

Lighting Talk on Subject Headings for Townsites

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My talk is about how the rule about using the latest name of a place as a subject heading fits maps of townsites that became part of a city. The rule is that if there is a one to one correspondence in the area covered by the two forms of the name, a person uses the latest form of the name even if the date of situation of the map was before the name change. For example, Ceylon became Sri Lanka, that is a direct correspondence, so the subject heading would always be Sri Lanka no matter what the date of the maps is. There is no one name modern equivalent for the area covered by the Roman Empire, so the heading for a map of the Roman Empire would be Roman Empire. However, many times a townsite becomes part of a city as is the case with McWilliams Townsite and Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, but now the city of Las Vegas covers a much larger area than that of these townsites.

According the Online Nevada Encyclopedia, in 1904 a surveyor named J.T. McWilliams began selling lots in the McWilliams Townsite that later became known as the "Westside" because of its location on the west side of the railroad tracks in Las Vegas. This was called McWilliams Townsite of Las Vegas. West Las Vegas is considered a city section of Las Vegas. Also according to the Online Nevada Encyclopedia, the birth of downtown Las Vegas took place during a land auction on Monday, May 15, 1905, when 1,200 lots in an area called Clark's Las Vegas Townsite were offered for sale. The vendor Backstage, which we are paying to establish NACO authority records for us, made McWilliams Townsite a see reference on the record for the West Las Vegas city section of Las Vegas and Clark's Las Vegas Townsite a see reference on the authority record for Las Vegas when I had wanted them established as separate names.

My question was, Is this correct? I brought up my question with a NACO participant and at the MAGIRT Cataloging and Classification Interest Group meeting at ALA Annual in New Orleans this June. The consensus was that what Backstage did is right, I should make sure the townsite name appears someplace in my record such as a coverage note if it is not part of the title of the map, and it is too bad that there is no subject heading for townsites.

Another similar case is a townsite name that lives on in a city section name. Jericho Heights, Nevada, which was also known as Pittman, was renamed Midway City in 1932. It was renamed Henderson in 1942, but there is still an area of Henderson called Midway City. I made the subject heading for that townsite map the heading for the city section.