

Vol. No 13 Issue No. 3, July, August, September 2016 * <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

Salt  Agua Fria  Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

Frank Ross Receives Lifetime Service Award

Frank Ross, a founding member of the Three Rivers Historical Society, was presented with a Lifetime Service Award at the March 15th meeting. Frank was a founding member of the organization in 2003. He helped with all the tedious organizational issues such as the non-profit 501 (c) (3), and with the incorporation process.

As a native of Avondale he brought information and memories of the early years of the community first known as Coldwater. He also served Avondale as City Attorney for many years.

He has served as president and vice-president and been on the Board of Directors from 2003 until 2015. He has always helped with various projects and staffed booths at events when needed.

Three Rivers Historical Society felt it was certainly time to make it official...Frank has been a very important part of our organization since its inception!

Congratulations, Frank and thank you!



Young Japanese Child Survives Atom Bomb Blast

In 1936 a baby girl was born to the Yamamotos in Okayama, Japan, a small city near Hiroshima. The Yamamotos had a famous ancestor, a Samurai warrior. The baby girl was named Katsuko; she had a younger brother named Takaoshi.

As war broke out in Europe, Katsuko was a student at primary school near her home. The European war escalated when Germany attacked Poland and sent many Jews to death camps. Many other European countries were threatened as the American president pondered what the United States role would be as country after country was taken over and thousands were killed. Finally, America began gearing up for its entrance into the war in Europe against the Nazis..

President Franklin cut off oil shipments to Japan. As a result, Japan joined Germany and Italy (AXIS) with the goal of world domination. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked America at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States declared war on December 11, 1941.

A few years later, Katsuko was at school and the children saw thousands of leaflets dropping like snow from airplanes. The leaflets warned the people to leave the area before an atomic bomb would be dropped on Hiroshima. The bomb was dropped on August 6, 1945, at 8:15 AM, Japan time. However, Katsuko remembered the terrible bomb explosion happened at night. Little Katsuko lost her parents and younger brother and was found wandering the streets of her destroyed city alone. She was taken to a shelter where she lived until her uncle, who owned a large rice farm, sent for her.

Katsuko traveled by train to her uncle's farm. A B-29 plane strafed the train and a boy sitting near Katsuko was injured, losing his leg. She was further traumatized when her uncle forced her to plant rice on the farm. Her aunt was mean to her, even though Katsuko knew nothing about planting rice. Katsuko remembered being hungry all the time and leeches in the rice patty water getting on her legs. One day she lost her shoes in the water and prayed, "Please, God, I need my shoes." She was a teenager when her mother's brother, Dr. Kibata, who practiced in California, heard of her plight. He was well-known in Hollywood and treated stars like Gloria Swanson. He decided to go to Japan and bring his niece to America to be educated. Dr. Kibata went to the U.S. Embassy and was able to secure a Visa and a sponsor so Katsuko, who could speak no English, could be enrolled in school in Virginia where her sponsor lived. The sponsor's husband was a West Point colonel and they opened their home to Katsuko. The Colonel and his wife had a daughter living in the dorm at Marymount Junior College in Arlington. Katsuko lived in their home and learned English, the American way of life, and useful household skills. She went to a private high school where she finally graduated, although the language difficulties were over-whelming. When she started college at Marymount, she was close to her sponsor's daughter and was introduced as the sponsor's "Japanese daughter." Her sponsor family called her "Kitty" and allowed her to cook sukiyaki for the family. After a year and a half at Marymount with failing grades, Kitty's uncle decided they would take her back to Japan.

Back in Japan, Katsuko learned Japanese arts, dance, how to play the Koto, and the tea ceremony as taught to the Geishas. She got a job at the American Government Hospital near Yokohama as a receptionist. At that time General Douglas McArthur was helping rebuild war-torn Japan. The Japanese people loved and respected General McArthur. One day while Kitty was working, a handsome young American came in looking for a dentist. His name was Howard Datwyler, the grandson of a famous architect in New York who designed Carnegie Hall and other important buildings. Howard worked for the CIA. He began to date Kitty; it was love at first sight. However, Howard was being watched because he wasn't supposed to fraternize with Asians. Howard decided to leave the CIA and returned to the United States where he was employed by a new company. He later returned to Japan



and the couple was married by the hospital chaplain with many of the doctors attending the ceremony.

They moved to Chicago to be near Howards' parents. Howard's father didn't warm up to Kitty at first, but later grew to love her. Later, Kitty and Howard moved to Dallas where Howard opened his own business, Big D Boat and Screw Company. He did business with other large companies in the area. While in Dallas, Kitty was employed by Kim Dawson Modeling Agency; she modeled on television and for Neiman Marcus stores. Howard and Kitty raised three sons; Howard's business thrived. After fifteen years, they moved to Sanibel Island, Florida. When their son's were adults, a friend, Senator Harry DeMaso, asked them to look into retiring in Arizona. They looked at homes in Sun City, but Howard thought the brick construction was better in the community of Pebble Creek Golf Resort. They purchased a home in Eagles Nest and became involved in the retirement lifestyle. This included acting in Showtime Productions. Kitty was picked in 1999 to play the Polynesian daughter in "South Pacific." The girl's mother, "Bloody Mary," was played by Lenore Semmler.

The good life at Pebble Creek has lasted for quite a few years. Katsuko, "Kitty," is now a widow and still lives in Pebble Creek.

By Lenore Semmler, Lifetime Member, Three Rivers Historical Society

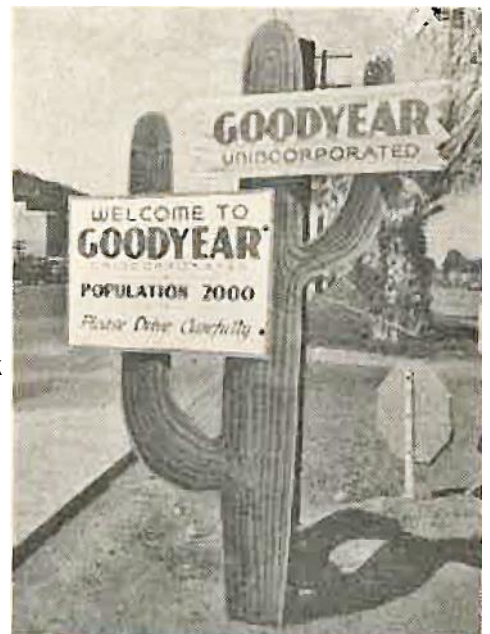
A Town is Born

With the opening of Goodyear Aircraft, many experienced workers, including engineers, supervisors and managers, were asked to move with their families from Akron, Ohio, to the Goodyear area. Try to imagine their homes and lifestyles in Akron, a modern city. Many came from homes with a basement and upstairs. They were used to paved streets, modern shopping, entertainment options, and many other conveniences. These families were asked to live in small homes built on a "slab" in a small community that didn't even have paved streets. They did have a grocery store and drugstore, but lacked a bank, post office and library. They were twenty miles from city amenities; gas was rationed.

But these new residents were not ones to sit around and wait for someone else to do something, they got right to work. The first project in the community was to poll residents and when all agreed, they paved the streets, raising the needed funds themselves. Neighbor helped neighbor if one was not in a position to pay his share of the cost.

Soon a Community Club was formed. It met in the community room of the Avondale Circle and was led by Francis W. Donnell. The club consisted of Goodyear residents, many of them GAC employees, who were interested in improving the community. One of the first issues they tackled was home milk delivery. A survey of residents was done. There was enthusiastic response and soon a milk truck was seen delivering fresh milk to doorsteps all over Goodyear. Soon after that success, the club asked residents of the Subdivision, Trailer Court, Westwood Manor, and Avondale Circle to vote on a name for the new community. The name Goodyear was overwhelmingly chosen. All the Community Club decisions were reported in the "Wingfoot Clan," the company newsletter.

The next service made available to the community was a library. A small room in the Avondale Circle Administration building was turned into a library in 1943. Wooden book shelves were constructed by volunteers and books were acquired through donations and borrowed from Maricopa County Free Library. Community volunteers staffed the library. Soon after, they decided to sponsor a volunteer fire department. Volunteers met on June 23, 1944, to elect officers and establish group classes. Chief Park L. Roberts of the Goodyear Aircraft Fire Department trained the volunteers. In October 1944, the committee established the boundaries of the new, unincorporated town of



Goodyear and selected roadside signage. The boundaries are: North, northern limit of Westwood Manor; east, dirt road between Avondale School and the power house east of Avondale Circle; South, Southern Pacific railway track; west, western boundary of the airport.

December 1944, brought the first bank to the area. Valley National Bank opened a branch in a newly constructed addition to the business block on Litchfield Road in Litchfield Park. E.T.W. Coulter was named the manager. The new bank served Litchfield Park and the surrounding area with complete banking services.

January of 1945 brought the official approval of a U.S. Post Office. Mrs. Marie Jenner of the Goodyear Subdivision was named postmaster. Mr. Elmer Ferral, chairman of the Community Club's post office committee, said that a suitable building had been assured. Until this time the nearest post offices would have been Avondale and Litchfield Park.

Lockheed Martin, upon ending operations at the former GAC facility, donated old copies of the "Wingfoot Clan" to Three Rivers Historical Society. Reading those early newsletters gave insight into how the town of Goodyear began to organize services for its new residents and improve the community.

Cecil's Hideaway

Back in 1959 or 1960, a new and unique bar opened in Avondale. It was called Cecil's Hideaway. It was built by local businessman, Cecil Howe, and was located on Dysart Road south of Van Buren. At that time, the Western Lanes Bowling Alley was next door to the south and behind it was the Oasis Drive-in Theater. The bowling alley was also owned by Mr. Howe.

What made the Hideaway unique was that it was an underground bar. On ground level was an entryway and restrooms. A curved stairway led down to the underground bar.

The story of why it was underground goes back to earlier times. A map of the area dated 1937 shows that the property was owned by L.A. Hammond and E.C. and Edith Skelley. When they sold the property it had a deed restriction that no bar could be visible on the property. Linda Skelley, a great-granddaughter of L.A. Hammond, confirmed that information saying that Mr. Hammond was a strong Quaker who did not approve of alcoholic beverages. Cecil got around that restriction by putting the bar underground.



In 1979, Frank Scott and his brother purchased the Hideaway from Cecil's widow, Ruth. The bar had been closed a few months when the purchase was made. The Scott brothers began to prepare the bar for re-opening. Imagine their surprise when they found cases of C Rations and canned water in a storage area. They were surprised again when a government worker stopped by to change the batteries of the Geiger counter. Evidently it had also served the community as an Air Raid Shelter during the Cold War

Some unique features that helped establish a thriving business was that Cecil would cash payroll checks from Goodyear Aircraft/Aerospace. On payday the line would be out the door for the check cashing service. Behind the bar were a few lawn chairs and a speaker from the drive-in theater so that bar customers could watch the movie. As a service to the bowling alley, there was a walkway from the back of the bowling alley to the Hideaway so that the servers at the bowling alley could bring drinks from the Hideaway to

the bowlers.

. Frank Scott was kind enough to give me a tour and share the history he had learned about the Hideaway. Frank pointed out some of the unique features of the construction of the bar. The roof was constructed of pre-stressed bridge tresses. The original floor was cement and after the air-conditioning duct work had been installed, it became apparent that they would need to either go deeper or hire only very short bar tenders. Part of the floor was jack-hammered out and reinstalled at a deeper level so the bar section was at a lower level than the section

with the tables and booths. The current bar and brass rail is original to the bar.

Over the years the Hideaway has changed hands and each owner has made some changes. The ground level now has an inside bar and patio. Current owner, Javier Aquila explained that the downstairs is used Thursday through Saturday to accommodate larger crowds, karaoke, DJs, and other attractions.

A couple of months ago, our guest speaker, Mack McCarley, remembered his college rock band playing many weekends at the Hideaway back in the '60s.

Currently, the bar is known as Aguila's Hideaway and is located at 1235 N. Dysart Road behind the liquor store. It is open from 11 AM to 2 AM daily.

Thank you to Frank Scott and Pat Howe Wallick for information for this article and sharing their memories.

The Doctor, the Dentist, and the Drugstore

When the company town of Litchfield Park was first established in 1917, it soon found itself in need of a doctor and a hospital. Ravaging the world with an estimated 25 to 50 million deaths, the Spanish Flu found its unmerciful way to Litchfield Park. Paul Litchfield brought Dr. Francis A. Brown from Bangor, Maine to Litchfield Park and had a small, temporary hospital built. Soon a permanent hospital was erected and the town had another doctor. Later, a third doctor, Richard L. Penn, arrived in Litchfield Park and lived in a house right next to the hospital. He stayed for 16 years caring for his patients until he retired and moved to Avondale.

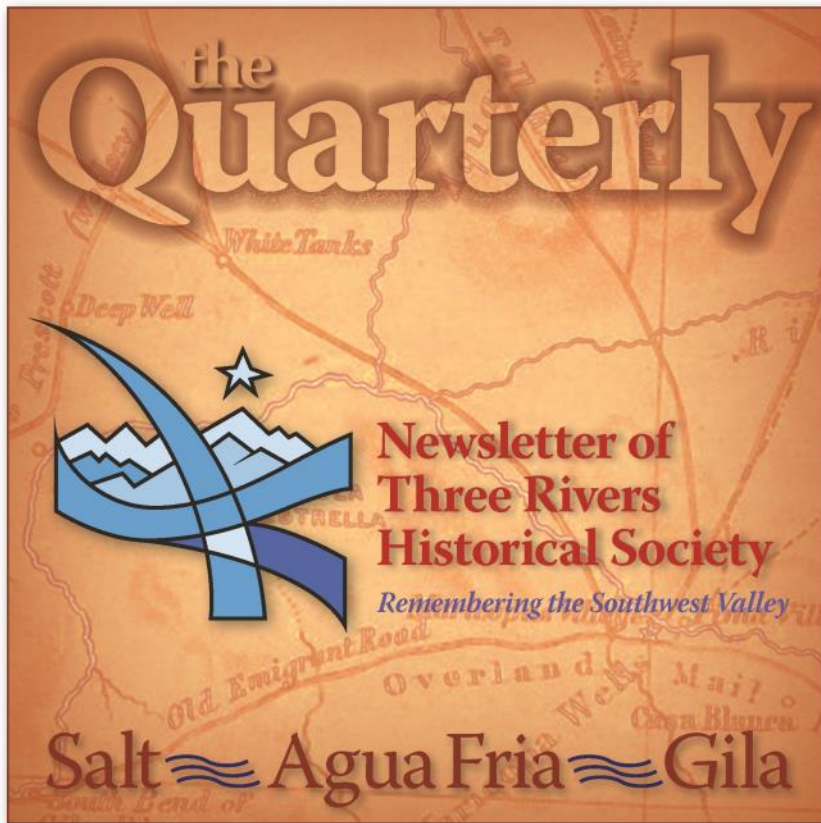
In 1941, Dr. Robert K. Hilton found his way to Litchfield Park from the mining town of Jerome. He had worked there for 12 years, but the mines were beginning to play themselves out. Dr. Hilton needed to find a new place to work. He moved his family into Dr. Penn's former house in Litchfield Park and set up his practice. A few years later, Paul Litchfield decided the company town needed a dentist. Dr. Hilton knew just the man; his good friend Dr. George McMillan who was still working in Jerome. Dr. McMillan moved to Litchfield Park in 1944.

The lives of both men seemed to parallel each other. Dr. Hilton was born in the Territory of New Mexico and Dr. McMillan was born in the Territory of Arizona. Both men loved music; Dr. Hilton played the clarinet and saxophone and Dr. McMillan played the piano and the trombone. Both performed in the saloons of early Arizona and New Mexico during their teen years earning money for their education. Both men were married and had a family of one boy and two girls. Both graduated in the spring of 1929 and established their early practices in the mining centers of the Verde Valley; both men finished their careers in Litchfield Park.

In the winter of 1928-29, a drugstore was built in Litchfield Park. A popular gathering place for the community, the drugstore boasted a soda fountain and a small area where people could eat. Members of the Litchfield Drug Morning Social Club often convened in this area and discussed all matters of state. Al and Shirley Holman owned the business for its last 31 years of existence. Al filled prescriptions and Shirley waited on customers. They closed their doors in 1999, leaving behind many memories that still bring smiles to the faces of area residents.

All of this history can be seen in photos and artifacts in the Litchfield Park Museum's exhibit The DOCTOR, the DENTIST, and the DRUGSTORE. Filled with delightful stories about early and mid-century Jerome and Litchfield Park, visitors will enjoy this dip into the past. Visitors will also get to see a 19th century sponge cabinet and antique medicine bottles from the Hilton Pharmacy of Socorro, New Mexico. It will be on display through next January. Over the summer, the museum is open Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon. After Labor Day, the museum will once again be open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Located on the corner of Litchfield Road and Camelback Road, the museum is free of charge. Make sure that you don't miss this exhibit about early and mid-20th century medicine!

By Judy Cook, Vice Pres., Litchfield Park Historical Society



Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5* | <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$15* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25* | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional \$45* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$100* | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$250* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$500 | * <i>Yearly Fee</i> |

Join _____ Renew _____ Call me to volunteer _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (Evening) _____

Cell _____ e-mail _____

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

A receipt will be issued to you.

Make out your check and mail to:

Three Rivers Historical Society,
P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

Three Rivers Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3
non-profit organization



Three Rivers Historical Society

Remembering the Southwest Valley

P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

Mark Pelletier, President

Betty Lynch, 1st V.P.

Laura Kaino, 2nd V.P.

Sally Kiko, Secretary

David Meese, Treasurer

Joann Gongaware, Diane Fekete, Wendy Neely, Al Field

Board Members

The Quarterly

Editors: Sally Kiko and Diane Fekete

Produced and Printed by

BMD Printing & Business Services

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear Library, 14455 W. Van Buren, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest speaker are e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address. E-mail Sally at kskiko@cox.net

