

Litchfield Legends

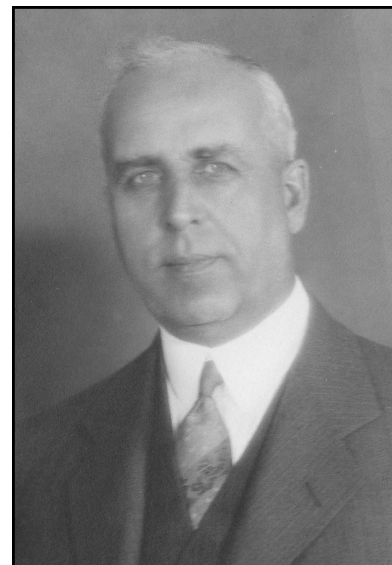
Fall 2013

Produced with major support from
La Loma Village and The Wigwam.

a publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society

PAUL WEEKS LITCHFIELD: The Man and His Vision

Every individual, by living his or her own life, plays a part in the unfolding of history. But on rare occasions, a person steps forward through the fog of daily living and has exceptional vision and, in turn, a profound impact on larger events related to the world. These individuals are not celebrities who flash to the forefront with a stroke of genius or an excess of depravity. Rather, these people exhibit traits throughout the majority of their lifetime that display great insight into ideas that change the behavior of mankind. They come in all fields and from all cultures. They are able to step outside of the details of day-to-day living, see trends and opportunities, and then pull together threads of action to move large groups of humanity forward. In addition, they exhibit a character based on honesty, integrity, and hard work – shunning greed, power for its own sake, and fame. Such an individual was Paul Weeks Litchfield.



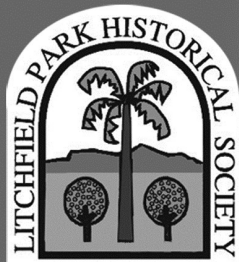
Litchfield had a life-long interest in transportation and foresaw a great future for the automobile. Armed with a degree in chemical engineering from MIT, he became interested in the design and manufacture of tires. Many have said that Litchfield was to rubber what Edison was to electricity. His unending quest for better quality tires earned him a posthumous place in the Automotive Hall of Fame. That quest also brought him to the Salt River Valley and landed him on a portion of land west of the Agua Fria River – present-day Litchfield Park. It was on this land that extraordinary developments occurred – the testing of tires, the *green-feeding* of cattle, the growing of quality cotton (long-staple and Acala), the Apprentice Farmer Program, the Farm Forum, crop rotation, experiments in soil and water conservation, Luke Field, Goodyear Aircraft, Goodyear Aerospace, and the transformation of farming methods by moving farm equipment onto rubber tires. And his interest in aviation led him to airplane tires, dirigibles, and blimps. He was a remarkable thinker – a man who had abilities to envision what ‘could be’ and then make it happen. Opening to the general public on Sunday, October 27th, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. is the exhibition **PAUL WEEKS LITCHFIELD: The Man and His Vision** in the Julia Denny Sweeney Gallery. Included will be many photos never seen before by area residents. Visitors will be able to view pictures

See “Litchfield” Page 3

In This Issue

Page

- 1 PAUL WEEKS
LITCHFIELD: The Man
and His Vision
- 2 President's Letter
- 2 Sun Health/La Loma
Village Galleries
- 3 Litchfield Park Book
- 4 Photo Memories
- 5 Photo Memories
- 6 *Rancho La Loma: A
Spiritual Retreat*
- 7 Hispanic History on
Loan
- 8 LPHS Gift Shop
- 8 Membership Form



Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

Lisa Brainard-Watson, President
Judy Cook, Vice President
Meredeth Stucky, Secretary
Jeff Raible, Treasurer
Sonja Hendrick, Past President

Board Members:

Larry Baker
Paul Crawley
Judy Fulton
Sara Homan
Linda Lamm
Robert McMillan, DDS
Barbara Nelson
Barbara Robey
Libby Hilton Rouse
Nancy Schafer
Melissa Thomas

Sponsors

\$500 Level:



La Loma Village
Sun Health
14154 Denny Boulevard
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340
(623) 537-7500



WIGWAM
ARIZONA
300 E. Wigwam Blvd.
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340
www.wigwamresort.com

\$250 Level:

W.C. Scoutten, Inc.
Municipal Engineers and Planners

\$100 Level:

Larry Baker
Sparklin' Clean Car Wash

**Curtis, Goodwin, Sullivan,
Udall and Schwab, PLC**
Attorneys at Law

Rick Hughes, Lifetime Member
and Professional Hair Stylist at
Haircutters in the Park

Peter Mahoney
Old Pueblo Café and The Park Café

John Manobianco
State Farm Insurance

Seraphim Moreira, DDS
Litchfield Center for Restorative
Dentistry

Letter from the President:

As fall approaches, we anxiously await the cooler weather, coming holidays, and the flurry of activity that results. It is a good time to not only plan ahead, but also to reflect on what we have accomplished this year. In April, we opened two new exhibitions, **"STITCHES IN TIME: Local Historic Quilts,"** and **"Tierra Verde: A Planned Community."** Both have been well received by visitors to the museum. As we draw these two exhibitions to a close, we are preparing for the grand opening of our next two exhibitions, **"PAUL WEEKS LITCHFIELD: The Man and His Vision,"** and **"Rancho La Loma: A Spiritual Retreat"**. They are scheduled to open the weekend of October 27th. Watch for more information related to this opening. As we plan and prepare for this, I am struck by the amount of effort that goes into preparing an exhibition, and am so very grateful for the wonderful volunteers, without whose help, our little museum would not exist. There is no way to adequately thank each and every one of you, but to say that you have our utmost appreciation. Thank you so very much. If you are looking for a fun way to get involved, consider volunteering at the LPHS. Many hands make light work!

Lisa Brainard-Watson

President - Litchfield Park Historical Society

Sun Health/La Loma Village Galleries

Our two semi-permanent galleries devoted to the early history of the area have had a makeover. A new exhibit on the history of the *company town* has been mounted. Included are some fascinating artifacts – a sewing machine for mending leather from the Wigwam, an old ice box, newly-found dental equipment once belonging to Dr. George McMillan, a doctor's bag from the time period (complete with pills), and drafting equipment once owned by Avondale resident, Douglas D. Watson (1932-2013). And ask our docents to show you a piece of bullet-proof glass once made at Goodyear Aerospace!

The second gallery has been redesigned to include more information on the Southwest Cotton Co. Among those items are two maps of Litchfield Ranch – one from 1919 and one from 1953. They present a comparison of how the ranch grew over those years. Also included is a photo of the Southwest Cotton Co. office in downtown Phoenix.

You won't want to miss these newly re-designed galleries. Visit them today!

“Litchfield” continued from page 1

of Litchfield as a young boy, a student, and as the power behind the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. through the first half of the 20th century. Also on view will be photos of the interior and exterior of Litchfield’s home in Akron, Ohio - The Anchorage - along with artifacts and photos from Litchfield’s contribution to the Boy Scouts of America. Laced throughout the exhibit will be quotes by Litchfield himself – *in his own words*. A philosophical and thoughtful man, Litchfield commented on things that are as applicable today as they were when he wrote them half a century ago. Observations about his family, his country, and his business reflect a man of depth. He cared deeply for his employees, demonstrated by such things as recognition programs, welfare assistance, and reduced work hours during the Depression so that he could employ more people. His love for America revealed itself through this radio program “Greatest Story Ever Told” and by completely committing the company to the war effort after the attack on Pearl Harbor.



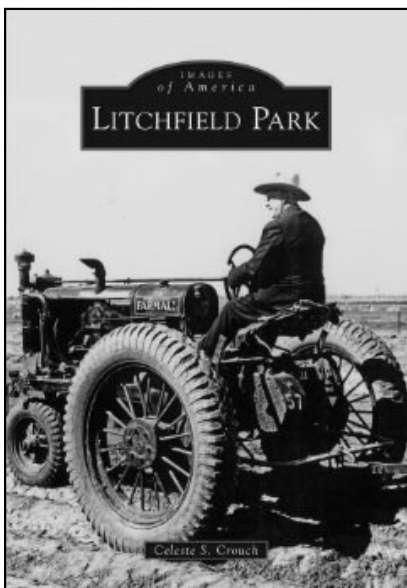
Litchfield was a world traveler when traveling wasn’t easy. Nevertheless, he retained a fascination with Arizona throughout his lifetime. One would have to admit that, without his personal devotion to this area, Litchfield Park never would have been established; and the Arizona holdings were retained by Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. for over two decades after his death.

Litchfield’s accomplishments were many and unique. When looking back over them, one can’t help but smile when reading this passage from his personal diary dated February 12th, 1899 (one year before he was hired by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.). *“As blue as can be, and awfully homesick. Shall never have a happy day while I have this position. Oh – it nearly drives me crazy, and I am so very lonely.”* It is a lesson to all of us who have at one time or another felt we haven’t found our niche in life. Litchfield indeed found his and left an amazing legacy to both his company and his country. The City of Litchfield Park thrives today as a tribute to the visionary Paul Weeks Litchfield.

Litchfield Park Book

Celeste Crouch, local historian and founder of the Litchfield Park Historical Society, has completed a book on Litchfield Park. This photo history of the area is due to be published in November by Arcadia Publishing. Ms. Crouch is donating her proceeds from the sale of the book to the City of Litchfield Park so that it can be applied to the renovation and restoration of La Loma Homestead. This is the historic *Rancho La Loma* property north of the museum that was once the winter home of Paul and Florence Litchfield. Individuals may contribute to this project as well by contacting the Litchfield Park City Hall.

A book signing will be scheduled at the museum and copies will be available in the museum gift shop before Christmas. This book will make a wonderful purchase or gift for anyone who holds Litchfield Park in special regard – either as their present home or as a part of their past.



Did you know? Paul Litchfield grew up in Boston.



Cottage #4 at Rancho La Loma



Litchfield Grandchildren



**Florence, Edith,
Katharine and Paul
Litchfield**



Desert Devotionals

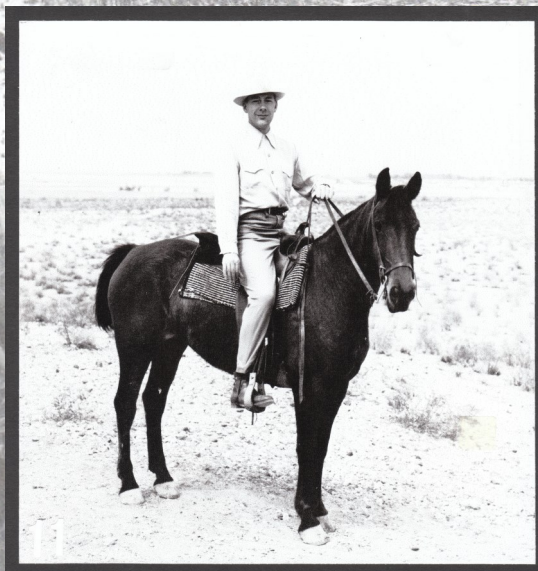
Did you know? Paul Litchfield's father was a photographer and an amateur painter.



Sunset Terrace



Edith and Wally Denny



Wally Denny



Boy Scout Lodge

Did you know? Paul Litchfield placed a large wooden cross in the desert west of Sunset Terrace.

Rancho La Loma: A Spiritual Retreat

A companion exhibit to the one on Paul Litchfield is ***Rancho La Loma: A Spiritual Retreat***. It will be on view in the museum's Wigwam Gallery. The show will portray what life was like on the hill northwest of downtown Litchfield Park from the 1920s through the 1980s. First built as a winter retreat for Paul and Florence Litchfield, it was handed down in the 1970s to the Litchfield's youngest daughter and her husband, Edith and Wally Denny. It became the primary residence for the Dennys until their deaths in the first decade of the 21st century.

Out of the desert the hill bloomed as a garden of trees, plants, and grass and became a sanctuary for over 130 species of birds. It also turned into a personal retreat for Paul Litchfield. At the end of each day, Litchfield and his family would walk down the hill to the desert floor and quietly sit in an area they called Sunset Terrace. Peaceful and secluded, they watched the sun set over the White Tank Mountains. It became a place of thoughtful reflection after the energies of the day had been spent.



Litchfields and the Hydes at Sunset Terrace

The top of the hill had a spot designated as the Open Air Chapel. This was the site of Desert Devotionals – ecumenical gatherings held on Sunday afternoons during March and April. Begun in 1950, they ended with a memorial service after Litchfield's death in 1959. Litchfield, raised in an ecumenical environment and encouraged to attend church services of many different faiths, invited people of all religions to these occasions. A variety of speakers expounded their views in this open-air space – and many church choirs lifted their collective voices in song. So popular, the event drew thousands annually from Phoenix and the Southwest Valley. One Sunday in 1953, Desert Devotionals drew 3,600 souls. The Church at Litchfield Park was a partner in this endeavor and also held their Easter Sunrise Services in this Open Air Chapel.

Four cottages were built on top of the hill: Cottage #1 for the Litchfields, Cottage #2 for Edith and Wally Denny and their family, Cottage #3 for Litchfield's office, and Cottage #4 for Katharine and Howard Hyde and their family. Katharine and Edith were the two daughters of Paul and Florence Litchfield. The first three cottages are still in existence, but Cottage #4 burned down many years ago. The Litchfield grandchildren found joy in visiting Arizona. They rode their horses, swam in the pool, and sat in the Wigwam stagecoaches delighting in the Western flavor of the area. It is no wonder that Julia Denny Sweeney (the Litchfield's first grandchild) eventually made her home in Litchfield Park. Before her death, she spent many hours telling stories to family, friends, and other interested individuals about those by-gone years.

Come and view the story of *Rancho La Loma*. See photos of the interior and exterior of the cottages, the grounds, and the visitors who made their way to the hill. Take a look at Paul and Florence Litchfield at their leisure enjoying the respite of their visits to Arizona. See the lushness of the grounds and the joyous picnics out in the desert when Arizona was a simpler place, and Litchfield Park was still a *company town*.

Special thanks to: **The City of Litchfield Park** and **Tim Blake**, LandCare Unl.

General Counsel: **Paul J. Faith, Esq.**, Faith, Ledyard, Nickel & Shelsky P.L.C.

Research Consultant: **Dr. Gloria Cuadraz**, ASU Office of Oral History & Ethnography

For quality storage needs, the LPHS uses **Palm Gate RV & Self Storage**

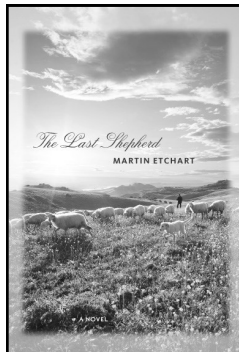
Did you know? Paul Litchfield was a friend of Orville Wright.

Hispanic History on Loan

The Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum is pleased to announce that the exhibit **“Early Mexican-American Life in Litchfield Park”** was on display at ALAC (Arizona Latino Arts & Cultural Center) during the months of April and May. ALAC is located at 147 East Adams Street in Phoenix (across from Symphony Hall). The photo display was one of the inaugural exhibitions for our museum. Enthusiastically attended at the LPHS, it also found an interested audience at ALAC. Requested by ALAC, the display portrayed the Mexican-American heritage of Litchfield Park. These early pioneers not only dug canals, planted crops, and raised livestock while working for the Southwest Cotton Co. and later Goodyear Farms, they left a rich Hispanic imprint on the Southwest Valley. Their legacy can be found in annual celebrations, street names, restaurants, music, and most of all in the contributions of their descendants.

This exhibition is currently on loan to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office at 1330 South 16th Street. This is a part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and has between 700-800 visitors daily. You may view the display at this site Monday through Friday from now until August 1st, 2014. You will find the exhibit in their entry area where they hold their official ceremonies. After August 1st the photos will return to the LPHS in preparation for another exhibition in fall of 2014 on the Camps of Litchfield Park. The LPHS is proud to tell this treasured story to an ever-expanding audience.

Check out these items for sale at the Litchfield Park Historical Society Museum.



“The Good Oak” and “The Last Shepherd” by local author, Martin Etchart, provides a vivid rendition of the Basque culture.

STILL LOOKING

The LPHS is *still looking* for historical photos and artifacts to add to its new museum. Check your closets, spare rooms, and garages.

You may have something for us to treasure.



DO YOU HAVE EMPTY ALUMINUM CANS?

The LPHS will recycle them for you. Leave them at the garage door of **610 North Old Litchfield Road, Litchfield Park**. The money realized from their recycling will help the LPHS pay its utility bills.

Back in the Good Old Days

A recent donation to the museum is a receipt from The Goodyear Golf and Country Club – dated January 5th, 1974. Listed on the ticket are these items: one prime rib (\$5.50), two lobsters (\$13.90), one duck (\$6.00), one surf n’ turf (\$8.34), one top sirloin (\$5.50), four coffees (\$1.00), two cheesecakes (\$1.30), and two sundaes (\$1.50). The service charge was \$4.97 and tax was \$1.15 for a total bill of \$39.27. Our check of the figures totaled \$49.27. Our conclusion – even *back in the good old days* there were people who couldn’t add!



PO Box 1936
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340
Phone: 623.535.4414



NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 15

Join Us

It is through your dues and the many donated hours of our dedicated volunteers that we are able to continue our efforts to preserve the historic legacy of the unique community of Litchfield Park.

Become a member today.

MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

10:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

and by appointment — call 623-535-4414

LPHS 2014 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2014 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

Do you have historic photographs or artifacts you would like to donate to the LPHS? ☐ 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.