



Sundt Construction *First United Methodist Church of Las Vegas, NM*

The builder of the facility we are commemorating this year was Mauritz Martinsen Sundt, known as M.M. He was born in Gjovik, Norway on October 3, 1863, and likely left home by 1877, at age 12 or 13, to join the Norwegian Merchant Marine. While in service, he quickly learned the carpenter trade (building his own toolbox, now on display in Sundt Company Headquarters in Tempe, Arizona) and was promoted to the role of ship's carpenter.

He arrived in America in 1881, first settling in Wisconsin, where he married and began a family. Unfortunately, Sundt suffered from asthma, so like many "health-seekers" of the time, he opted for the dry climate of the Southwest, intending to try Mexico. Arriving in Las Vegas in 1890, the conductor suggested he get off the train as the medicinal hot springs there might offer some relief. Not only did the springs help, but Sundt found the town as amenable as the climate, and he quickly found work with a local building contractor.

By 1902, he and a partner, V.A. Henry bought out their employer, and a few years later, M.M. bought out Henry and established his own company, M.M. Sundt Construction. The original planing mill still stands at the corner of 3rd and National.

Sundt Construction was responsible for many of the most recognizable buildings in Las Vegas, in addition to our church, including:

- Ilfeld Auditorium
- J.C. Johnson Mortuary
- Early structures at Camp Luna
- The YMCA
- The Romero Block
- The Agua Pura Dam
- The Meadows Hotel
- His residence at 1607 8th Street

The first step in the expansion of the company came in 1929 when his son Thoralf began work for the Bureau of Architecture for the Methodist church and designed a church for the growing community of Tucson, Arizona. Wanting to build a church designed by his son, M.M. dispatched another son, John, to take the bid documents to Tucson. They won the bid, and John stayed in Tucson to oversee construction.

The company soon won other projects:

- The University of Arizona
- Custom Homes Los Alamos
- Davis-Monthan Air Base
- Marana Air Base
- Relocation camps in Lordsburg, NM, and Sacaton, AZ
- Holloman Air Base
- Sandia and Kirkland Fields
- The Marine Corps Air Station in El Centro, CA

Sundt Corporation Headquarters was established in Arizona, and the company has grown into an international firm with projects spanning the globe.

M.M. continued to live and build in Las Vegas until his death in 1942.

