

Goodbye Good Friend

Tom Heim 1931-2008

*Summary of talk given by
Tom Heim, October 21, 2008*

Tom Heim was born in Ohio and received a Civil Engineering degree from Case Western. He served on the Board of both the Litchfield Historical Society and the Three Rivers Historical Society.

He started his career with Goodyear in Ohio, working there 10 years before coming to Goodyear Aircraft in Goodyear in 1964. He stayed with Loral when they purchased the company in 1987 for 9 years. He then served as a consultant to Lockheed Martin for 9 years before retiring. Over the years he held many positions: Structural Engineer, Superintendent of Maintenance, Production Superintendent, Program Director, Director of Plant Construction and Maintenance, and Facilities Leasing and Sales.

Goodyear Aircraft buildings were built by the Department of Defense on county land. It was leased to Goodyear Aircraft to build aircraft for the war. Goodyear Aircraft had a plant in Ohio and sent contracts to Goodyear that they lacked space to accommodate. One of the first contracts was with Consolidated, in San Diego to build flight decks. It made sense to make them in Goodyear to shorten the distance to ship



the completed product. Another contract was to build the FG-1, Corsair. They produced 4000 in four years. They also worked on the PB2Y, Coronado, and the B24 and of course, the blimp envelopes.

After the second World War the plant was closed. On January 20, 1949, the Department of Defense auctioned off the plant. With its vast manufacturing space, 107

acres, and \$283,000 worth of assets inside the buildings Goodyear Aircraft got a bargain for only \$475,000. In 1963, it changed its name to Goodyear Aerospace to reflect that it was now involved in the space industry, too.

The original buildings at the plant were constructed in June of 1941. It was completely self sufficient with its own water, electricity, natural gas, steam, sewage treatment plant, filtered drinking water, fire department and security. Goodyear Aerospace was sold to Loral in 1987 and Lockheed Martin took over when they acquired Loral.

The memories of these wonderful years brought tears of emotion and pride to Tom's eyes. Goodbye, good friend. We will miss you, your contributions to our community, and to history.

by Gloria King

Charlotte Melhorn had a Dream

Charlotte wanted to go to beauty school for as long as she could remember. Her German father thought that was unnecessary as she would just marry a farmer anyway. After marriage (to a farmer) and four children, her husband Clarence, wanted to move from Wisconsin to Arizona. Charlotte decided this was her opportunity. At the age of 40 she would finally go to beauty school. After thousands of hours of study and hard work, she opened the Maricopa Beauty School on Western Avenue in 1979 with one student and tuition was \$350. Other students came quickly and they generally had no idea of the work and commitment involved! Today tuition can be up to \$16,000. The school is operated by her son now. A DVD of her interesting life story is available for \$15. To order, call Lenore, 623-536-1597.

Oral History Project Needs You

Everyone has a story and we will help you reminisce. We have the means through a fun and informal video format to help you record your memories for your family and community. We can interview you at a location of your choice and with more than one individual; so invite a few family members and friends for a trip through memory lane. Call Lenore at 623-536-1597 to arrange an appointment for an interview. We have a sense of urgency to record oral histories before it is too late.

Thanks for the Memories

When Anna Mae Bebb, a retiree after 42 years with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron and Goodyear, heard about the Three Rivers Historical Society she told Gloria King about an original Goodyear Tire sign that she had on the side of her barn. She had finally found a way to preserve it.

Years ago, her son Wayne found an old Goodyear Tire sign at an abandoned gas station in Oakland, California. He knew immediately that his Dad, who loved working at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company would like to have that sign to remember his many years at the plant. One night Wayne shimmied up the pole and took the sign. It arrived in Goodyear as a surprise retirement gift via a Mother's Cookie delivery truck which was coming to Phoenix. Wayne surprised his Dad by showing up at the retirement party and presenting the sign to his father. Everyone who knew Russell Bebb felt he had blue and gold blood in his veins. Russ, now deceased, retired in 1981.



Once a Marshal in These Parts

If only for a little while

Goodyear's first Marshal was Meredith Bovee. He was believed to have quit the police department leaving with the town's gun, bullets, and a siren and lights on his personal car. He was believed to have had trouble in several states.

Town Council minute extracts, June 10, 1947

At a special meeting of the town council on June 10, 1947, Meredith Bovee of 3500 Grand Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona made application in person to the Council for position of Town Marshal. After interviewing Mr. Bovee a closed meeting was held and Council discussed salary and working conditions for the position. It was decided to have the Marshal subject to call twenty-four hours a day with patrol duties to be set up after town ordinances were established. The car was to be furnished by the Marshal who began his regular duties on June 16, 1947.

August 11, 1947

On August 11, 1947, a special meeting of the Town Council was called for the purpose of discussing traffic signs and order of same. A discussion followed regarding the absence of Marshal Bovee who had been granted a week's leave of absence. Having received no word from the Marshall as to his overdue absence, the clerk was instructed to contact his folks and obtain information as to when he might be expected back and report to the council.

by Lt. Bill Newman, Goodyear Police Dept.

Monthly Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at Goodyear Financial Building at 250 N. Litchfield Road, Goodyear, AZ. Notices of date, location and guest speakers are generally e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address. E-mail Sally at kskiko@cox.net.

City Logos Tell a Story

Avondale

In 1961 the City of Avondale City Council adopted Resolution 78 recognizing John Lindley Higham for designing and preparing the first city logo. The logo features a stage coach being drawn by four horses. It was stated that the logo highlights the fact that Avondale was founded as a stage coach stop and will give Avondale recognition around the state.



In the 90s in an effort to modernize the city's image, the City Staff created this logo. It was used for marketing material but never replaced the original logo which is now considered the official city seal.



Late in 1999 early 2000, City Staff again wanted to modernize the city's image and still keep in mind the city's history. The current logo was designed to represent the three rivers that traverse the city, Agua Fria River, the Salt River and the Gila River and depicts the mountains that surround the area.



Many thanks to Linda Farris, former City Clerk of Avondale, who researched this logo information for us. We discovered there is a historical story told in the progression of the city logos. We plan to feature one city in future issues.

Excerpts from Two of Our Oral History Interviews:

Twenty-four years at Goodyear Naval Base as a sailor and a civilian

"You look back on the bad days and they all look good.

"I enlisted in 1942 and was in the South Pacific two and a half years. Then I came to the Goodyear Naval Base in 1945...in 1948 I was discharged from Alameda. But, they wanted me to come back as a civilian...so I did. We had thousands of planes to check out. They lined up clear down to Highway 80.

"I was a Section Leader, preserving airplanes when we could, saving parts to use again, or scraping planes too far gone. Pigeons were a problem because they like to nest in the planes. Some thieves broke in under the fence and took parts to sell...they were caught.

"I served under every commanding officer that they had. Someplace I have a picture of them lowering the flag for the last time. Phoenix took over the base."

Pete Deery, Retired Navy



Have You Ever Fed a Lori Parrot?

"I always loved exotic birds...

"I was born in Phoenix and raised on a farm. Before high school I started raising ducks, Love Birds, and Cockatiels as an investment and then as a breeding farm. By my 20's I knew I wanted to raise exotic birds. I graduated from ASU in 1963, and the zoo opened in 1964. I borrowed \$2,000 and bought land (Grandpa's advice) at 83rd and Northern. I got married....moved two old houses onto the land and that was the beginning!

"In 1973 I bought 30 acres and today we have 66 acres. By 1984 Wildlife World Zoo opened to the public. By 1999, I bought the first white tiger and first white alligator...a true albino with pink eyes. They cannot be in the sun at all, so they could not survive in the wild.

"We were the first zoo to allow the public to feed Lori Parrots. Now at least 50 zoos have this feature. Giraffes, which are becoming rare, can be fed by the public as well. This adds a memorable experience to your visit to the zoo."

*Mickey Ollson, Owner/Director
Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium*



Left to right: Ed Buonvecchio, Mickey Ollson, Lenore Semmler

You can get the rest of these stories by purchasing a DVD from Three Rivers Historical Society for only \$15. Call Peggy: at 623-935-9435.

Litchfield Farms Historic Cemetery

By 1916 The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio had attained the stature as the largest tire manufacturer in the world. Most vehicles at that time were equipped with solid rubber tires which were quite durable but transmitted every small bump in the road to the uncomfortable passengers. Newly developed pneumatic tires were able to provide a much smoother ride but were also plagued by tire failures due to the weakness of the tire body. What was needed to make the new pneumatic tires more reliable was a much stronger fabric material for use in the tire body. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company eventually developed such a material or "cord" by incorporating a type of high grade long stranded cotton into the rubber. This cotton was available from two primary sources: Egypt and the Sea Islands off the Georgia coast of the United States.



Paul W. Litchfield

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the closure of shipping lanes due to German U-boat activity coupled with a severe boll weevil infestation on the Sea Islands effectively shut off the supplies of the special cotton. In response to the lack of this crucial raw material for tire production, Goodyear Tire and Rubber began to seek alternative sources for the cotton including the Salt River Valley in Arizona which had soils and climate similar to Egypt. In 1916 the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company sent Paul W. Litchfield to the Phoenix area to see if existing ranchers and farmers would be interested in growing the Egyptian cotton. After a less than enthusiastic reception it was decided that the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company would undertake its own cotton growing enterprise.

In 1916 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company acquired two sites in the Salt River Valley and created a wholly owned subsidiary company, the Southwest Cotton Company, to run the cotton growing operation. One of these sites, the original Litchfield Ranch, was located in what is now known as the tri-city area of Litchfield Park, Avondale and Goodyear. In January 1917, work was started to transform the 16,000 acre Litchfield Ranch into a major cotton producing property.

In order to clear and level the raw desert terrain approximately 2,000 workers were employed, most of whom were Mexican Nationals and their families legally imported to work in the fields. This 2,000 man



workforce along with nearly 1,300 mules and more than a dozen iron wheeled gasoline powered tractors used to pull the heavy drags quickly cleared the land for cotton cultivation. Water to the cotton fields was provided by the then free flowing Agua Fria River diverted through the still operational Air Line canal. As a testimony of the hard work provided by imported

workers, production increased from only 264,000 pounds of cotton in 1917 to over 6,700,000 in 1918.

To provide shelter and housing to the many Mexican workers in the fields, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company set up several labor camps in the area, one of which was even named "Algodon" or "cotton" in Spanish. Although conditions in these camps were perhaps better than what one might have encountered in Mexico at the time, they certainly were not up to our current "modern" standards for health and sanitation. Thus when the great flu epidemic of 1917 occurred throughout the world, the labor camps were especially hard hit. Because of the many deaths of the men, women, and children living in the labor camps, the Southwest Cotton Company established a small cemetery where the farm workers could bury and honor their dead. This cemetery, first established in 1918, is now known as the Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery and is still in operation today. The Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery is run as a non-profit, private cemetery by SunCor Development Company which purchased the original Litchfield Ranch property in 1987. Burial is still provided free of charge to qualifying individuals and minor children. Estimates of the number of graves at the cemetery range from 500 to over 1,000. Unfortunately, many of the graves are unmarked and a great deal of the burial records have been lost or destroyed over the years. SunCor Development Company intends to continue operations of the cemetery as a non-profit, private facility until such time that burials cease and other long term arrangements can be made for the continued care of the site.

The entire tri-city area of the West Valley can trace its history back to the establishment of the Southwest Cotton Co. by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Even the names of the cities, streets and landmarks of the area testify to the great influence the cotton growing enterprise had on the community.



Many current residents were workers for, or are related to Goodyear Farms employees and although development has changed much of the landscape forever, the Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery is, and will continue to be, a well known link to the past.

By Tom Rankin

Depression Glass

In the early 1930's when the Great Depression had a firm grip on the nation, the glass industry started mass production of "tank" glass, now known as Depression Glass.

Color was everywhere - offsetting the gray pall of "hard times." A palette of colors was used in the production of Depression Glassware; a myriad of pinks, blues, greens; deep tones of cobalt, burgundy, amethyst: plus frosted colors, milk translucent, and opaques.

Some of the colored glassware shown sold originally for as little as 3 cents a piece, and all the way up to an outrageous 99 cents. S.S. Kresge, Sears & Roebuck, many department stores and other five-and-dime stores offered four place-settings (20 pieces) for only \$1.99. In its country-wide chain, S. S. Kresge sold nearly 100 carloads of the "Miss America" pattern in less than a year.

The Quaker Oats Company, and other food manufacturers and distributors, put a piece of glassware in boxes of food, as an

incentive to purchase. Movie theaters and businesses would hand out a piece simply for coming in the door. Glass was plucked from an oatmeal box one week, from a detergent box the next.

Sometimes gas stations would throw in a punch bowl and cups with an oil change. Movie theaters got in on the action offering a piece of glass with a ticket to a Saturday matinee.



Three Rivers Historical Society's display of Depression Glass at Goodyear City Hall

Hohokam Treasures in the Lower Forty

By Shelly Rasmussen, a vocational Archaeologist, Interpretive Ranger, Maricopa County Parks & Recreation

These petroglyphs appear to be Hohokam (A.D. 750-1450) and are found along the Gila River, in the Estrella Mountains and in the Mobil and Maricopa areas. The patination of desert varnish shows that the symbol, (below, left rock, faint rattlesnake at the bottom on left), appears to be older than the numbers. The symbol on the rock on the right is also found on Black Mesa, north of Phoenix, and appears to be newer.



The sun symbol (photo, upper right) is a common symbol found in Hohokam territory. This is also a universal symbol found all over the world. Patina on it appears to be very old.

The four metates (bottom right photo) are all portable and were used for food preparation for corn, seeds and beans. The tool of choice to be used with the metates would have been a manos, a small hand-held stone, smooth on one side because of the grinding. The metate on the left is of basalt and would have been used with a stick to grind seeds into flour. The five pestles would have been used with mortars. Both metates and mortars are commonly found near a water source.



The stones pictured above were found on King Ranch while clearing the land, 1950/60s.

Can you help us write the captions for these photos?



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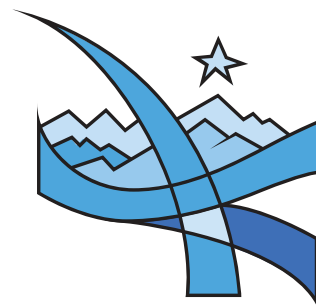
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