

Las Vegas Museum of [REDACTED] Organized Crime [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Law Enforcement.

St. Valentine's Day Massacre Wall Fact Sheet

St. Valentine's Day Massacre: The St. Valentine's Day Massacre refers to the most notorious crime in American history—the execution of seven men during a Prohibition Era conflict between two powerful gangs in Chicago--the South Side group led by Al Capone, and the North Side gang led by George “Bugs” Moran.

The wall where the victims were killed is the most important Mob artifact in existence.

After the men were mourned and buried, the recriminations over, and the investigations ended – the wall was left as the most eloquent testimony to Mob activity over the last 100 years.

History: On the morning of Thursday, February 14, 1929--St. Valentine's Day--members of the Moran gang, a gang hanger-on, a hired mechanic and his dog, were gathered in a warehouse on Chicago's North side. The killers, believed to be members of the Capone gang masquerading as police and detectives, staged a raid, with the hope of catching and eliminating Moran. They lined the men up against the rear inside wall and gunned them down with Thompson sub-machine guns. One victim lived for several hours but chose not to identify his killers. The dog was the only survivor of the massacre. Although there have been numerous theories and numerous “confessions,” no one was ever convicted of the crime and it remains officially “unsolved.”

The Massacre Wall: The warehouse was home to SMC Cartage Company at 2122 North Clark Street. The wall was easily identified and became infamous in its own right because of world-wide press coverage and photos that captured the bloody aftermath of the event. The police produced diagrams showing where each of the victims stood and fell; the coroner's report indicated that a volley of 70 machine gun bullets and two shotgun blasts were fired.

SMC Cartage Company stood in the Lincoln Park neighborhood until being demolished in 1967. At that time, George Patey, a Canadian businessman purchased the wall. Patey had the wall painstakingly taken apart and had each of the bricks numbered, and then shipped them back to Canada. He used them for years as an attraction in a restaurant he operated. The wall is essential intact; over the last 40 years a very small number of the bricks were sold or given to family members.

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After Patey's death, in 2004, his sister inherited the bricks and in turn authorized her daughter Kendall O'Leary to look for a home for the wall. While many others offers were entertained, the family felt The Mob Museum was the best place for the story to be told and continued.

Significance to the History of Organized Crime in America:

Capone had an alibi; and Moran missed the event completely--but public outrage exploded. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre was the most infamous mob hit of all time. The violence of this action and the bullet-riddled wall showed the incredible force of the machine gun execution. It stunned America and people began to change their ideas about the bootleggers who were supplying illegal liquor during Prohibition. The government never nabbed Capone for the St. Valentine's Day Massacre but began to employ other strategies to put him and other mobsters out of business and in jail.

This is the most important Mob artifact in existence. After the victims were buried, the investigations ended – the wall was left as the most eloquent testimony to Mob activity over the last 100 years.

Significance to The Mob Museum and Las Vegas: The Mob Museum--the first and only museum dedicated solely to the history of organized crime and law enforcement's efforts to combat such activities—is the appropriate location for the Massacre Wall.

The Mob Museum's exhibits will present:

- The early history of organized crime across America;
- The opportunity for criminal enterprises during the Roaring 20s and Prohibition—when the mob motto was “Give the People What they Want”--in the form of illegal alcohol;
- The growth of organized crime enterprises in cities across the country—starting in the east and consistently moving westward—to Chicago and eventually to Las Vegas;
- Connections between Chicago and Las Vegas from the Capone era onward, through the Central States Pension Loan Funds, to the hidden ownership of casinos, and Tony Spilotro's move to Las Vegas;
- Illegal skimming operations and where much of the money ended up—Chicago;
- The efforts of local police as well as federal agencies to combat these crimes and criminals is the parallel story--from Eliot Ness and the Untouchables in Chicago, to today's army of agencies working to combat organized crime at home and around the world.

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Due to both fact and fiction, many people associate Chicago, Capone and that era with the beginning of a fascination for the “romance” of the Mob, and what most people still think of when they think of the Mob.

This dramatic piece of history, the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre Wall, should dispel any romantic notions.

For more information contact:

info@themobmuseum.com