

Spring
2017

Litchfield Legends

A publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum

Litchfield Park Centennial Edition

Why Preserve History?

Someone once said, "*The past is our memory – without it, we leave our fate to chance.*" Four and a half years ago the Litchfield Park Historical Society put together a four-gallery museum. We were all under the impression that it would be an interesting story about small-town America – especially since we had a major Arizona resort right in the middle of town. However, what we discovered is that Litchfield Park was so much more. If the Historical Society had never kept and researched the material culture it now oversees – the photos, the documents, the artifacts – much of this history would have been lost to the ages and buried in the mists of time.

We already knew that Paul Litchfield brought the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. to Arizona in 1917 to grow long-staple cotton to help keep their tires more puncture proof. What we didn't know was that **Goodyear Farms** (established in 1943) had a major influence on the development of farming methods and equipment worldwide. The property (stretching from Northern Avenue on the north to present-day Highway 85 on the south, and from the Agua Fria River on the east out to Cotton Lane on the west) became an important center for experimentation in farming techniques. Better irrigation systems, soil and water conservation, crop rotation, improved seed development, greater yield per acre, and the *green feeding* of cattle in feed lots were some of those innovations. However, topping the list of accomplishments was Goodyear's testing of rubber tires and the development of appropriate tires for all sorts of farm equipment being developed during the first half of the 20th century. That achievement alone impacted farming worldwide forever.

We also unearthed a military component to the Southwest Valley that continues to this day. Bookended by **Luke Field** on the north and **Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona** and a **Naval Air Facility** on the south, Litchfield Park became a significant site for the development of air power and Naval reconnaissance methods used during World War II. Over succeeding decades, that influence only grew as Luke Field became Luke Air Force Base and Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona developed into Goodyear Aerospace, Loral, and later Lockheed-Martin. In addition, the Naval Air Facility grew into the Goodyear-Phoenix Airport.

As Litchfield Park remembers its past during its Centennial year, we are mindful of what a unique part the Southwest Valley played in world affairs. Shakespeare said, "*What is past is prologue.*" If he is correct, the Southwest Valley and Litchfield Park have exciting prospects in front of them.

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Farm Forum attendees arrive in Phoenix in 1943 to learn about new farming methods developed at Goodyear Farms.

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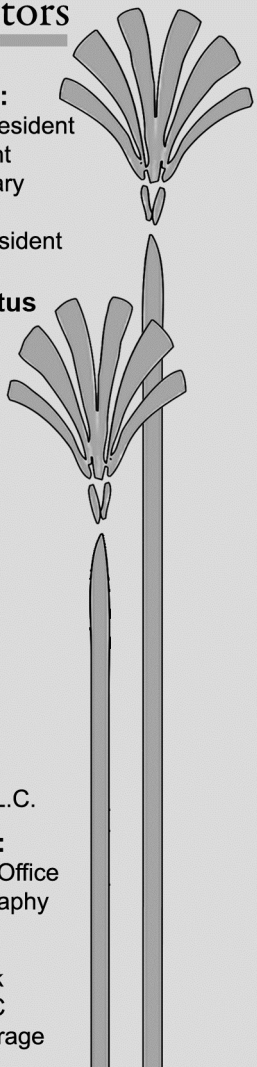
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Special Thanks

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



Letter from the President

We are taking the opportunity in this spring's newsletter to spend some time reflecting on **our mission of preservation**. Since 2017 is the year of Litchfield Park's Centennial and the fifth year of the establishment of a museum dedicated to its history, it is an appropriate time to take a good look at why that history is so important to document. Each year the museum has visitors from all over the United States and Canada. Many return with family and friends to see what's new at the museum. All of our visitors who come for the first time are astonished at how significant the history of Goodyear Farms was in the history of farming. They are also surprised to see the important military facilities that were in this area and still are today.

It's important to remember that we wouldn't have all of this information without your help. Over the years many people have donated photos, documents, and artifacts that are pieces of the larger puzzle of history. Without those pieces, we would not have the stories from that rich tapestry of the past that we are then able to share with people. Before you forget about what you might have in your closet, bedrooms, or storerooms, and before your children and grandchildren throw all of those items in the garbage because they don't realize how important they are to the history of the area, **please consider donating them to the museum and our archives**. We can insure that those items of material culture will be preserved to the best of our ability and be around 100 years from now for research and public viewing.

Help us preserve the past.

Lisa Brainard-Watson

President, LPHS and MUSEUM

Badges Given to Museum

Two **badges** once belonging to the **volunteer firefighters** at Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona were given to the museum in February. Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona was begun in 1941 and played a significant role in supplying aircraft parts during World War



LPHS Vice President, Judy Cook and Glendale Police Department Sergeant Jacqueline Cole

II. **Sergeant Jacqueline Cole** of the Glendale Police Department (right) is presenting the two badges to Judy Cook (LPHS Vice President) in front of the museum's Goodyear Aircraft-Arizona exhibit. The badges can now be seen on display as a part of that exhibit. Sergeant Cole is a part of the Foothills Property Crimes Division. She said, *"I'm delighted to have found a good home for these badges."* We at the museum are delighted as well.

MUSEUM CERTIFICATION

The LPHS & MUSEUM has just received certification for 2017 from the Arizona Historical Society. Each year we must re-apply; and this is the fourth year of being granted that certification. We are all proud of that accomplishment – and know that you in the community are proud of it too. Thank you for helping us make history.

**The Board of the
LPHS and MUSEUM**

Why Preserve History cont.

Since none of us will be here for Litchfield Park's Bicentennial year, it is up to all of us to ensure that the future is well-planned and that the past is accurately remembered. We at the Historical Society are doing our best to preserve that extraordinary history. Our mission is two-fold. First we are committed to preserving the artifacts and archival material in our museum to the best of our ability. And second, we continue to tell the story of Paul Litchfield and the past century to our visitors. Daily our docents see the public amazed at the perseverance of our ancestors – their sense of purpose as they moved through two world wars and the Great Depression. Through our research of what happened, we have seen that changing times worldwide directly impacted what went on in the Southwest Valley. Surprisingly, not only were these people able to adjust to those changes, they were able to influence profoundly what went on worldwide and to make life better for all of us living today. Farming is built on the accomplishments of the past; and today's farmers continue to put quality food on our tables and clothes on our back. In addition, the military achievements developed out here have helped to keep our country safe.



Why preserve history? One answer to that question might be to remain mindful of the accomplishments of our predecessors and not take for granted all that has been given to us. We could lose everything in a heartbeat if we don't study the past and learn from it.

Preserving the History of Old Buildings

The work of preserving history is not limited to the small things - photographs, mementos, and documents. Historic preservation also deals in large things - such as buildings and streetscapes. Cities and towns across America are wrestling with issues of how to save the structures of historical significance that have become outdated or are "in the way" of new development. Historic preservationists argue that saving old structures helps a community retain its cultural identity, and tearing down history does not contribute to the community, no matter what is built in its place.

Safeguarding the special buildings and elements of our community is the responsibility of all of us. Without considering historic preservation during the planning of new development, the community suffers a loss of its heritage, uniqueness, and character. Despite any perceived historical benefit, the property owner has the final decision; and fighting the demolition of buildings is usually not successful. Working with owners is the best method for saving those structures that you find significant.

As a recognized source for safeguarding the history of the area, the LPHS was recently asked to document a former Duncan Family Farms site that was once a part of Waddell Ranch. This southwest corner of Indian School Road and Cotton Lane is now owned by the City of Goodyear. All nine buildings, including the old Pugh's Store, were marked for demolition. Arnott Duncan, of Duncan Farms, asked the LPHS to tour the buildings before they were torn down in order to preserve what we could of their history. To date, we have taken over two hundred photographs, conducted several hours of interviews, and collected old photos, documents and personal memories to add to our archives. Perhaps you have a photograph or special memory we can add to that collection?

This project demonstrates how LPHS serves the greater West Valley community as a major resource for historic documentation and preservation. Sadly, it also shows how easily our local history is lost to future generations.



Litchfield Park Historical Society members Arnott Duncan, Margaret Truman Baker, Karen Krause, Janice Ryan Bryson, and Ken Wood tour Pugh's Store before its demolition.



Scale replica of the U.S.S. Arizona

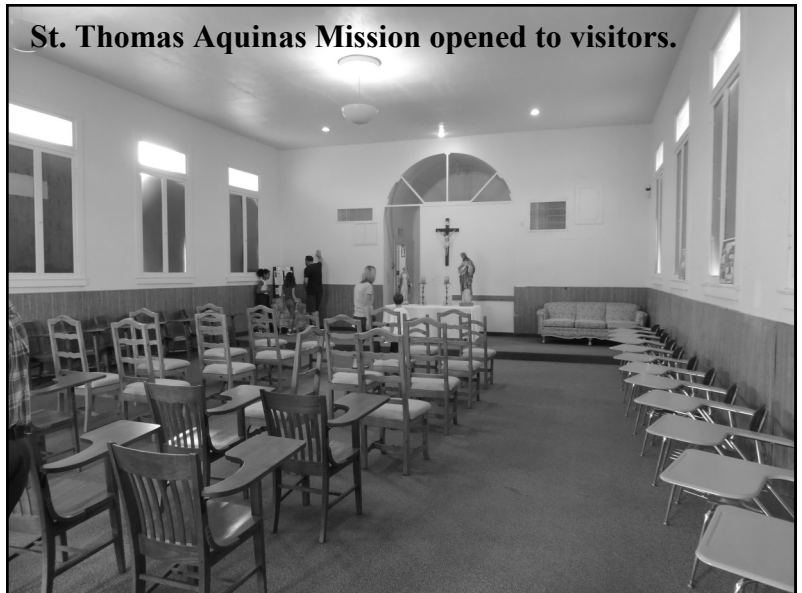


Litchfield Park Historical Society displays

Dave Deatherage & The Desert Knights Band



St. Thomas Aquinas Mission opened to visitors.



Litchfield Park Centennial Celebration



Front door of St. Thomas Aquinas Mission



Ballet Folklorico Esperanza

Robert McMillan, DDS

Bob and Rae McMillan holding Bob's Board Member Emeritus plaque.



In January, the Litchfield Park Historical Society reached a milestone – the departure of a beloved Board Member – Dr. Robert McMillan (or Bob as we know him). Bob has been serving on the Board of Directors since the Society began in 2001. He served as its second President and helped bring the Society's rebuilding of the historic World War II Memorial into reality. In addition, Bob and his family donated one of our more impressive exhibits to our museum in memory of his father **Dr. George McMillan** (Litchfield Park's first dentist).

Over the years, the Board members have come to rely on his presence, his patience, and his wisdom. Bob was always there – at Board meetings, at museum openings, and at the end of a phone call or email when asking for advice. So – the Board was unwilling to release Bob completely from its reach. They voted unanimously to appoint Bob **Board Member Emeritus** status. As such, he is listed on our letterhead and in our newsletters and annual reports with that recognition. And 'yes,' we can still reach him at the end of a phone call or an email.

Bob - we thank you for your devoted service to our organization over the years. But we're not ready to say 'goodbye' yet. *Hasta luego, buen amigo* ...

The Board of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and MUSEUM

Litchfield Park Historical Society Events

LPHS Vice President, Judy Cook welcomes visitors to the opening day of *The Apprentice Farmers ... and Beyond* and *People of the Land: Southwest Valley Farming Families* exhibits. These two popular exhibits will continue at our museum through September.



LPHS President Lisa Brainard-Watson and Bob McMillan at our Annual Meeting.



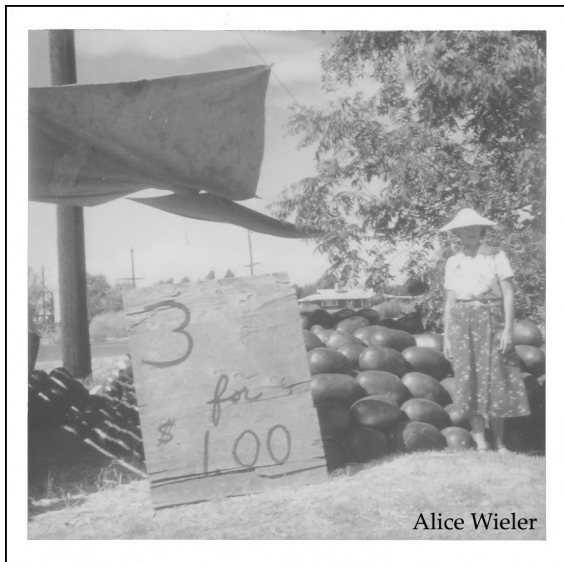
"The Early History of Cattle Ranching in Arizona" was presented by Janice Ryan Bryson at our annual meeting. Janice's wonderful presentation focused on the introduction of cattle to the area in 1540 and how the industry grew. As the 2016 Cattle Woman of the Year in Arizona, Janice continues her involvement in the cattle industry to this day.



Photographs

An Archival Nightmare

We've heard the expression often – "*A picture is worth a thousand words.*" We at the Historical Society agree with that sentiment because we have been able to gather many facts from viewing and analyzing our photographs. However, preserving photo images has become more than a challenge. Early photographs are rare in our collections. We have a few cabinet cards and images from the late 19th century; and while they are brittle and sometimes faded, we have managed to save them. We also have dozens of small snapshots taken with early 20th-century cameras. While some of them have tears and dirt from rough handling, ink stains, and some fading, we have been able to preserve those as well. However, we are most fortunate to have dozens of 8x10 photos that were professionally taken during **Litchfield Park's company town period (1917-1959)**. These were done on quality paper and most haven't experienced severe damage. It may be that they were a result of Paul Litchfield's awareness of photography methods since his father was a noted Boston photographer back when Paul was growing up. Many of them are aerial views – something most archives would covet. We have stored these in archival storage (acid-proof sleeves and folders placed in fireproof file cabinets) to preserve them for future generations. The only problem with some of these photos has been the glassine covers over them which have had to be removed to prevent the image from further deterioration.

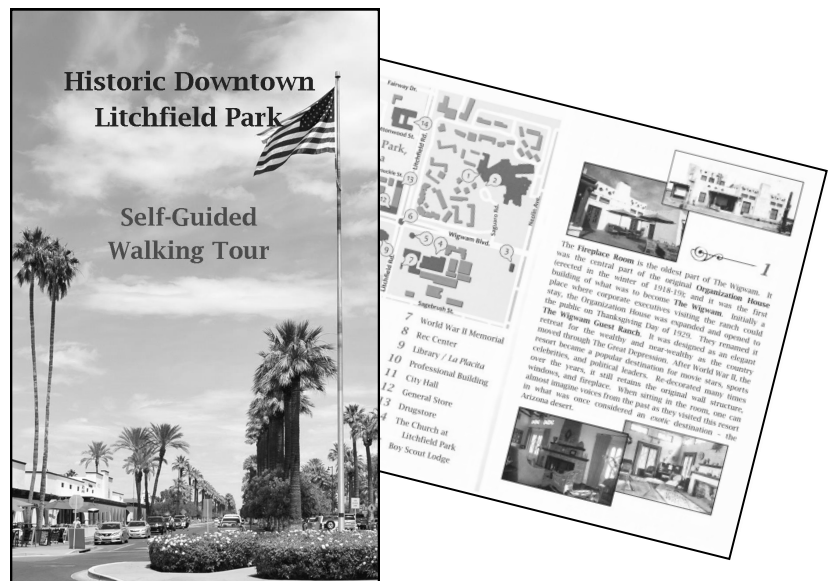


However, once history reached the second half of the 20th century, we have the remnants of a multitude of experiments which presented us with new challenges. Our Polaroid photos have experienced chemical deterioration forcing us to place them in cold storage (literally – a refrigerator) and in acid-proof sleeves to prevent damage to other photos. Then there were those years where photos turned either orange or yellow depending on the chemicals and papers used during the developing process. And we can't forget that many of them were placed in photo albums with sticky mounting sheets and plastic covers on top. We remove those as quickly as possible to prevent any further damage. Then came the decades of ever-changing new technology. Among the many forms images took are slides, floppy disks, DVDs, tiffs, pdfs, jpegs, and *the mysterious clouds* (which exist somewhere). Where should we store those images? Copy them onto photo paper, put them on a disc, a thumb drive, or on a hard drive? Added to those are the iPad and cell phone transmissions which often result in fun-house images that are elongated vertically or horizontally. As with all things magnetic, new issues have emerged. We always advise our museum visitors to save all those precious

hard-copy photos of their ancestors and place them in acid-proof sleeves for future generations. The photos in proper storage will last longer than many of the new technologies they may be using to preserve them. Many people have downloaded those images on discs of one sort or another only to find that part of that image has migrated to another disc or disappeared altogether.

Let's not forget the history of film. First printed on cellulose nitrates, they are highly flammable. These too have to be put in cold storage – preferably a freezer. Add to those the 8-track tapes, thin brown tapes, videos tapes, and the many variations that technology goes through as new and improved things come on the market. Not only does the film change, so do the instruments used for showing them. If you don't have that piece of equipment, you can't show the image without converting it into a new form.

While new technology is exciting in its innovation, it can be a nightmare for anyone trying to preserve the past and be able to display the images. For someone who is looking for a job where no two days are the same and that is filled with constant challenges, preserving visual images may be *just their perfect career choice*.



Historic Downtown Litchfield Park

Self-Guided Walking Tour

Historic Downtown Litchfield Park Self-Guided Walking Tour

Booklets are now available at the Museum Gift Shop!

Each page gives you a historic and contemporary color photo of one of 15 stops in Litchfield Park's historic district, as well as a short description of that site. Stop by the Museum to get one today!

Keep the Wheels Turning at our Museum

Did you know we accept vehicle donations? Support the Litchfield Park Historical Society and MUSEUM and receive a tax deduction by donating your unwanted vehicle—running or not. Additional information is on our web site at www.LPHSMuseum.org or call 844-569-4483.



Litchfield Park Centennial Copper Commemorative Coins

LPHS member Rocky Cocchiola bought the very first copper commemorative Centennial Coin. The coin has Paul Litchfield's image on the front, and three bolls of cotton on the back. Rocky, an avid supporter of the museum, then sold 30 more coins for us. We wish to thank him for his efforts and continual enthusiasm for our museum.

You can purchase your own copper coin commemorating the Litchfield Park Centennial at our gift shop for \$20 each. They make a wonderful gift – for others and for you! Come and see them today!



Sponsors

\$500 Level



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**Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
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Peter Mahoney, Park Café and Old Pueblo Café

John Manobianco, State Farm Insurance

Margie Martinez, La Loma Mexican Grille



PO Box 1936
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340
Address: 13912 W. Camelback Rd.

Museum Hours

Summer Hours; Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Labor Day through Memorial Day
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Also by appointment 623-535-4414

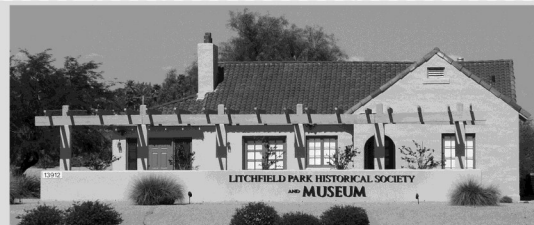
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Do you have empty aluminum cans?

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.



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 2017 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2017 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.