

history of the mob in las vegas

The history of the mob in Las Vegas is a captivating tale that intertwines organized crime, entertainment, and the development of one of the most famous cities in the world. During the mid-20th century, Las Vegas became a focal point for mob activity, as it offered a lucrative landscape for illegal enterprises. The nexus of gambling, show business, and corruption created a perfect storm that allowed mobsters to thrive in the city. This article delves into the history of the mob in Las Vegas, exploring its rise, dominance, and eventual decline, as well as the lasting legacy it left on the city.

The Origins of Organized Crime in Las Vegas

The origins of organized crime in Las Vegas can be traced back to the post-World War II era. After the war, the United States experienced a boom in leisure activities, and Las Vegas emerged as a prime destination for entertainment and gambling. The combination of a growing population, increased tourism, and the legalization of gambling in Nevada in 1931 created opportunities for organized crime to establish a foothold in the city.

The Role of the Mob

Several key figures from the mob played instrumental roles in shaping Las Vegas during its formative years. Some of the most notable include:

1. Meyer Lansky: Often referred to as the "Mob's Accountant," Lansky was a financial genius who helped orchestrate many of the mob's ventures in Las Vegas. He was intricately involved in the development of the Flamingo Hotel and Casino, one of the first luxury resorts on the Strip.
2. Bugsy Siegel: A protégé of Lansky, Siegel was a notorious gangster who is often credited with transforming Las Vegas into a glamorous destination. He was heavily involved in the construction of the Flamingo, which opened in 1946, and his vision set the stage for the lavish resorts that would follow.
3. Frank Costello: Known as the "Prime Minister of the Underworld," Costello was a key player in the mob's operations in New York and had significant influence over Las Vegas. His connections helped facilitate the mob's investments in casinos and resorts.

The Golden Age of Mob Control

The 1950s and 1960s marked the golden age of mob control in Las Vegas. During this period, the mob consolidated its power and influence over the city's gambling industry, with several casinos under mob ownership or control.