; accession number 2012-16.

Processing Note

Material was processed by Christina Molina in 2012. In 2014, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Ian M. Baldwin revised and enhanced the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards. Subsequently, Ian M. Baldwin uploaded this information into ArchiveSpace. In 2019, Melise Leech rehoused the collection and enhanced the collection description to bring it into compliance with current standards and Sarah Jones processed the digital materials stored on floppy disks.

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Names and Subjects

- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- History
- Cold War -- United States -- Architecture
- Residential structures
- Architecture
- Single-family dwellings
- Photographs

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Underground House: magazine articles, 1964-2003	box 01

Underground House: movie script, undated	box 01
Underground House: news articles, 1995-2003	box 01
Underground House: notes and facts, 1996-2001	box 01
Underground House: photographs, 2001-2002	box 01
Underground World Home Corporation: articles and correspondence, 1964-1965	box 01
Underground House: Magazine and directory articles, 2003-2004	box 02
Swayze, Jay, <i>Underground Gardens and Homes</i> , 1980	box 02
Beaurline, Kelley, <i>There's No Place Like Home</i> , 2002	box 02
Hall, Loretta, <i>Underground Buildings: More Than Meets the Eye</i> , 2004	box 02
<i>Las Vegas' Top 10 Bathrooms Featuring the Underground House</i> , 2003 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
<i>Underground House "Around Your Home," Host Bob Anderson</i> , 2002 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
<i>Underground House: Homes and Hide-a-ways Venues</i> , undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
<i>Underground House Master Dub</i> , 2001-2004 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
<i>Travel Channel's Best of</i> , 2003 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
<i>Underground House: HGTV</i> , 2004 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 02
Digital images of the Underground House Physical Description: 4 Digital Files (0.00103 GB)	digital file 00