



# the Quarterly

Remembering the Southwest Valley

Vol. No 13 Issue No. 4, October, November December 2016 \* <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

Salt  Agua Fria  Gila  
Three Rivers Historical Society

## **IN THE BEGINNING:THREE RIVERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

It was November 16, 2004, and it was our very first official meeting of Three Rivers Historical Society!

The meeting was called to order by President Jean Stewart-Ruth at 3:10 P.M. Lenore Semmler volunteered to act as Secretary and take minutes for the group. She also said she would be willing to accept the position for one year. The treasurer, Don Jones, gave copies of the treasurer's report to those in attendance. Frank Ross and Patty Rudolph paid membership dues and joined the Society. The balance on hand to date is \$2,372.49.

Beverly Francis passed out business cards for the Society to the group. Membership report: Beverly talked about meeting a man who owned the land on which a Japanese prison camp was located during WWII near the White Tank Mountains. Lila Schneider added that some of the prisoner's children attended the same school she did. Records of the camp are on file at the State Capitol archives. Sharolyn Hohman stated that the archives also contain lists of German prisoners who were held in Arizona.

Billy Moore Days Western Heritage Parade: The Historical Society entered a float designed by Jean Stewart-Ruth. Our float won a 1st Place prize in the civic float category. The trophy was on display at the meeting and pictures of the float and participants were passed around. A superior effort by Jean, her sister and brother and others was applauded.

Sharolyn Hohman is looking for people to serve as president and vice president of the Society for the year 2005. She will have a slate prepared for the December meeting.

Jean said we are registered on the Volunteer Site and a student at ASU has offered to research Casey Abbott, an early pioneer. Another woman volunteered her two children to help wherever needed.

Peggy Jones brought the DVD interviews of pioneers of the area. They are for sale at \$12.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members. A lady whose father was an early resident of Litchfield Park inquired about our Society. Jean sent her a letter with photos.

The new Avondale office building on Western Avenue has room for a historical display. Bonnie Mosert will frame and hang some of our pictures for the display. A motion was made by Sharolyn and seconded by Lila to do a display there. Motion carried.

Trotting Park: A letter was sent to the owner of the Phoenix Trotting Park property to obtain some memorabilia to add to the collection. Lila donated picture postcards of the historical old grandstand building when new.

We need to do more research on the Avondale Circle. Several people talked about some of the old-time businesses and residences in Avondale and Goodyear.

Beverly suggested we do a column in the West Valley View newspaper with articles about our local history. Bill Bedoya said he would write down some remembrances. Lila told about the various businesses that occupied the Avon Theater building over the years. Jean has been clipping articles of interest from the SW Valley Sun newspaper about local servicemen. Some war stories are on Peggy's

DVDs.

Our next meeting is December 20th. A Christmas party will be held, and all are asked to bring food to share. Paid members in good standing can vote at this meeting according to our by-laws.

John Leach was a visitor and potential member today. Sharolyn asked Jean for a list of members in good standing. Peggy said she would report to Sharolyn on the directors we have. The board consists of the officers and three member directors. Terms are for three years. Jean might be persuaded to continue as president if she had a strong vice president to help her with the leadership work.

In January we will try to make up a calendar for the year 2005. Marie Lopez Rogers said Jose Sylva is working on a history of the migrant worker camps of the past. Do we want to invite him to a meeting and talk about this history?

An old Avondale - Goodyear map was turned in with an offer to help with the archives.

Beverly said she will be moving and has things she'd like to donate to the Society. We now have two 5x5 storage containers at Storage Solutions. We should write and ask if they would donate use of a smaller container to our organization. Storage Solutions is located east of Dysart on Van Buren.

Lila donated a 1958 membership letter from Tom Aragon to the Chamber.

At 4:22 P.M. meeting was adjourned.

Lenore Semmler, Secretary

## Route 66

Route 66 is an iconic and well-known route from the Midwest to the West Coast. This well-traveled U.S. highway goes southwest from Chicago to Los Angeles. Route 66 became famous in the 40's when Bobby Troup and his Big Band wrote and performed the song, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," but was used long before that by people fleeing worn out farms and lost jobs during the Depression, in the 20's and 30's. Many stopped and found jobs in New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada, but many more continued on to California with hopes of finding fame and fortune.

This migration and travel on Route 66 from the East to the West lasted from the 1920's to the mid 1970's when Interstate 40 was completed. Parts of U.S. 40, which was Arizona's part of Route 66, were integrated into I-40, but most of it was by-passed and faded into oblivion.

My husband, who was in the Air Force during the 60's and 70's, and our family traveled on Route 66 many times during his twenty years of service. It always seemed he would get stationed at a base in the East or the South and we would travel back to Arizona to visit or stay with my family. We visited many of the parks along the route including the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest, Meteor Crater and Wupatki Ruins. We also visited Montezuma's Castle several times. We have many happy memories of these places and our many travels across the United States. We recently made a trip to Kansas and followed Route 66 up through Arizona, New Mexico and Kansas. There are many signs of Route 66 still out there and lots of places that you can visit and travel it, but we still miss that piece of American history that is fading into the past.

By JoAnn Gongaware

## Arizona's First 100 Years

In December, 2011, the Phoenix Magazine issued a Special Centennial Collector's Issue. In the magazine there was a timeline with some interesting and sometimes little known facts. I hope you enjoy some of the highlights.

On February 14, 1912, Arizona became a state. That same year, Arizona women received the right to vote, eight years earlier than the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which granted that right to women throughout the nation.

In 1919, the Grand Canyon finally becomes a national park. Legislation attempts to make it a national park



began as early as 1882.

In 1922 the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce started the movement to change the name of the Salt River Valley to Valley of the Sun. The goal was to enhance winter tourism. It didn't become official until 1935. Also in 1935, Arizona Highways magazine was first published by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Over the years the content showcased Arizona scenery; color photography debuted in 1940.

The Arizona Mormon temple opened in Mesa in 1927, the first in the state. Two years later, in 1929, the Arizona Biltmore hotel opened. It has been a favorite of presidents and movie stars ever since.

Arizona made national news in 1931 when Winnie Ruth Judd traveled from Phoenix to Los Angeles and the decapitated bodies of several of her friends were found in her luggage. The "Trunk Murderess" was found guilty and committed to the state mental hospital in Phoenix. She escaped six times. Another criminal, John Dillinger, and his gang were captured without firing a shot by the Tucson police after a suspicious fire at the Congress Hotel.

The Depression brought the Civilian Conservation Corps to Arizona. They worked construction projects at the Grand Canyon, South Mountain, Papago Park and Petrified Forest.

Arizona and California have been arguing about water rights since forever. A dispute with California in 1934 caused the Arizona National Guard to be activated. Nellie Bush, a State legislator was named "Admiral" of the Arizona Navy, but her fleet of two old steamboats ran aground and was rescued by her adversaries, the Californians.

The Desert Botanical Garden opened in 1939 to preserve and display the world's arid-climate natural wonders. Gertrude Webster provided financial support. That same year "old Tucson" was the site used to film a western movie. More than fifty buildings were constructed to recreate 1860's Tucson. It was used for a large number of western movies and became a tourist attraction. It was destroyed by fire in 1995, but was rebuilt and reopened in 1997.

In the 1940's, women's softball became a popular sport. Phoenix had two teams, the Ramblers and the A-1 Queens. Former Governor Rose Mofford played on the Queens; more important to Agua Fria Alumni, Zada Boles played for the Ramblers. At Arizona State College (ASU), she lettered in baseball, softball, track and tennis. Miss Boles was PE teacher for girls and a coach at Agua Fria for many years.

1941 brought two Army Air Bases to Arizona, Williams Field and Luke Field. Pearl Harbor was bombed and the United States entered WWII. 1942, two relocation camps for Japanese-Americans were built in Arizona; the Gila River Center near Sacaton, and the Poston Center near Parker. That year the famed U.S. Marines elite Navajo Code Talkers unit was formed.

It's hard to believe, but Native Americans didn't win the right to vote until 1948. 1949 brought high-tech industries to Arizona. Motorola built a laboratory in Phoenix to research new solid-state technology. The 1950's brought Hughes Aircraft in Tucson and AiResearch, Sperry Rand and General Electric to the Valley.

Television came to Phoenix and the Valley in 1950 when KPHO began broadcasting from the Westward Ho Hotel; a massive rooftop tower carried the broadcast across the Valley.

1953 brought desegregation to Arizona schools. A complaint filed by civil rights organizations against Phoenix Union High School resulted in a court decision.

With peace at home, Arizona's spring training tradition was pioneered by the Cleveland Indians in Tucson and the New York Giants in Phoenix. It became the "Cactus League" when the Chicago Cubs and the Baltimore Orioles arrived in 1954.

Introduced in January, 1954, Wallace and Ladmo, a children's comedy television show ran until 1989.

In 1958, Arizona State College became ASU amid cheers from students. That same year, Wayne Newton, a junior at South Mountain High School was discovered by a talent agent from Nevada. He and his brother, Jerry, performed on a Phoenix television show, the Lew King Rangers.

Sun City, a community designed for active retirement opened in 1960. During the three day open house event, this Del Webb community sold 237 homes. This development set the stage for senior living communities across the country.

1963 saw the advent of Miranda Rights after Ernesto Miranda was arrested in Phoenix and confessed to a crime without being informed of his right to an attorney. Robert McCulloch purchased 26 square miles that became Lake Havasu City. Eighteen Titan missiles carrying nuclear warheads became a part of the Cold War strategy near Tucson.



U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater won the Republican presidential nomination in 1964. He lost in a landslide to Democrat Lyndon B Johnson. Judge Lorna Lockwood became Chief Justice of the Arizona State Supreme Court, the first in the U.S.

In 1972 the Eagles' debuted the single "Take it Easy." The song, with the phrase, "...I'm a-standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona..." put Winslow, Arizona on the map. In 1976, Arizona Republic reporter, Don Bolles, died from injuries caused by detonation of dynamite under his car. He was investigating organized crime in Arizona.

The first wineries came to Arizona in 1979, there are now forty-five and counting. In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor, a native Arizonan, became the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. The last stretch of Route 66 was bypassed by I-40 near Williams in 1984. In 1985, the first unit of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station produced energy for the Valley. The Central Arizona Project, a 336-mile aqueduct, brought Colorado River water to central and southern Arizona.

In 1990, the federal government closed the Phoenix Indian School. It had been in operation since 1891. Arizona voters finally put an end to controversy and boycotts by reinstating Martin Luther King Jr. a federal holiday in 1992.

In 1999, Tempe Lake was created by placing inflatable rubber dams in the dry Salt River. In 2001, in only their fourth year of existence, the Arizona Diamondbacks won the World Series. In 2008, John McCain, won the Republican nomination for president. He was defeated by Barack Obama. The Arizona Cardinals made it to their first Super Bowl in 2009 but were defeated by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the closing seconds of the game. In 2011, the Wallow fire burned 841 square miles in the White Mountains, it was the largest blaze in history.

### **"Paving of West Van Buren to Litchfield Drive to Start"**

That was the headline in the August 17, 1944, issue of *The Wingfoot Clan. Goodyear Edition*. It's hard to believe for those of us who live here now, but in 1944, the paved portion of West Van Buren ended at Avondale Boulevard, formerly 115<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Remember, there was no I-10 either!

This was big news because Goodyear Aircraft was in full production and employed six to seven thousand workers, many who traveled to work each day from Phoenix. The usual route to work was driving west on Highway 80 (MC85) and crossing the railroad tracks going north on Litchfield Road. That doesn't seem to be much of a problem these days, but in 1944, there was a lot more train traffic, both freight and passenger, and delays occurred. The article went on to say that the three mile stretch had been a dirt and gravel road. A. H. Zieske, Vice President of Goodyear Farms, officials of Goodyear Aircraft Corporation and the Phoenix Transportation system collaborated in arranging for the pavement construction. Federal road funds provided the money; Maricopa County Highway Department provided the muscle. But, of course, the paving stopped at Litchfield Drive (Road), at least for a time.

### **Wild Horses of Arizona**

Wild horse herds can be found in several locations in Arizona. Two that I see with some regularity are the Salt River herd and the Heber herd. They are a magnificent sight; beautiful horses and colts in groups living free.

The Salt River herd roams freely between the Tonto National Forest, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Neither the U.S. Forest Service nor the Indian communities claim them. They belong to nobody and some think they are vulnerable. Are they a nuisance or are they a living link to the Wild West, something to treasure and preserve for future generations?

In 1971, federal law declared that wild horses and burros on public land should be protected; they are symbols of the pioneering and historic spirit of the West and they enrich our lives. In 1995, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community passed its own ordinance protecting the wild horses on their lands from harassment, capture, starvation or death. They believe that the horses are an important part of their heritage. The law does allow for humane thinning of the herds, such as euthanasia of sick animals, adoption and birth control for mares. This applies only to horses on their lands.

This April, the Arizona Senate approved a bill that makes it a crime to take, harass, kill or interfere with the Salt River horses.

The Heber herds, which can often be sighted from the Forest Service Roads south of Highway 260, are estimated to number a few hundred. It is thought that some may be descendants of an original wild herd. Others may have escaped from the White Mountain Apache Tribe land and other places when the Rodeo-Chediski fire raged in the area. Management of the Heber herd is shared by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. One concern is over-grazing since much of the area is shared with cattle. On a recent drive on FR 50 we saw two groups of horses, each with six adults and two colts.

I am not conversant with the management of forests or the grazing of cattle. I do know that watching these beautiful wild horses brings me much joy!

## Thanks for Membership Renewals

Three Rivers Historical Society thanks you for your membership renewals. The dues help us pay for postage, the printing of our newsletter, The Quarterly, and the other expenses of doing business. We would like to especially thank our new lifetime member, City of Avondale, contributors, Constance McMillan, Alfred Gamez and W. Kaufman, and business/professional members, Keepsake Trophy and City of Goodyear. Gracias, danke, je vous mercie, grazie and ahéheé to all our members for your continued support.

### Lifetime Members

Bill & Joey Arnold  
City of Avondale  
Frank and Jaime Cavaliere  
Beverly Francis  
Ron & JoAnn Gongaware  
Gloria King  
Maxine Lakin  
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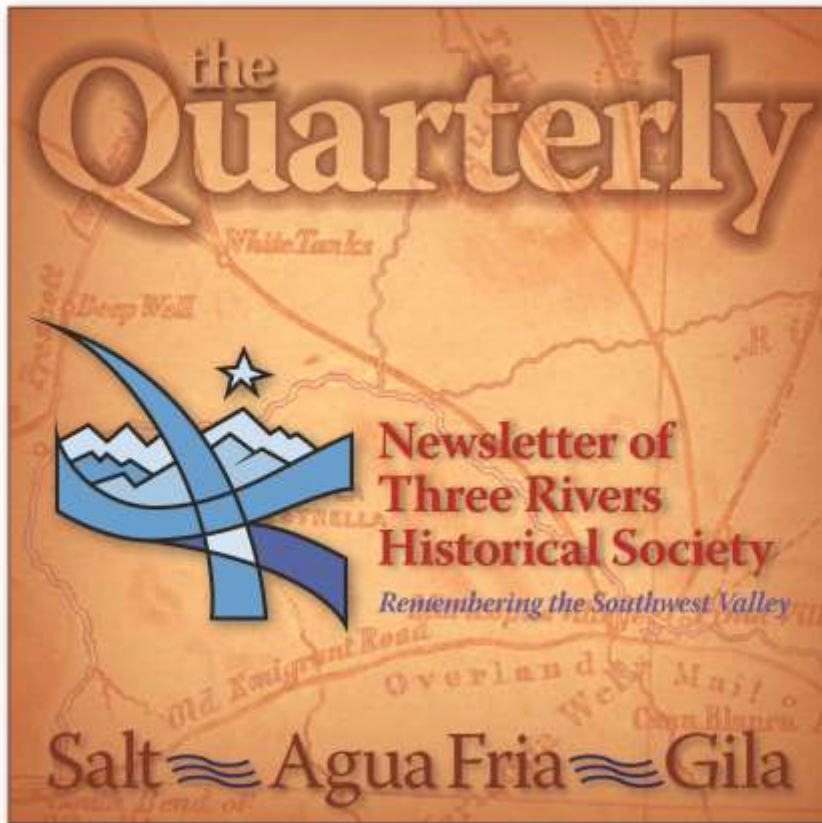
Alfred Gamez  
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### Individual or Family Memberships

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## Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

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## Three Rivers Historical Society

*Remembering the Southwest Valley*

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### ***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](mailto:kskiko@cox.net)

