

## **James Cashman**

**December 16, 1885—December 30, 1962**

**Elected 1920 short-term, 1922 short-term, 1924 short-term, 1926 long-term**

During James Cashman's time in southern Nevada, he made an indelible mark on the community and became one of the area's most beloved citizens and an outspoken booster for Las Vegas. He opened one of the first car dealerships in southern Nevada, served on the Clark County Commission, and helped start Helldorado Days. "Big Jim," as he was known, was a pioneer resident of Las Vegas and he worked tirelessly to promote the city.



Cashman first arrived in southern Nevada in 1904 at the age of seventeen. He took a variety of jobs in Las Vegas including dishwasher and lunch counter operator. He then took a job repairing telephone lines near Searchlight. He proved himself a hard and capable worker during his time in Searchlight. He then started a trucking business that transported ore between Nipton, Searchlight, and Eldorado Canyon. He also started a ferry service across the Colorado River.

Cashman realized the growing importance of the automobile and saw an opportunity. He opened the Searchlight Garage in 1910 and it did quite the business since it was the only repair facility in the area. He expanded his business and began selling automobiles, becoming known as the "Searchlight Automobile Magnate."

As the mining boom in Searchlight began to die off, Cashman relocated to Las Vegas. In 1920, he opened a garage and dealership in Las Vegas next to the Overland Hotel. This first garage became the first in a number of dealerships in Las Vegas that would bear Cashman's name. In 1923, he met his future wife at his dealership when she purchased a car from him. Leah Barker worked as an extension agent for the University of Nevada and traveled around the state by automobile educating residents on home economics. The couple had two children, James Jr. and Tona.

In 1920, Cashman ran for the Clark County Commission, defeating John Eggers. Cashman made good roads his priority during his time on the County Commission and was reelected in 1922, 1924, and in 1926 elected to the long-term post on the Commission.

Cashman's entrepreneurial spirit continued to drive him throughout the 1920s. In 1923, he and a partner, W.H. Pike bought a plane and created Grand Canyon Scenic Tours. He also created a boat tour on Lake Mead in 1929.

As a member of the Elks Lodge, Cashman helped start Helldorado Days in Las Vegas in 1935 to help promote the city. Cashman worked with the rest of the Elks to create the Helldorado Village and served as parade chief for twenty years. The Elks also created the first community stadium and honored Cashman by giving it his name. The city maintained the honor when they built the modern Cashman Field.

"Big Jim" retired in the 1950s, turning the businesses over to his son, James Cashman, Jr. He devoted himself full-time to his causes in the community. He was an active member of the Elks, the a founding member of the Rotary Club in Las Vegas, and one of the Sheriff's Mounted Posse.

Cashman died at his home in 1962 at the age of 77. His death shook the Las Vegas community and over 700 people attended his funeral. The Clark County School District named a middle school in his honor in 1965. Cashman's name became synonymous with his good cheer, drive, and never-ending dedication to southern Nevada.