

Fall  
2017

# Litchfield Legends

A publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum

## Litchfield Park Centennial Edition

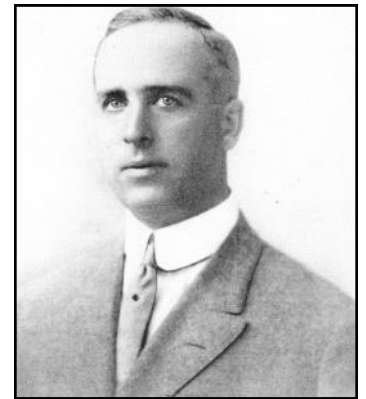
### Litchfield Park—The First 100 Years

Grand Opening—Sunday, October 22nd, 1:00—5:00 p.m.

In honor of **Litchfield Park's Centennial year (1917)**, the museum is taking a look at the first 100 years of the town's history through a series of exhibits. Visitors to the museum can see how the city of Litchfield Park grew from a **small company town**, through the beginnings of an **American new town**, and into the **city** it has become today. These displays provide a wonderful opportunity to understand the evolution of this area of the Southwest Valley. They explain how Paul Litchfield and the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. converted the desert into the cities of Litchfield Park and Goodyear. Listed below are the exhibits you will be able to view beginning on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### The Company Town – Litchfield Park 1917-

**1959:** Litchfield Park started as a small company town that began to form at the north end of Litchfield Ranch (present-day Litchfield Park and part of Goodyear) in the first few months of 1917. Many resources were needed – and all of them immediately. Items such as a general store, business office, school, machine shop, housing for employees, water sources, and electricity were established quickly. As the small community grew, a barbershop, church, café, drugstore, hospital, and pool hall were added. In 1918 a formal plan was laid out by Paul Litchfield and Phoenix architect L.G. Knipe. While never fully realized, the intended purposes for each of the four corners of downtown Litchfield Park have largely remained the same throughout the town's history. This community was designed to meet the needs of the employees and their families of these Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. subsidiaries: the Southwest Cotton Co., and later, Goodyear Farms and Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona.



Paul W. Litchfield

#### The New Town – Litchfield Park 1964-1986:

After Paul Litchfield's death in March of 1959 and Kenneth McMicken's less than three weeks later, there was an attempt by the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. to create a unique city called Litchfield Park. Its design was inspired by the American **new town movement**. An announcement of this goal was made in 1964 in New York City by Goodyear. Victor Gruen and Associates from Los Angeles were hired to plan and execute the project. The proposed city would cover the area from the Agua Fria River on the east to Cotton Lane on the west; and from Camelback Road on the north to McDowell and Van Buren Roads on the south. Twelve villages would be located along the north and south sides with a central core of commercial and public buildings running through the property from east to west. The first village – to be called **Tierra Verde** (green land) – would be superimposed over the old **company town**. Walking trails, a lake, recreation center, and a new professional building would be added to the already existing elementary school, Wigwam Resort, golf courses, and the small commercial area. The work began in the mid 1960s. After 20 years of toil on this project by the developers, Sir

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### Special Thanks

The City of Litchfield Park  
Tim Blake, LandCare LLC  
Palm Gate RV & Self Storage

## Letter from the President

If you are like me, you are probably anxiously awaiting that first indication that summer is over and fall is on the way. For us, this is a busy time at the historical society as we mark the **Fifth Anniversary of the opening of our museum** at Aunt Mary's House on the corner of Litchfield Road and Camelback, and prepare for our fall exhibition, which opens on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The exhibitions, entitled "**The First 100 years of Litchfield Park**" and "**Los Campos de Litchfield Park – Revisited**" will hopefully be well received, and we hope to see you there!

Finally, I couldn't write this without taking a moment to reflect on the passing of a special member of the LPHS family, **Melissa Thomas**. Melissa was a tireless supporter of the LPHS, a member of the Board of Directors, and the first to volunteer to help. When a task was out of her "wheel house," she was quick to volunteer her "better half," as she called her husband Woody, who always went above and beyond to help wherever he could. At opposite ends of the political spectrum, we had lively discussions, but always ended with talk of grandbabies. She was over the moon with her first grandchild. Melissa will be greatly missed.

**Lisa Brainard-Watson**  
**President, LPHS and MUSEUM**



**Melissa Howard Thomas**  
**1954-2017**

Once again the Litchfield Park Museum has lost a valuable volunteer and supporter. In June, Melissa Thomas' sudden passing came as a shock to all of us.

Melissa began her service to our organization in 2001 as one of the founding members of our Board. Always having an avid interest in history, she was a loyal supporter of our efforts to preserve the area's cultural heritage. Although there were times she had to leave the Board for health reasons, when she was present, she helped with many tasks. Among them were garnering sponsorships, writing for our newsletter, assisting with events, chairing a children's activity for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city, and staffing the LPHS booth for Art in the Park. She also served for a time as Membership Chairman and Board Secretary. In addition, she donated \$5000 to establish a fund for a new museum building.

Those of us who knew her were always amazed at her continual good cheer in the face of serious health problems. We all believed she would conquer them. We remember her great joy at the birth of her only grandchild – a boy born last January. Continually sharing pictures with us of this beautiful baby gave her such pleasure. We are especially saddened to think of the short time she was able to spend with her new grandson.

Melissa is the latest of our LPHS volunteers who we all believe now watch over us from afar. She will be missed.

## Litchfield Park Museum Celebrates Five Years of History

On **October 22<sup>nd</sup>**, the Litchfield Park Museum will celebrate its **5<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. Among our many accomplishments since opening our doors in October of 2012, is the fact that we have been a **certified museum** by the prestigious **Arizona Historical Society (AHS)** since 2014. Each year we proudly display our certificate since it has to be earned annually through a re-certification process.

In 2013 we loaned our **“Early Mexican-American Life in Litchfield Park”** exhibit to the Arizona Latino Arts and Culture Center (ALAC) and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office per their request. In 2015 we commissioned Jeff Alderman to create a **miniature of the Rancho La Loma** property of the 1940s (on permanent display at the museum). Our publications include **“Paul Weeks Litchfield (1875-1959) – His Thoughts on Business, Government and Life,”** **“Historic Downtown Litchfield Park – A Self-Guided Walking Tour,”** and this fall – **“Los Campos – The Camps of Litchfield Park,”** as well as our semi-annual newsletter ***Litchfield Legends*** and our new semi-annual publication ***Collectors’ Corner***. We built a website, established a Facebook page, and have provided changing exhibits to our friends and members at La Loma Village. We have also hosted 21 **Annual Meeting** and **“Remember When”** speakers. While these accomplishments have been significant, we have also experienced the loss of several valuable volunteers: **Mike Cartsonis, Sam Fox, Elsie Hollinger, Barbara Robey, Julia Denny Sweeney, Melissa Thomas, and Jim Warkomski**. They contributed much to our success and helped us to become what we are – the recognized museum and historical society we are today.

A list of our exhibits over the past five years includes:



**Early Mexican-American Life in Litchfield Park**  
**STITCHES IN TIME: Local Historic Quilts**  
**Rancho La Loma: A Spiritual Retreat**  
**THE WIGWAM: From Necessity to Luxury**  
**LIGHTER THAN AIR ... Balloons, Blimps, and Dirigibles**  
**PEOPLE OF THE LAND: Southwest Valley Farming Families**  
**Tierra Verde: A Planned Community**  
**PAUL WEEKS LITCHFIELD: The Man and His Vision**  
**EARLY FAMILIES of Litchfield Park**  
**Southwest Cotton Co. and Goodyear Farms**  
**Los Campos de Litchfield Park**  
**Bodas en Los Campos**  
**MEDICINE in Litchfield Park**  
**The Apprentice Farmers ... and Beyond**  
**Paul Weeks Litchfield and the Boy Scouts**  
**The DOCTOR, the DENTIST, and the DRUGSTORE**  
**Jeff Alderman's World of Miniatures**  
**GOODYEAR AIRCRAFT: Arming for War**  
**A Company Town: Litchfield Park from 1917 to 1959**  
**The 1943 Farm Forum**  
**Goodyear Aircraft and Goodyear Aerospace**

Over 5000 visitors have toured our exhibits.

*How many have you seen?*

Make a promise to yourself this year to come to our museum and spend some time taking a look at the

**First 100 Years of Litchfield Park.**

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## Litchfield Park Centennial Coins

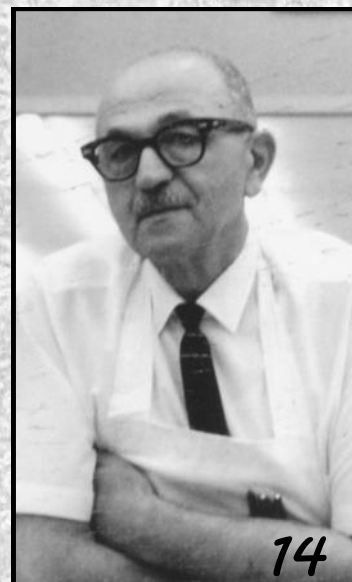
Made from Arizona Copper

Purchase your commemorative coin at the Litchfield Park Museum today. The coin has Paul Litchfield's image on the front, and three bolls of cotton on the back.  
\$20

Commissioned by the Litchfield Park Historical Society







*Can you name these famous faces of  
Historic Litchfield Park?*

*See the answers on page 6*





## Famous Face of Litchfield Park

1. **Jackie Mercer** – Miss America 1949.
2. **Charlie Salem** – the first mayor of Litchfield Park.
3. **Paul Weeks Litchfield** – the founder of Litchfield Park in his military uniform during high school. He was President and CEO of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. from 1926-1940; and Chairman of the Board from 1940 until 1958.
4. **Florence Brinton Litchfield** – Paul Litchfield's wife, for whom the library is named.
5. **Mike Cartsonis** – Director of Planning and Design for Litchfield Park during the *new town* period.
6. **Bennie Gonzales** – internationally-recognized architect who designed the Rec Center, the Professional Building, the triad lights, and the arches that front the commercial block.
7. **Reade Whitwell** – Vice President and General Manager of The Wigwam (1950s-1970s).
8. **Julia Weeks Litchfield** – Paul Litchfield's mother.
9. **Kenneth Bruce McMicken** – primary agricultural force behind the Southwest Cotton Co. and Goodyear Farms; and Paul Litchfield's first cousin.
10. **Dr. Francis Amabisca** – a much-beloved teacher at Litchfield High School who encouraged her students to go to college.
11. **Ramon Soto** – Irrigation Foreman for the west side of Litchfield Ranch.
12. **Sara Serrano** – the first postmistress of Litchfield Park; she ran the general store along with her husband Frank.
13. **Dick Smith** – world-renowned trainer of Olympic diving champions and the first Director of the Litchfield Park Club (today's Rec Center).
14. **Naj Abraham** – owner of Abraham's Market.
15. **John Edge** – Apprentice Farmer from the first class in 1937.
16. **Mary Brinton Tubbs** (*Aunt Mary*) – one of Florence Litchfield's older sisters who once lived in the house that is now home to the Litchfield Park Museum.
17. **Edith Litchfield Denny** – Paul and Florence Litchfield's youngest daughter.
18. **Dr. Robert Hilton** – Litchfield Park doctor from 1941 until 1979.
19. **Dr. George McMillan** – Litchfield Park's first dentist.

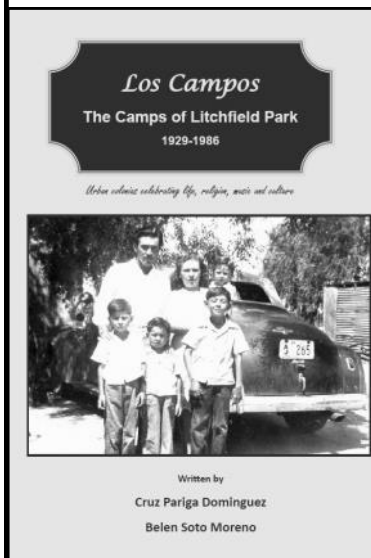
Stop by and hear their stories at the  
Litchfield Park Museum –  
*where the past comes alive!*

## *“Los Campos* **The Camps of Litchfield Park** **1929-1986”**

The Litchfield Park Historical Society and MUSEUM is proud to announce **the publication of a new book:** *“Los Campos – The Camps of Litchfield Park.”* Written and compiled by **Cruz Pariga Dominguez** and **Belen Soto Moreno**, this book is a tender remembrance of a time past and a place where many members of the Mexican-American community of the Southwest Valley trace their roots.

While work at the Southwest Cotton Co. and later, Goodyear Farms, brought these people to this part of the Valley, the book focuses on their life within the camps – the way they lived, their religious heritage, celebrations, education, and their participation in WWII. In addition, **over 300 photos** donated for use by members and descendants of the camp families reflect some of their genealogy.

The book was a labor of love for Mrs. Dominguez and Mrs. Moreno. Having grown up in the camps, the women were dedicated to help preserve this history before it was lost. Three years of work went into the compilation of as much of the history as they could find. Should new photos and history appear over the next few years, they will be included in a revised



edition of the book sometime in the future. The book will be available for sale at the **Litchfield Park Museum on October 22<sup>nd</sup>** – the opening day of our new exhibit **“Los Campos de Litchfield Park – Revisited.”** Proceeds from the sale of the books are being donated by Mrs. Dominguez and Mrs. Moreno to the LPHS to assist in the preservation of artifacts, oral histories, and original photos from the Mexican-American community, as well as the mounting of exhibitions pertaining to the history of the camps.

Don't miss this opportunity to take a step back in time to visit a simpler life and a culture that fashioned a dynamic sense of community. The story of the Mexican-Americans who lived in the camps is one that serves as an inspiration for all of us.

## **The First 100 Years cont.**

James Goldsmith (a corporate raider from England) invaded the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. by purchasing a large block of Goodyear stock. The struggle between Goodyear and Goldsmith resulted in the liquidation of many Goodyear assets – including its Arizona holdings. It was in 1986 that the original Litchfield Ranch land was sold; but the first and only village built (*Tierra Verde*) remained. That area was incorporated in 1987 as the city of Litchfield Park.

**The City – Litchfield Park – 1987-Present:** Incorporated in 1987, the city has had eight mayors; and retains the *small-town atmosphere* that was established during the *new town* years. It is host to many art festivals and events held in the original four-corners area where traffic is closed off and festival attendees can walk safely among the festival and event booths. The town continues to be home to The Wigwam, an historic Arizona resort where visitors can experience a flavor of the past. The city boasts many parks and remains a green oasis in the middle of the Southwest Valley desert.

**THE FOUNDER – Paul Weeks Litchfield:** This display will be a small peek into the life of Paul Litchfield, for whom the town is named. Litchfield was President and CEO of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron, Ohio, from 1926 to 1940; and he served as Board Chairman from 1940 until a year before his death in 1959. The exhibit provides many photos from his life growing up in Boston and his important career as leader of Goodyear when it became the leading tire manufacturer in the world. It also includes a few selected quotes from his autobiography, “Industrial Voyage.”

**Los Campos de Litchfield Park – Revisited:** This significant exhibit will be on display in our Wigwam Gallery. It pays homage to the many Mexican-Americans who worked for Goodyear’s subsidiaries providing years of labor to help make those businesses successful. It is a look into the life and people who inhabited the five camps that were located throughout the Litchfield Ranch property. Also on view will be an hour-long DVD **Voices from the Camps** where visitors will be able to hear these Mexican-Americans tell their personal stories in their own words.

**Medicine in Litchfield Park:** On view in our permanent galleries are remaining artifacts from the careers of Dr. Robert Hilton and Dr. George McMillan. Close friends, they were the company town’s doctor and dentist from the 1940s through the 1970s. Also included in the display are historic drugstore items and photos from the historic cemetery (established in 1917) and the town’s hospital built in 1918.

**Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona and Goodyear Aerospace:** The museum is fortunate to have photos and artifacts from the two Goodyear subsidiaries built at the foot of Litchfield Road near the old Litchfield train depot. Goodyear Aircraft was built in 1941 and played a valuable part in WWII. Goodyear Aerospace succeeded Goodyear Aircraft and became a leader in the aerospace industry.

If you have ever wondered how the Southwest Valley developed over the last century, this is a **don’t miss opportunity** to see the big picture.

# 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**



**Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce**  
**SouthwestValleyChamber.org**



**WIGWAM**  
ARIZONA

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

## **\$250 Level**

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**Financial Adviser, EDWARD JONES**

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PO Box 1936  
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340

Location Address: 13912 W Camelback Rd.

Email: [office@LPHSMuseum.org](mailto:office@LPHSMuseum.org)  
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The LPHS will recycle them for you. Leave them at the garage door of 610 N. Old Litchfield Road, Litchfield Park. The money will help the LPHS pay its utility bills.

**\*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 2018 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2018 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.