

Fall
2018

Litchfield Legends

A publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum

WATER: The Evolution of a Resource

by Lisa Hagarty

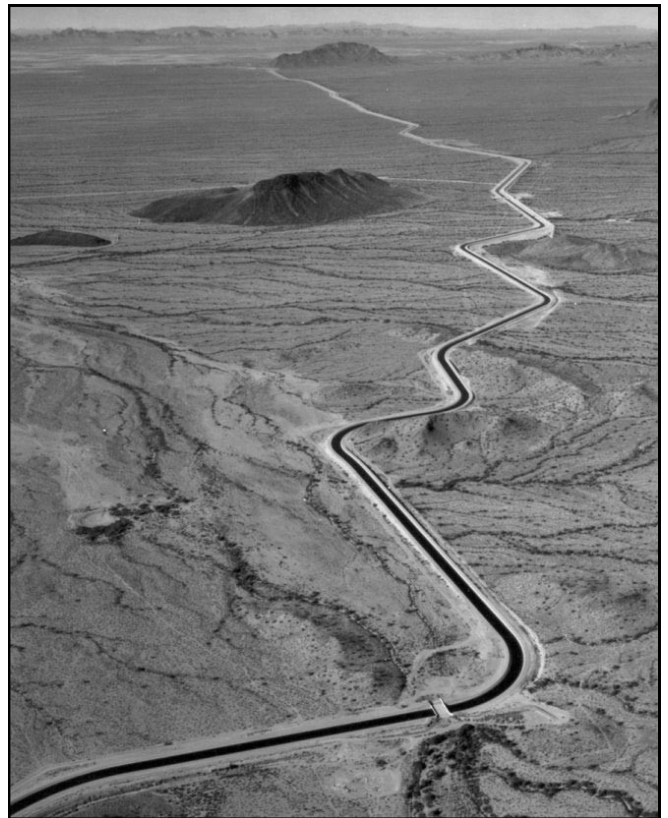
"In the beginning there was the desert. Then man came along and brought water to the thirsty desert soil. The desert bloomed and became a productive garden for the soil was rich and good."

This excerpt is from a February issue of Arizona Highways in 1947 dedicated to "the story of water" in Arizona. Editor Raymond Carlson goes on to say it is a story of "water stored and controlled." He refers to Arizona as a "Southwestern empire" created from what was once "waste land" and calls the feat "an epic in reclamation that has never been equaled in the history of mankind."

Reflected in grandiose terms is a supreme confidence in human ability to shape and control the environment. At this point in history the dams on the Gila, Salt and Verde rivers were complete, their waters stored and managed for a burgeoning agricultural utopia. Yet in spite of the addition of eight dams over 40 years, attention had already turned toward the "mighty Colorado" due to depleted groundwater and lakes. In 1947, the state would've been five years into a 22-year drought and in the middle of a long legal battle to determine what its share of the Colorado River would eventually be, paving the way for the 336 mile-long Central Arizona Project Canal.

Securing a sustainable water supply is still a critical issue today, and the challenges faced in 1947 are still familiar. The Litchfield Park Historical Society Museum's upcoming exhibit "Water: The Evolution of a Resource" opening November 11th, seeks to shed light on our past and current relationship with water both in the Southwest Valley and across Arizona.

Exhibit Grand Opening
WATER: The Evolution of
a Resource
Sunday, November 11th
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal

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Our story encompasses many facets such as geologic events, the sophisticated engineering of prehistoric peoples, exploration, Western migration, unpredictable waterways in cycles of flood

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Special Thanks

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The Wigwam Celebrates 100 Years of Hospitality

1918 – 2018

This past summer the Litchfield Park Historical Society was asked to put together a display for The Wigwam that would commemorate their Centennial Year (2018). Board members Libby Hilton Rouse and Judy Cook spent a little over a month putting together a display that covered the history of The Wigwam's first 100 years.



Nine display panels were set up on the south wall of The Wigwam's Fireplace Room. The exhibit is currently on display and will be there through the end of the year. Stop in and see the evolution of one of Arizona's oldest resorts and trace its history through its many decades of existence. See the early years when it began as the Organization House – a place where visitors from the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron, Ohio could stay when they visited the cotton-producing Litchfield Ranch. Because travel from the small city of Phoenix took one day each way, it became necessary for the company to provide a place for people to stay overnight.

On Thanksgiving Day of 1929, the Organization House was opened to the public and called The Wigwam Guest Ranch. During the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the facility appealed to wealthy clientele who were seeking a respite from the cold of

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Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 21 – Last Chance Event – 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Last chance to see the Los Campos exhibit. For children – make tortillas, adobe bricks, and masks. Additional displays, wonderful gifts (including the Los Campos book) to purchase for yourself and others, and food. FREE and open to the public.

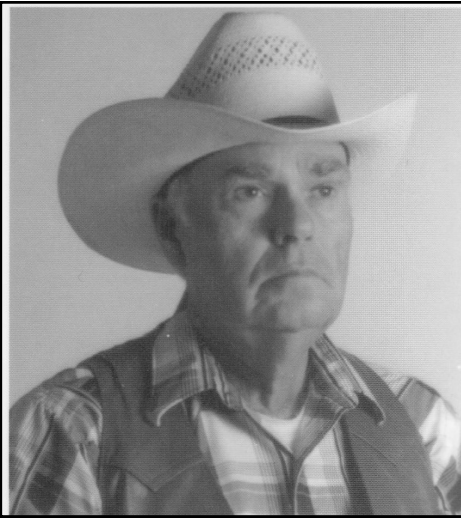
Sunday, November 11 – Opening of “WATER – The Evolution of a Resource” – 1:00-4:00 p.m. FREE and open to the public.

Sunday, December 2 – Holiday Gathering – For Lifetime and Contributor Members – by invitation only.

Thursday, January 25 – LPHS Annual Meeting – For LPHS members – by invitation only

Bill Kaufman Pledge

Once again LPHS Lifetime member Wilbur (Bill) Kaufman has displayed his loyalty and devotion to our organization. Since he walked into our museum several years ago, he has continually demonstrated his belief in the importance of preserving history – the stories, artifacts, and photos. Bill grew up on his father's 40-acre farm in Liberty, AZ, and his mother was a teacher at the Liberty School. He was a 1948 graduate of Litchfield High School and he has authored two books – "Liberty, AZ" and "The Migrant Worker." Bill has contributed many artifacts that have enriched our collections and delighted our audience – young and old alike. He has also contributed money to help keep our efforts going. These donations have included grants to sponsor our exhibits, money to help us purchase a new front door, and a gallery sponsorship to honor his friend and mentor – Apprentice Farmer John Edge.



Bill has recently informed us that he is making a pledge of \$60,000 to our new museum building. Along with that pledge will be a naming opportunity yet to be determined. The new museum will be housed in the former Litchfield/Denny house at the top of the hill north of our current location (Aunt Mary's house). Information about the new museum and Capital Campaign will be released soon. Bill wanted us to share this information with the public hoping that this news would inspire others to consider a similar donation toward this venture.

Every organization has a small group of individuals who believe in its mission and reason for being. These people realize that money is an important ingredient in making dreams a reality. We call Bill our 'angel.' He has always been there for us – helping us in any way he could. Many times he has said to us, "Do you need anything?" "Is there something that I can help pay for?" We are so grateful for his efforts and feel truly honored that he has chosen us to be recipients of not only his financial generosity, but the many treasures he has protected over the years. By placing them in our care, they have found a home in our museum and can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Help us extend a huge **THANK YOU** to Bill! We are so grateful that he came into our lives!

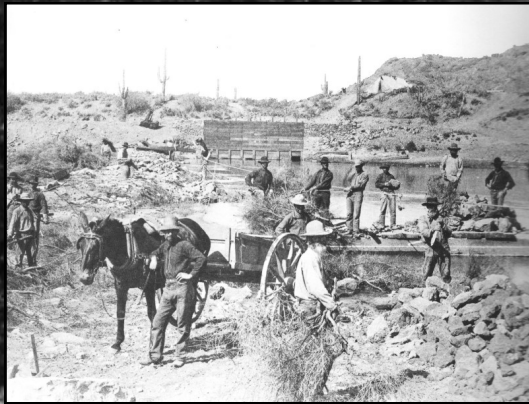
The Board of Directors of the LPHS & MUSEUM

Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce Exhibit

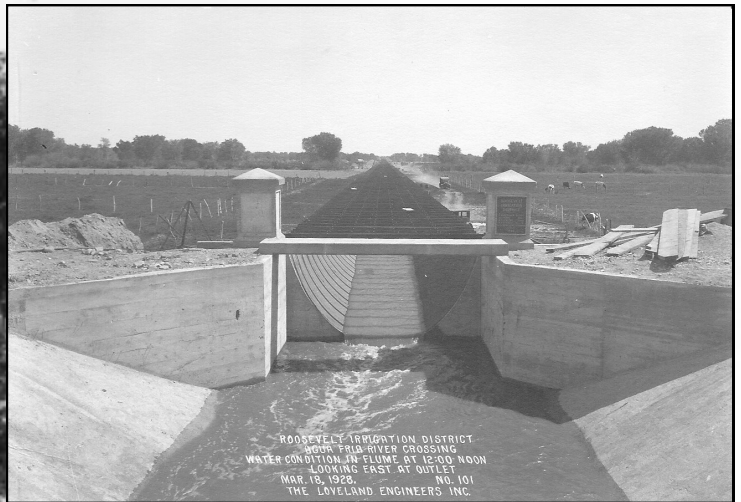
This past spring the Three Rivers Historical Society and the Litchfield Park Historical Society joined forces in putting together a display for the Chamber's annual dinner – **The Swaggies**. It was held on Friday, June 15th, at The Wigwam. The Chamber was celebrating its **sixtieth anniversary (1958-2018)** and wanted an exhibit that showcased life as it looked in the late 1950s in the Southwest Valley.

Three Rivers Historical Society Board member Sally Kiko along with Litchfield Park Historical Society Board member Judy Cook put together the photo display. Entitled "**Remembering the late 1950s in the Southwest Valley**," the ladies showcased each of the cities in the Southwest Valley – Tolleson, Avondale, Goodyear, and Litchfield Park. They included several other topics – Goodyear Aircraft, Goodyear Farms, Paul Litchfield and *Rancho La Loma*, the rose growers, and the move from Litchfield High School to Agua Fria Union High School in the mid-50s. Sally even located a hula hoop for attendees to try. One adventurous person did!





Cleaning out the Arizona canal 1890s
Courtesy of the Mesa Historical Museum



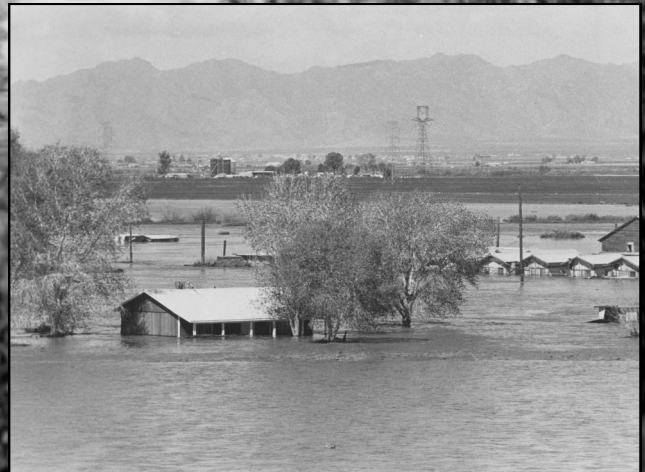
Roosevelt Irrigation District canal, Agua Fria River crossing
1928



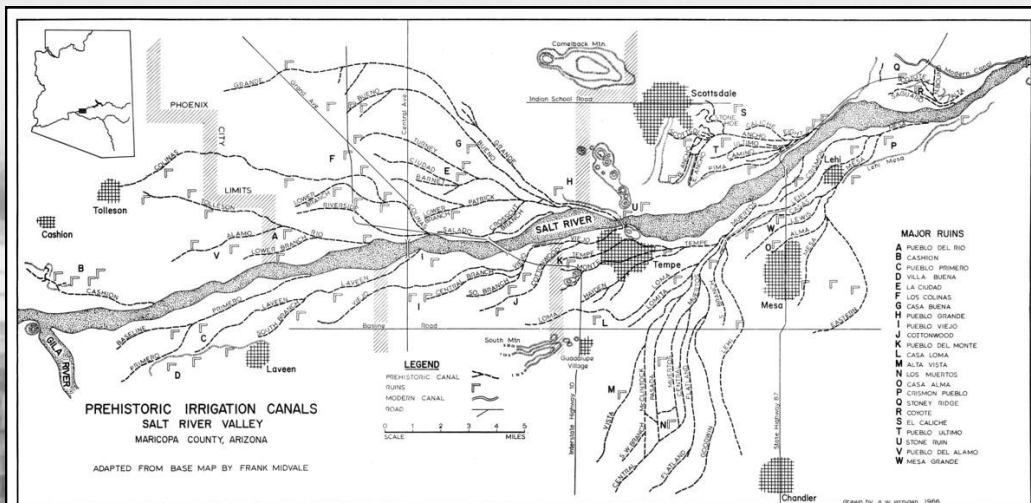
Canoe on the Arizona Canal circa 1920



Depiction of Maricopa Wells, an important water stop
near the Estrella Mountains in the 1800s



Flooding near Tolleson, 1978



Map of prehistoric canals of the Salt River Valley



John Wesley Powell's 1871 Colorado River expedition



Reg Manning cartoon from *The Arizona Republic* February 3, 1947 depicting the demise of the Hohokam and the need for more water from the Colorado River

Flooding at Luke Air Force Base, August 3, 1951

and drought, extensive agricultural endeavors, active water management, and the ongoing search for balance between supply and demand.

It begins with our geography which has a major effect on the availability of surface and groundwater in our corner of the Salt River Valley. Our proximity to the confluence of three rivers, the Gila, Salt, and Agua Fria, and a vast underground body of salt helped create environmental conditions that have attracted human activity for millennia.

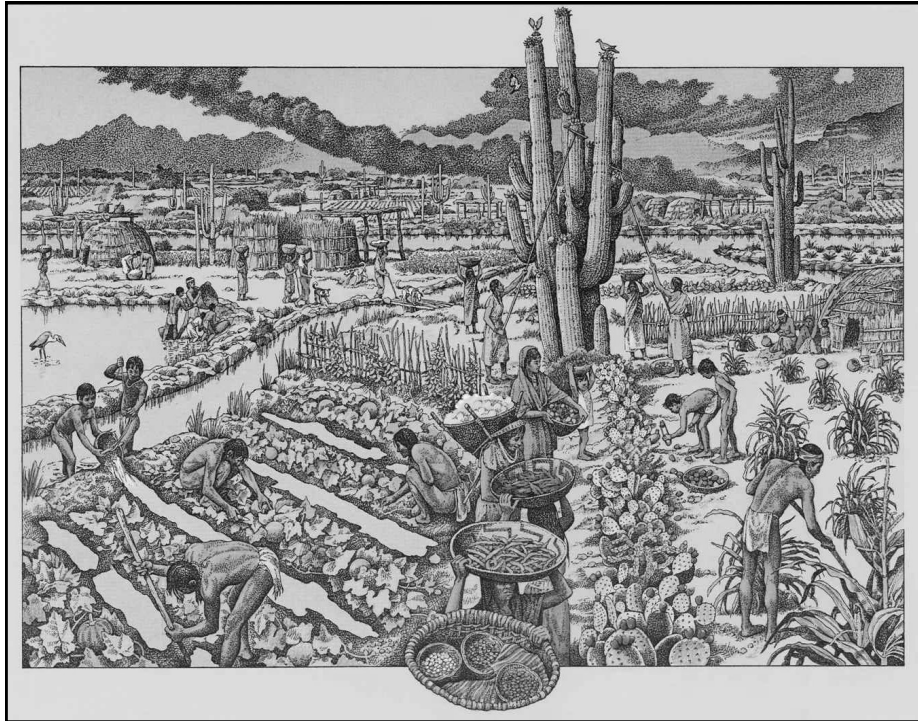


Illustration of Hohokam Farming

The Hohokam are perhaps the best known prehistoric group of the Salt River Valley. Their prolific canal system, now largely lost to modern development, laid the groundwork for the agricultural efforts of pioneers in the 1800s. Enterprising settlers were known to rehabilitate the abandoned canals. Hohokam sites have been documented near the north side of the Gila River at the base of the Estrellas near Cashion and in the vicinity of where the Phoenix Goodyear Airport is today. But predating the Hohokam by about 7,000 years was a group of people who occupied areas near Luke Air Force Base. It is thought that the drainage patterns due to topography along with a high water table created a marshy and biologically diverse habitat, making it a perfect location for food gathering.

The exhibit also examines how waterways and groundwater made travel and expansion through this desert valley possible. Many early American travelers relied on a popular water stop at the south

end of the Estrella Mountains called Maricopa Wells. The Gila River served as a main artery of travel for Spanish explorers, mountain men, American expeditions, surveyors, and settlers heading for California. Though now largely unnoticed, our rivers and wells are still integral to our water supply.

Floods and efforts to control them have recurring roles in the story of water in the Phoenix area and the Southwest Valley. Water projects, including dams and canals, were the solution. Few people are aware of the ten-mile-long earthen dam that protects Litchfield Park and the surrounding area from disasters such as the flood which inundated Luke Air Force Base in 1951. The McMicken Dam was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 1956 and named after Kenneth McMicken, Goodyear Farms general manager and cousin of Paul Litchfield.

On the other side of the equation is the impact of drought and what it means to our water security. We'll examine how we use our water, efforts at clean-up and restoration, current challenges, and what the future of our water may be. Arizona is currently in its 21st year of drought, but the future seems more uncertain now than it did to Carlson in 1947. With optimism he offers this closing thought: "Nature's whims can be circumvented, if man is wise and looks toward the future."

WATER: The Evolution of a Resource exhibit has been underwritten by generous grants from John Donahue and Bill Kaufman

The Litchfield Park Historical Society is looking for children's toys from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to add to our collection. If you have any of these items – please consider donating them to the museum.



Wigwam: Continued from page 2

winter. Open only from to December 1 through May 1, The Wigwam Guest Ranch offered exotic experiences in comfortable surroundings. Campfire entertainment by rodeo cowboys such as Yellowstone Chip and treks into the desert on horseback for picnics were highlights for visitors.

During WWII, The Wigwam was closed to the public. It was used to house pilots from neighboring Luke Field as the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. (along with other U.S. companies) devoted almost all of their resources to the war effort.

Following WWII, the country experienced a time of prosperity. The Wigwam spent the years between 1951 and 1986 hosting many of the



Libby Hilton Rouse

nation's celebrities – movie stars, politicians, and sport's figures. They found an idyllic setting to retreat from fame and fortune and spend quiet times in the Arizona desert. The Wigwam prospered as one of the leading golf resorts in the world.

After 68 years of ownership, the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. sold all of its Arizona holdings in 1986. The Wigwam was sold to Suncor Development; and for the first time in its history, the resort was open year round. In 1990 The Wigwam was

purchased by a Japanese investor by the name of Kabuto. After a major refurbishment, the property eventually fell into receivership. Purchased by the Arizona JDM Partners in 2009, The Wigwam experienced a return to its historic roots and a renewal that has made The Wigwam a vibrant resort once again.

Come and see this exhibit. Enjoy seeing photos from the first 100 years of The Wigwam's extraordinary history and experience the 20th century unfold before your eyes as you travel back in time.

A Special Thank You!

We want to give a well-deserved thank you to **Rocky** and his crew at **LandCare LLC** for taking great care of our trees and shrubs. We always know that Litchfield Park Museum (Aunt Mary's house) will be ready for our visitors, members and special guests visiting us.

Notice to LPHS Membership

A vote for a Bylaw change will be held at our Annual Meeting in January.

Sponsors

\$500 Level



La Loma Village
Sun Health

14154 Denny Boulevard
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



S&S Tire & Auto Service Center
800 N. Dysart, Goodyear, AZ 85338



WIGWAM
ARIZONA

300 E. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park, AZ
www.wigwamresort.com

\$250 Level

Mary Cavanaugh-Marsh,
Financial Adviser, EDWARD JONES

Estrella Rotary Club

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Larry Baker, Sparklin' Clean Carwash

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Victor Fierros, Jewelry by Victor

Rick Hughes, Haircutters in the Park

Peter Mahoney, Park Café and Old Pueblo Café

John Manobianco, State Farm Insurance

Margie Martinez, La Loma Mexican Grille

Mickey Ollson, Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium



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***Aluminum only. No tin cans please.**



Join Us. It is through your dues and donations that we are able to continue our efforts to preserve the history of Litchfield Park. *Become a member today.*

LPHS 2019 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2019 membership year

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Annual Membership Dues ☐ Single Adult \$20 ☐ Family \$30 ☐ Business/Professional \$60
☐ Contributor \$125 ☐ Lifetime \$600

I would like to make an additional Special Donation of: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other _____

Thank you! Please make your check payable to: **Litchfield Park Historical Society**
PO Box 1936, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Would you be interested in volunteering for our organization? ☐ Yes

The Litchfield Park Historical Society is an official IRS 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation, and membership dues and other donations are tax deductible for persons who itemize.