



Vol. No 10 Issue No. 3, July, August, September 2013 \* <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

## Three Rivers Is 10 Years Old!

Ten years ago, a small but determined group of people from the west valley decided that it was time to form a local historical society. Articles of Incorporation were signed on August 8, 2003. The following were initial members of the Three Rivers Historical Society: Don & Peggy Jones, Tom Heim, Jean Stewart, Sharolyn Hohman, Marie Lopez-Rogers, Julia Sheperd, Bob McMillan, Stephanie Karlin, Paula Ilardo, Lila Schneider, Nancy Brandt, Nancy Jenkins, Melissa Thomas and Yolanda Gonzales

Rivers were so vital to the early settlers in our communities and three of them converge just north of the Estrella Mountains. The founding members decided that the logical name for this new society was Three Rivers Historical Society honoring the Agua Fria, The Gila and the Salt Rivers. Our logo was developed by artist Bonnie Mostert. The members developed a mission statement, too: To preserve and nurture respect for the cultural history and artifacts of the southwest area of Maricopa County of Arizona, surrounding the confluence of the Agua Fria, Salt and Gila rivers, to enrich our understanding of our beginnings and positively affect our path towards the future.

They applied for and received 501 (c) (3) status and began fund raising, gathering and displaying artifacts and historical information at community events and cataloguing and preserving a growing collection.

Over the years the society has grown and developed. An early black and white newsletter was expanded and improved upon by Gloria King and Ed Buonvecchio. Our meetings, first held at the Chamber of Commerce moved to Goodyear Civic Center when we needed more room to accommodate our growing membership. Business meetings were made more interesting with the addition of guest speakers who tell their story and bring back memories. Thanks to Mark Pelletier, we now have a website that attracts interest.

We continue to participate in local events, bringing historical photos and information about the local communities. We have partnered with the West Valley Arts Council and Maricopa County Parks to build a Centennial Trail at Estrella Park. The Centennial Trail will be a barrier-free, half mile loop with eleven exhibit pads telling the history of the area.

A celebration was held on June 21, at Total Wines. Cake and punch were enjoyed and our guest Speaker Mickey Ollson was most entertaining. Door prizes and a complementary wine tasting capped off a festive evening.

Salt  Agua Fria  Gila  
Three Rivers Historical Society

# 1998 - Arizona's Sesquicentennial

On July 4, 1848, President James K. Polk had a busy day. He started the day by setting the cornerstone for the Washington Monument; he reviewed a military parade, received the ratified treaty from Mexico and hosted a White House party. And, of course, the most significant part of that day had to do with the treaty with Mexico.

At 11 PM, on July 4, 1848, with the Marine Corp band playing on the south Lawn of the White House, President Polk declared that the war with Mexico was over and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was official. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo turned over the Arizona lands north of the Gila River that had been gained by the Mexican-American War to the United States. In addition to Arizona land, it included California, Nevada, Utah, Western Colorado and southwestern Wyoming, too. But for Arizona it was the beginning of a long journey of incorporation into the United States.

Polk had been elected on a mandate of Manifest Destiny and had a clear goal when he took office to expand the United States from Atlantic to Pacific. He had negotiated a treaty with Great Britain for the Oregon Territory and went to war with Mexico over boundary and territorial rights to Texas, California and New Mexico. In a little more than three years, he had doubled the size of the United States and created a nation of vast resources and wealth.

This Arizona Territory, although first joined to the New Mexico Territory, was rich in minerals, forests, grasslands and good soil. It was strategically located along two transcontinental trails, like the Butterfield Stage Coach route, and had begun to attract pioneers from the United States. They had begun to settle in Arizona and wisely adopted the Mexican and Indian customs, building with adobe and irrigating their farms. But the new settlers found the natives resistant to anyone else living on their land. A 40-year Indian war caused hardships for the early settlers but they remained determined and prevailed. They gained Territorial status in 1862, separate from New Mexico and statehood in 1912.

## *Mary Jo McCully – Long Time Resident*

Mary Jo's daughter-in-law was the one that alerted me that Mary Jo had an interesting story and that I should get her to tell it. So, at long last, I did get her story. We had a lot of fun remembering the towns of Goodyear and Avondale "back in the day," of growing up in the "old subdivision" in Goodyear, of neighbors either moved away or deceased.

Mary Jo was born in Wichita Falls, Texas. When she was nineteen she came to Arizona, first staying with her sister and brother-in-law, who were stationed at Luke at the time. Her first job in the area was at Goodyear Aircraft Corporation; she worked there with her sister Billie Tom Campbell Taylor. It was in full production in those war years. She was a "bucker" which she explained was on the other side of the riveter. During those same years, a young man named Max McCully worked at Goodyear as a tool and die maker, but with thousands of employees and working in different areas, different shifts, they didn't meet. In 1946, with the war ended, Goodyear abruptly stopped production and closed the plant in Goodyear.

Of course, Mary Jo had to find another job. And soon she did. She was hired to do clerical work at Poston Japanese Internment Camp. With the end of the war, the camp was being closed, but they needed workers to clean up the loose ends and attend to the business of closing the facility. The person who hired Mary Jo and another lady

instructed them to meet their “ride” to Poston on the steps of the Main Post Office in Phoenix. The “ride” turned out to be a young man named Max McCully, a fireman recently hired at Poston. Well, it didn’t take Mary Jo long to decide that this was the guy for her, so on March 10, 1946, Max and Mary Jo were married by a Baptist Minister in Phoenix.

Max McCully was born in Aumsville, Oregon. Many of the men in his family were loggers. His mother lost her first husband at a young age due to a fatal logging accident. She also lost her first infant; the baby was breech and the doctor was unable to deliver it alive. Heartache was not a stranger to her in her young life. However, she remarried and Max was a son of that second union.

Max had spent the years before the War helping his mother run a boarding house in Prescott. He came to Goodyear to work as a tool and die maker at Goodyear Aircraft. He bought a brand new home at 201 Los Robles, Goodyear in 1942, built by Dell Webb. The housing was built to accommodate the influx of workers that had come to work at GAC. He and his mother, Tresie McCully, lived in the house prior to his marriage. Mary Jo remembered that the home’s original price was \$3,400. Tresie continued to live with Max and Mary Jo much of the time. She was an accomplished pianist and played for the Sunday school at Avondale Community Church. She also worked at the Goodyear Post Office when it first opened in 1944.

The next few years brought children into Max and Mary Jo’s family; first a son, Perry and then daughters, Lynn and Dana. After Poston, Max worked primarily as a machinist for the Arizona Army National Guard. When the children were young, Mary Jo was a stay at home mom as most moms were in those days. As they grew older she went to night school to learn floral arranging. She worked for a while with a florist in Phoenix, but when White Shears Florist opened in Avondale, she worked there. Max, by trade a machinist, could weld and do almost anything with metal. He was also an accomplished carpenter, adding furniture, built-in bookcases and converting the garage into more living space for his family. In addition, he served on the Goodyear Volunteer Fire Department for many years, ten years as Fire Chief.

One of the stories Mary Jo told me that made me chuckle was about their first television set. At that time their next door neighbors were Bill and Doris Rhodes and their children. Television was pretty new and not all families had them, but the Rhodes family had a TV. Max came home from work one day to see HIS children with their faces up to the Rhodes’ window watching their TV. No more of that! He bought them a TV. I know how they felt; I think we were the last family in America to get a television.

Max passed away in 1996, just short of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Mary Jo remains quite active. She volunteers three days a week at the Tolleson Food Bank and is a member of the Three Rivers Historical Society. She has six grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren. Her children live in the Valley; her son, Perry lives in Goodyear, daughter, Lynn in Cashion and Dana in northeast Phoenix. She still lives in the house that Max purchased in 1942. Seventy one years in the same house must be a record, at least for Goodyear.

All of our lives are a story. Sometimes we think we are just “regular” people and our story isn’t interesting; that only famous people are interesting. WRONG! What’s your story?

*Submitted by Sally Kiko*

## ***S & H Green Stamps – We Loved ‘em!***

Those of us over the age of 50/60 remember the stamps that merchants gave to customers as an incentive to keep coming back. Sperry & Hutchinson were distributors of Green Stamps. They made money when retailers bought the stamps from them, then the retailers kept customers loyal by giving them stamps for each purchase. The more you bought the more stamps you got. Eventually you saved enough stamps to lick and paste in a free book. Then of course, you would go to the redemption center and pick out the item that you saved for. It was like a free gift!

The program reached its zenith in the mid 60's. They were printing three times as many stamps as the US Postal Service and its catalog was possibly the largest single publication in the country. It was estimated that 80 percent of US households collected stamps of one sort or another. This created an annual market for S&H of about \$825 million. Not bad! Naturally, others decided to jump on this band wagon. Along came Blue Chip, Plaid, Top Value, King Korn and a bunch of others giving their own stamps. It was a very popular game that everyone enjoyed.

Do you have S&H Green Stamps someplace around the house? You can still trade them in for cash or merchandise. Cash Value of 1,200 stamps is \$1.20 or you can get a catalog by calling them at 1-800-435-5674. Excerpts from: straightdope.com

**Marty Vaccaro, 3RHS video man, shared a story** he recently read in the book, *Inside STAR TREK, The Real Story*. The following are excerpts from the book.

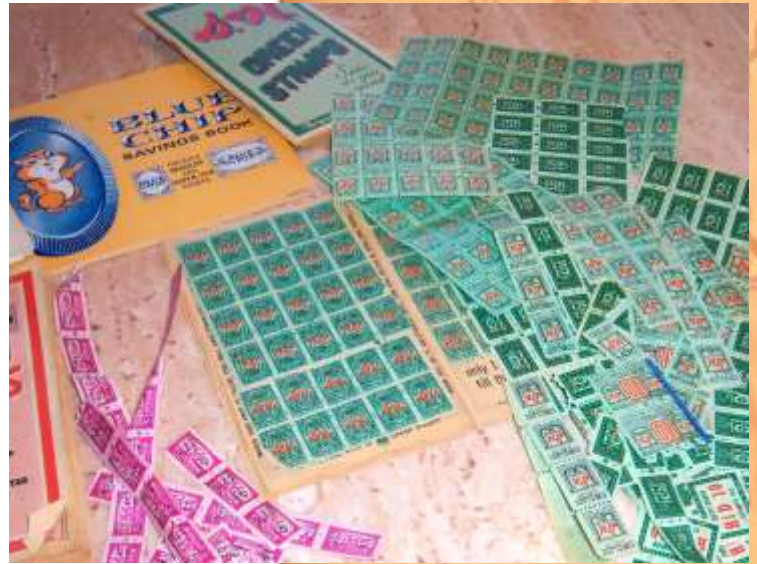
The absolute rage of the country was stamps. Not postage stamps, not food stamps, not rubber stamps. The rage was S&H Green and Blue Chip merchants stamps. Whatever, wherever you bought merchandise, you received stamps! These stamps became so important in people's lives that, during the disastrous Bel Air, CA fire, some victims fled their million-dollar homes clutching their Green or Blue Chip Stamp books...leaving behind their stocks, bonds, irreplaceable family photos, valuable paintings...

The studio cars were required, by union rules, to be used for all our travels. Desilu Transportation Dept. had an arrangement with the Shell gasoline station at the corner of Melrose Avenue and Cahuenga Blvd., near the studio. When the studio vehicles needed gas they drove to the Shell station, filled up and said, "Desilu charge."

In a Board of Directors meeting the usual topic of money was brought up. Lucy was there. She said, "Herb, I'm concerned." Herb replied, "I am also, Lucy, but I think we are headed in the right direction." Lucy said, "Not that, Herb. The stamps." He replied, "What?" Lucy says: "The stamps, Herb, who's getting all the stamps?" Again Herb says, "What stamps?" "The Green Stamps, Herb, who's getting all the g.d. Star Trek and Mission Impossible Green Stamps from the Shell Station?"

The studio losing hundreds of thousands of dollars wasn't as important as those g.d.Green Stamps.

***Submitted by Gloria King***



# THE COLDWATER STEAMER

It was a scene reminiscent of a Rockwell Saturday Evening Post cover. Kids running, and on bicycles, accompanied by their barking and howling dogs, playing chicken with the hissing machine lumbering along old Yuma Road. Larger than a car, smaller than a truck, the “Stanley Steamer” was a major attraction in 1940's Avondale, which prior to 1946 was known as Coldwater.

Two brothers, Don and Art Phillips, owned and operated a gas station (I think it was a Gulf Station) and auto repair garage at what is now 617 East Western in Avondale. They also owned a “Stanley Steamer” built by the Stanley Motor Carriage Company of Newton, Massachusetts. The steam powered automobile had several nicknames including “The Flying Teapot” and the “Coffin Nose”. Actually, the brothers Phillips owned two steamers. One to drive very slowly up and down Yuma Road. The other to provide parts to keep the first one running. How Coldwater came to be the home of two Steamers, I’ll never know, but since the company only operated from 1902 to 1924, and never built more than 500 cars in a year, the fact that two of them ended up in Avondale, a town of only about fifteen hundred people is a mystery.

We lived on the southwest corner of what is now Dysart Road and Riley Drive, but when the brothers fired up the Steamer we could hear the whistle, almost as loud as the Southern Pacific steam engines that rolled through town several times a day. The Steamer’s whistle had a higher pitch than the railroad engines, so it was easy to tell that Art and Don were out cruising. All of the kids in town viewed the whistle as an invitation to come and watch the spectacle. Because the Steamer never went very fast, it was not unusual for the kids running alongside to work up the courage to dodge the hissing of the pressure relief valve and jump on the running board for a short ride before being shooed off by one of the brothers, who were always dressed in blue and white striped overalls (often greasy from the day’s work) and newsboy caps as though that were their uniform.

Before Art and Don showed up with Steamers, no one that I knew had ever seen, or even heard of, a steam powered automobile, so it was an attraction that the kids couldn’t resist. Grownups, too. It seems that, whenever the whistle blew, the whole town would turn out. Since we only had movies three days a week and softball in the summertime, we were easy to entertain.



In that vein, during the same time frame that the “Steamer” was a major provider of our entertainment, there was a musical group from Glendale who would occasionally set up their band in the paved lot of Harry Meeker’s Chevron Station and play country and western music. They called themselves the Lone Star Playboys. Usually a crowd of thirty to forty people would gather around and listen. Every so often, Judge Burns (I don’t think he was a real judge, but that’s what we called him) would pass the hat around and people would put in what spare change they had. Occasionally a dollar bill would show up. One night in (probably) 1947 or 1948 they brought a new member of the band. He was a singer. Everyone agreed that he was pretty good. The next time

the band showed up, they had changed their name. The new name was Marty Robbins and The Lone Star Playboys.

*Submitted by Frank Ross*



1950: Number of Drive In movie theaters reaches 2200.

Pres. Truman sends troops to South Korea

Charles Schultz starts Charlie Brown/Peanuts comic strip

1951: CBS introduces the eye logo

I Love Lucy debuts

1952: Mr. Potato Head, Frosted Flakes & Tony the Tiger were introduced

Elizabeth II begins her reign as Queen of England

The occupation of Japan ends

1953: Dwight D. Eisenhower takes office

25<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards televised for the first time

Chevrolet introduces the Corvette

The first issue of Playboy published in December featuring Marilyn Monroe.

1954: Hank Aaron breaks into the Milwaukee Braves lineup

Lassie debuts on television

Davie Crockett becomes a national craze

Do-it-yourself and Sci-fi are coined

1955: Disneyland opens in California

The Mickey Mouse Club debuts on TV

James Dean dies in a car accident

Ford introduces the Thunderbird

Rosa Lee Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama

1956: Elvis Presley begins his recording career

Grace Kelly marries Prince Rainier of Monaco

Ringling Bros & Barnum & Bailey performs its last tent circus

The TV show, "The Price is Right," premieres

1957: Dick Clark introduces American Bandstand

The Frisbee and transistor radios come out

Pres. Eisenhower sends troops to help with desegregation in the south

Russia launches the first orbiting satellite, Sputnik 1.

"Leave it to Beaver" premieres on TV

1958: U S launches first satellite, Explorer 1

Brooklyn Dodgers become the Los Angeles Dodgers

Congress creates NASA

Johnny Unitas and the Baltimore Colts beat New York Giants in the first sudden-death overtime championship

1959: Alaska becomes the 49<sup>th</sup> state

Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, & "The Big Bopper" are killed in a plane crash in Iowa

Mattel introduces Barbie

Hawaii becomes the 50<sup>th</sup> state

Wilt "the Stilt" Chamberlain debuts with the Philadelphia Warriors



# Airline Restaurant, 1940's

## *Russell Stair, Owner*

**Western Avenue was downtown!** On the corner of Western Avenue and Litchfield Road was Bowman's Drugstore and next door was Abraham's Market: both built by The Southwest Cotton Company. The soda fountain in the drugstore was a "meeting place" for kids after school.

The U. S. Post Office building was built to the east of the market. There was no home delivery so everyone went "downtown" daily.

New construction began when Mr. Litchfield made the decision to sell some of the company land. Russell Stair jumped at the opportunity and bought the first lot which was 32 x 50'. He asked Jim King to build a restaurant which he named the Airline Restaurant. Then Jim King bought the second property sold and built Goodyear Variety & Hardware Store. Next, First National Bank was added to this prime business area.

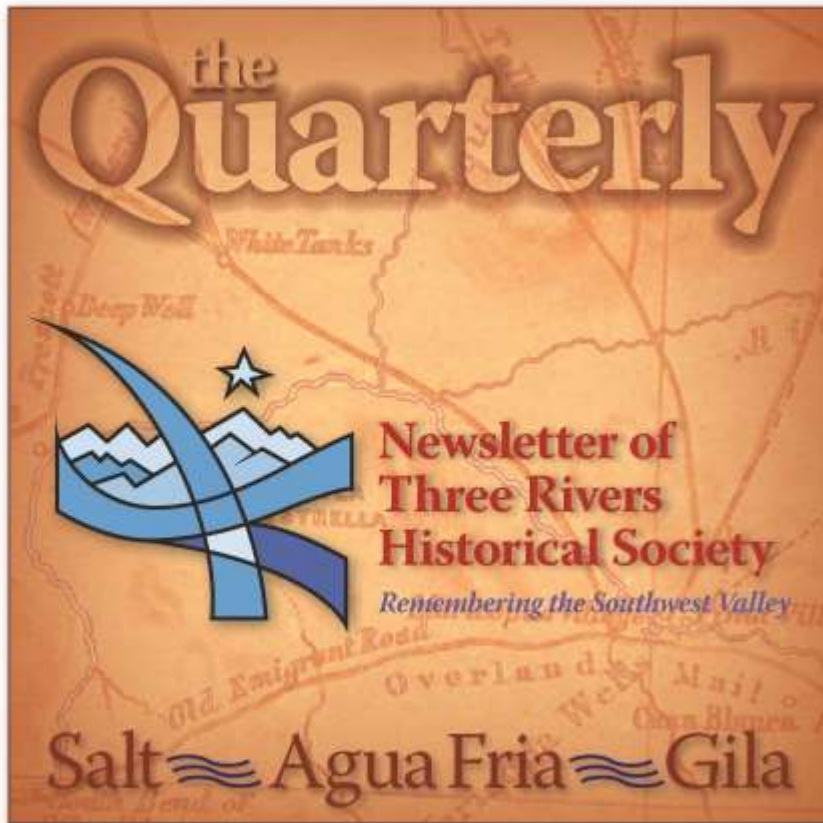
Gloria's reminder of how new businesses came to "downtown" Goodyear sparked memories from folks that grew up here. Lenore Semmler remembers the big jar of dill pickles on top of the counter in the meat department at Abraham's market. When she was going to weekly after-school classes for Confirmation she would stop in to buy a pickle because she didn't have time to go home for a snack. She also remembers a time when she had a cousin visiting and not having but a few coins in his pocket he bought a Coke with two straws and they shared a Coke.

Sally Kiko remembers one of her best friends in school, Carole Towle; her father was the Manager at Abraham's, her mother was the cashier and an uncle was the butcher. They sold hot dogs by the link and cheese was cut to order off a big wheel. At that time only groceries were sold there. Bowman's Drug Store next door carried personal care products like toothpaste, soap, and paper products. Oz Bowman the owner of the business was good at making sure the kids that wanted an education and were willing to work for it had a summer job at his store. I worked mainly the soda fountain but could also pitch in and work the "floor" even if that meant that I, who was underage, sold cigarettes to the other underage kids. I don't remember any fear of enforcing that law. We also worked over the Christmas vacation doing the inventory. It was a going to be a long day if you had to count the seed packages or greeting cards!

Sally also remembers the excitement of the first Café opening in Goodyear. Even though not many families went out to dinner with any regularity it was a nice treat for a special occasion. The opening of the Goodyear Variety and Hardware store was even greater news. Now household items, fabric and dress patterns were available locally. Paint, tools, and hardware items available locally were important to the community, too.

*Submitted by Gloria King*





## Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5*       | <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$15*                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25*       | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional \$45* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$100* | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$250*           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$500     | * <i>Yearly Fee</i>                                  |

Join \_\_\_\_\_ Renew \_\_\_\_\_ Call me to volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

A receipt will be issued to you.

Make out your check and mail to:

Three Rivers Historical Society,  
P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

Three Rivers Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3  
non-profit organization



## Three Rivers Historical Society

*Remembering the Southwest Valley*

P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

**Sally Kiko, President**

**JoAnn Gongaware, 1st V.P.**

**Ken Wood, 2nd V.P.**

**Wendy Neely, Secretary**

**David Meese, Treasurer**

**Frank Ross, Past President**

**Mark Pelletier, Lenore Semmler**

*The Quarterly*

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### *3RHS Meetings*

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear City Hall, 190 North Litchfield Road, Suite 117, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest speaker are e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address. E-mail Sally at: [kskiko@cox.net](mailto:kskiko@cox.net)