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Billy Moore Days - 55 Years of Fun!

The year was 1954, and the local Chamber of Commerce hosted its very first Billy Moore Days Parade and festival. William "Billy" Moore came to Arizona in the 1867. He eventually made his way to the west banks of the Agua Fria River and established a stage coach station. He added a General Store and became the post master of the town he named Coldwater. Billy Moore Days was an opportunity for the local communities to celebrate this hardy pioneer and begin a tradition that lasted 55 years. It was also an opportunity for the local merchants to bring in new business.



Weeks in advance of the celebration local men began growing their beards to get in the spirit of the event started. There was a prize for the best beard. No cheating; you had to be clean shaven the day before the official start day! Western wear was the dress of the day as the shop keepers and business men added to the spirit of the event.

In the early days of the parade many businesses and local organizations decorated floats and participated in the festivities. It was usually held in October when the weather moderated a bit. Organizations often used flatbed truck trailers as the base of their float. Depending on the cotton harvest, it might be difficult to find a farmer that could spare a trailer. All the decorations were locally done and really quite artistic. There were prizes awarded to the best float or parade entry. The area schools marching bands marched and played their best in the parade. Oh, and, since it was a western theme, equestrian units participated, too.

Even before the day of the parade, the beautiful young ladies in town entered the Miss Billy Moore Days contest. The winner went on to compete in the Miss Maricopa County. So winning locally could eventually lead to Miss America if the young lady won each level of competition.

Other activities included booths sponsored by the local businesses and organizations that sold food, soft drinks, ice cream and the usual festival items and of course carnival rides. Some years there were dances and other activities, too. To be sure, a good time was had by all. Somewhere along the line, the City of Avondale assumed the sponsorship of the festival and parade.

Unfortunately, along came the economic downturn in 2008 which brought an end to what was billed as the longest-running parade in the state. But as the local cities were beginning to come out of the recession a new idea came along. By now its Arizona's Centennial and Avondale and Goodyear decided to join forces and introduce a new parade and festival. So, in February 2012 the first "Tale of Two Cities" Parade and Festival celebrated the Arizona's Centennial. The third annual "Tale of Two Cities" event will take place on February 22, 2014. Hope you'll come out, meet your neighbors and enjoy the festivities.

Salt  Agua Fria  Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

What is a Cowboy?

Father Eusebio Kino, the Jesuit priest and explorer, was Arizona's first cowboy. He drove a herd of cattle from Sonora into the Santa Cruz Valley in the late 1600s to give to the natives in the area.

State historian, Marshall Trimble, has referred to cowboys as "legends in Levis." They have been one of the symbols of the making of our country. These hard-working, independent, and self-reliant folk heroes have made a lasting mark on the history of the west.

The word "cowboy" seems to represent the whole gamut of frontiersmen, gunfighters, outlaws, gamblers, and hard-working ranch hands. The open range cowboy atop his reliable horse has become like the knights of old. Their image has come to symbolize the good qualities of mankind such as freedom, love of the outdoors, individualism, honesty and care of animals. Cowboys came from all walks of life, from the runaway teen to the blacks seeking a new way of life after slavery. His ability to work with horses and cattle and use a lariat were what really counted.

Some have criticized the cowboy saying he was an illiterate laborer atop a horse and not unlike the factory workers in the eastern towns. However, a few cowboys were often charged with driving a large herd of cattle to market. They might have to defend the cattle against outlaws or Indians. They were willing to risk it all to turn a stampede or ford a swollen river. And those cattle he cared for were the life savings of the rancher. At the ranch, the boss might have ruled with an iron fist, but out on the range they were pretty much their own bosses, with wide open spaces and unlimited fresh air.

The cowboy had many items that were necessary for his survival. The wide-brimmed Stetson not only provided shade for their necks and faces but also served as a water pitcher for them and their horses or they could use them to fan a fire. A good hat might cost most of a month's wages, but would last for years. His chaps were worn when working cattle in rough country; they protected his pants, provided warmth in the winter and protected him from thorny bushes and cacti.

The preferred pants of a cowboy were usually the heavy, blue denim Levi's. Shirts were long sleeved to protect the arms from the sun and bushes. The neckerchief served as protection from sun and windburn, and in a storm it was a dust filter. It could also be used as a wash cloth, tourniquet or sling. Boots typically had a two-inch heel to keep their feet from sliding through the stirrups. The cowboy would often spend a bit more for a pair of boots than his monthly pay.

A working cowboy was very fussy about his saddle. The ranch often provided a horse but the saddle was nearly always owned by the cowboy. A saddle weighting 30 to 40 pounds was built sturdily to withstand years of hard riding. The lariat was the most important tool of the cowboy. It enabled a medium sized man to throw a 1,000-pound cow. Working cowboys have always felt that their roping skill was what distinguished them from the pretenders.

Horses are a necessary tool of the cowboys. Most horses were just cowponies. Extraordinary horses were admired and a good cow horse might be better known than the men who rode them. On many ranches the cowboy was expected to finish breaking a new horse. The bronc buster would turn over a new horse to the cowboy after only riding it a few times.

The glory days of the open range cowboy came to an end in the 1880s. The demise of the huge herds of cattle on the open range was a result of long droughts and overstocked ranges. Many cattlemen forced sell out. Homesteaders came and took legal claim to the ranges that had once provided free grazing for the cattle. The cattlemen who wanted to continue to raise cattle would have to fence them, have smaller herds and be more selective in their breeding.



The Gadsden Purchase

In 1854 The United States of America agreed to pay Mexico \$10 million for a 29,670 square mile portion of Mexico that became southern Arizona and New Mexico. This was known as the Gadsden Purchase.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago formally ended the Mexican –American War in 1848. However, tensions continued to simmer. America was supposed to protect Mexico from Native American attacks; Mexico wanted to be compensated for the attacks that occurred. These tensions complicated the U.S. efforts to find a southern route for the transcontinental railroad.



Another area of contention between the two countries was the Mesilla Valley of New Mexico. In 1853 Mexican officials evicted Americans from their property in the Mesilla Valley. Governor William Lane of New Mexico declared the Mesilla Valley part of the U.S. territory of New Mexico. Attempting to diffuse the problem, President Franklin Pierce sent James Gadsden, the U.S. Minister to Mexico, to negotiate with Santa Anna.

Santa Anna met with James Gadsden on September 25, 1853. He was given negotiating options ranging from \$50 million for Lower California and a large portion of northern Mexico to \$15 million for a smaller land deal that would provide for a southern railroad. Santa Anna refused to sell a large portion of Mexico, but he needed money to fund an army to put down ongoing rebellions. So, on December 30 1853 he and Gadsden signed a treaty stipulating that the United States would pay \$15 million for 45,000 square miles south of the New Mexico territory and assume private American claims. The United States agreed to help prevent American raids along the Mexican border. With increasing strife between the northern and southern states, the U.S. Senate ratified a revised treaty on April 25, 1854. The new treaty reduced the amount paid to Mexico to \$10 million and the land purchased to 29,670 square miles. This treaty was sign by President Pierce and Santa Anna.

The treaty did not solve all border disputes. However, it did create the southern border of the present -day United States and acquired the land needed for the southern route of the transcontinental railroad.

So if you live in the area south of the Gila River, you live on land that once a part of Mexico!

Wise and Witty Sayings

Never squat with your spurs on.

There are two theories to arguing with a woman. Neither works.

If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back into your pocket.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

Letting the cat out of the bag is a whole lot easier that putting it back in.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.



Avondale Circle, 1944

World War II made a significant impact on the West Valley. With war imminent, the Defense Department built a manufacturing plant on Southwest Cotton Company land on the southwest corner of Litchfield Road and Western Avenue. Goodyear Aircraft, a division of Goodyear Tire and Rubber, managed the plant. There was a Goodyear Aircraft Plant in Ohio that was building aircraft and this new Goodyear plant would expand their production and be near the west coast companies that did the final assembly of many war planes.

This defense facility would eventually employ 7,000 people. Housing was needed in a hurry. The "old" Goodyear subdivision on the north side of Western Ave was built while GAC was under construction and helped house the people that came from Akron to get the factory up and running. In 1944, the Westwood Manor, now Park Shadows, and the Avondale Circle were built adding much needed living quarters for the workers and their families.



Other housing for defense workers and married Navy and Air Force men included trailer parks and Wingfoot homes.

The Avondale Circle was on Western Avenue between Central Ave. and Litchfield Road, on the south side of the street across from Cecil Palmateer Park. It was built in 1944 with the assistance of the Federal Housing Authority. At the time of their construction they were termed "temporary defense housing units." The eighty buildings consisted of 184 apartments in single story buildings that had two or four apartments. In addition, there was a large building in the center of the development that housed the rental office, the maintenance shop, a laundromat,

and some public rooms. One of the smaller public rooms housed the Avondale Library until the new, larger library opened in 1975. The larger room was used for meetings and occasionally for teen dances. The "Circle" was under the auspices of the Maricopa County Housing Authority and in 1946 they named Elmer Outlaw Manager of Avondale Circle. A similar project was built in west Phoenix to provide housing for the workers at the Alcoa Aluminum plant; it was called Alzona Park. By today's standard the apartments were very basic.

In 1958, the City of Avondale assumed the management of the Avondale Circle and the Circle continued to provide homes for families for many years. I was unable to discover the exact year it was demolished but it was about 1975, so it had a pretty long life for "temporary defense housing units!"

Lenore Semmler spent her early years in the Avondale Circle and describes what life was like in this development.



In 1949, Grace and Walter Bensburg and their three daughters decided to pull up stakes in New York where they had lived all their lives and move to Arizona to find work. They didn't have jobs, but they had skills. Walter had worked for Grumman Aircraft building planes for the war. They rented an apartment in the "Circle." Grace's sister, Melva, and her family lived in the Circle, too. Another of the Bensburg's neighbors was Ann and Casey Clark. Ann was a second grade teacher at Avondale Elementary School.

The Circle was full of young families with children and some retirees from the service. People who lived in the Circle were trying to get ahead and liked it there because it was close to the school and kids could walk to Greenleaf Pool on Highway 80 (MC 85). It cost 25¢ to swim; a great way to cool off in the summer.

Some families had ice boxes in their kitchens and the ice man's truck would park on the street and carrier a block of ice to the apartments. We kids would try to pick up chunks and slivers of ice to suck on when it was so hot outside. We played under shade trees and ran through the water sprinklers to cool off. We were mostly barefooted, but there were stickers in the grass; the burrs on the clover and "goat heads" that got stuck in our feet and hurt! There were castor bean plants near the apartments. The castor beans were green and soft, but when they dried up and hardened we threw them at other kids. A cardboard box or pile of tumble weeds could be used to make a fort. We jumped rope, played jacks, hide and seek and climbed trees. Our Uncle Ed had a canvas/rubber boat we filled with water to use as a pool; this would have been a surplus life raft. I remember playing Monopoly and card games for hours. We didn't have television until the mid-'50s so outdoor activities and games kept us occupied.

Eight years after arriving in Goodyear, my father completed construction of our home on Kinderman Drive, Avondale and we left the Circle. My parents worked hard to get ahead. My mother, Grace, first worked as a maid at the Wigwam, as a clerk at King's Department Store and later at Luke AFB Exchange. My father, Walter, worked at the Litchfield Naval Air Facility as dispatcher and when it closed he transferred to Davis Monthan and commuted to work. The Bensburg's loved Arizona; they stayed and made this community its home.

Sally Kiko and Lenore Bensburg Semmler

WHO AM I?

Born in 1859 and died in 1955, this industrialist and entrepreneur named his fledgling rubber goods manufacturing company, "Goodyear," to honor Charles Goodyear, the man who invented the vulcanization process for curing rubber. With his brother, Charles Willard, they founded the company because of their desire to participate in an enterprise that afforded an "opportunity for invention."

Incorporated in 1898, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company rapidly grew with the young automotive industry and helped establish Akron as the "Rubber Capital of the World." Among his many significant inventions were the tire-making machine and the detachable wheel rim. He resigned from Goodyear in 1921 and continued by founding another rubber company...named Seiberling Rubber Company. YES, I am Franklin Augustus "F.A." Seiberling.



(Source: Historic Marker in Akron, Ohio – Seiberling's estate in West Akron is a National Historic Landmark.)

Gloria King

Thank You!

Last fall, Three Rivers Historical Society sent out a letter to our members, friends and supporters. We were in need of matching funds to help finance the Centennial Trail. Well, our members, friends and supporters were most generous! A tip of the hat to you!

While the Centennial Trail consists of a number of projects, that when they are all completed will be a barrier-free, half-mile loop that tells the history of our area, the immediate need is for an irrigation system. We received a donation of 200 saplings, desert willow, screw-bean mesquite and western hackberry that require frequent watering until they get established. We have been happy to have volunteers that have helped us keep them watered and thriving. However, an automatic irrigation system will simplify matters and the basic lines will be there to tap into as the work progresses and more plants are added. Work on the irrigation system will be underway soon.

My sincere thanks to all that contributed to the drive. I appreciate your generosity and willingness to help.

Sally Kiko

The Gila River

The Gila River runs through the southern portions of both Avondale and Goodyear. It was once a flowing river that provided water to the peoples that have lived nearby for the last 2000 years.

The source of the Gila River is in western New Mexico, in Sierra County on the western slopes of the Continental Divide in the Black Mountain Range. The river flows southwest through the Gila National Forest and the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, then westward into Arizona and past the town of Safford. It flows along the southern slope of the Gila Mountains in Graham County through a series of canyons. Then the Gila is impounded by the Coolidge Dam in San Carlos Lake south of Peridot.

It emerges from the mountains into the valley southeast of Phoenix, where it crosses the Gila River Indian Reservation as an intermittent stream due to large irrigation diversions. West of Phoenix, the river bends sharply southward along the Gila Bend Mountains, then swings westward toward the Gila Mountains in Yuma County and finally empties into the Colorado at Yuma.

The Gila is joined by many tributaries, starting with the East and West Forks of the river which combine to form the main stream near Gila Hot Springs in New Mexico. Above Stafford, it is joined by the San Francisco River and the intermittent San Simon River. Further downstream it is joined by the San Carlos River from the north in San Carlos Lake. At Winkelman it picks up the San Pedro River and then is joined by the Santa Cruz River south of Casa Grande. The Salt River, its main tributary, joins in the Phoenix metro area, and further west the Gila receives its last two major tributaries, the Agua Fria and Hassayampa Rivers, from the north.

This river drains an arid watershed of nearly 60,000 square miles. Indigenous peoples have lived along the river for at least 2,000 years, establishing complex agricultural societies before European exploration began in the 1500s. Euro-Americans did not permanently settle the Gila River watershed until the mid-19th century. Indigenous peoples such as the Hohokam were responsible for creating large, complex civilizations along the Gila and Salt Rivers between 600 and 1450 A.D. They constructed over 200 miles of canals to irrigate their crops. Juan de la Asuncion

reached the Gila in 1538. During the Mexican-American War, 100 cavalymen guided by Kit Carson marched along the Gila River. The Mormon Battalion followed the troops, building a wagon trail roughly following the river in late 1846. After the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, the Gila Rivers served as a part of the border between The U.S. and Mexico until the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

During the twentieth century, human development of the Gila River watershed made it necessary to construct diversion and flood control structures on the river and its tributaries. Consequently, the Gila now contributes only a small fraction of its historic flow to the Colorado. These engineering projects have transformed much of the river valley from arid desert to irrigated land, and supply water to the millions of people that now live in the watershed.

The only major dam on the Gila River is the Coolidge Dam 31 miles southeast of Globe, which forms the San Carlos Lake. A number of diversion dams have been built on the river including the Gillespie Dam which was breached during a flood in 1993. The upper Gila River, including its entire length in New Mexico is a free flowing river. Between Virden, New Mexico and Solomon, Arizona it is navigable during spring snowmelt and after summer and autumn storms. Due to its desert surrounding, the river is characterized by erratic flows and flash floods that reach high peaks and drop off just as quickly. San Carlos Lake is popular with boaters and fishermen.

In 1944, twenty-five German POWs pulled off the largest and most spectacular escape from an American compound during the war. They dug a 178-foot tunnel out of the Navy's Papago Park POW Camp. Their courageous but ill-fated escape plans were based on a stolen highway map of Arizona which showed the Gila River leading to the Colorado River, and then to Mexico. Devising a scheme to flee by water, the Germans constructed a collapsible Kayak under the noses of their American captors, tested it in a makeshift pool within prison compound, and then sneaked it out through the tunnel. Their plan was perfect- except for the map. The Gila, shown as a healthy blue waterway, turned out to be little more than a dry rut. All of the men were captured though some remained at large for more than a month.

Remember the Burma Shave Signs?

Long before the interstate freeways, we all drove the two lane roads to get us from here to there. Along those country roads Burma Shave signs would be posted in a farmer's fields. They consisted of five signs about 100 feet apart. They were small red signs with white letters; each sign contained one line of a four line couplet. And, of course, the 5th sign was the obligatory sign that advertised Burma Shave.

Some examples:

Drove too long
Driver snoozing
What happened next
Is not amusing

Burma Shave

Brother speeder
Let's rehearse
All together
Good morning, Nurse

Burma Shave

Passing school zone
Take it slow
Let our
Little shavers grow

Burma Shave



Verlyne Meck Recounts Buckeye's Early Days

Verlyne Meck, wife of Mayor Meck and noted historian of all things pertaining to the Buckeye Valley was the guest speaker at the October 15th Three Rivers Historical Society. Verlyne was born and has lived in the Buckeye Valley. She not only graduated from Buckeye Union High School, but taught there, too. A graduate of ASU and Grand Canyon University, she has written two books about the history of Buckeye, and is on the Board of the Buckeye Valley Historical Society.

If you've read her two Arcadia Publishing books, Images of America, Buckeye and Buckeye Then and Now, you may have noticed that many of the photos used in the book are part of her extensive collection. She shared her wealth of historic photos and knowledge of the Buckeye area, Liberty, Arlington and Palo Verde in her presentation. As usual, she brought the history of the Buckeye Valley to life with humor and interesting stories.

Are you a Member?

Many people who have expressed an interest in our organization over the years have been added to our mailing list. And we are very happy you share our interest in the local history. However, have you ever considered joining our organization? Dues are quite reasonable and they help defray the expenses of not only the newsletter but of the organization.

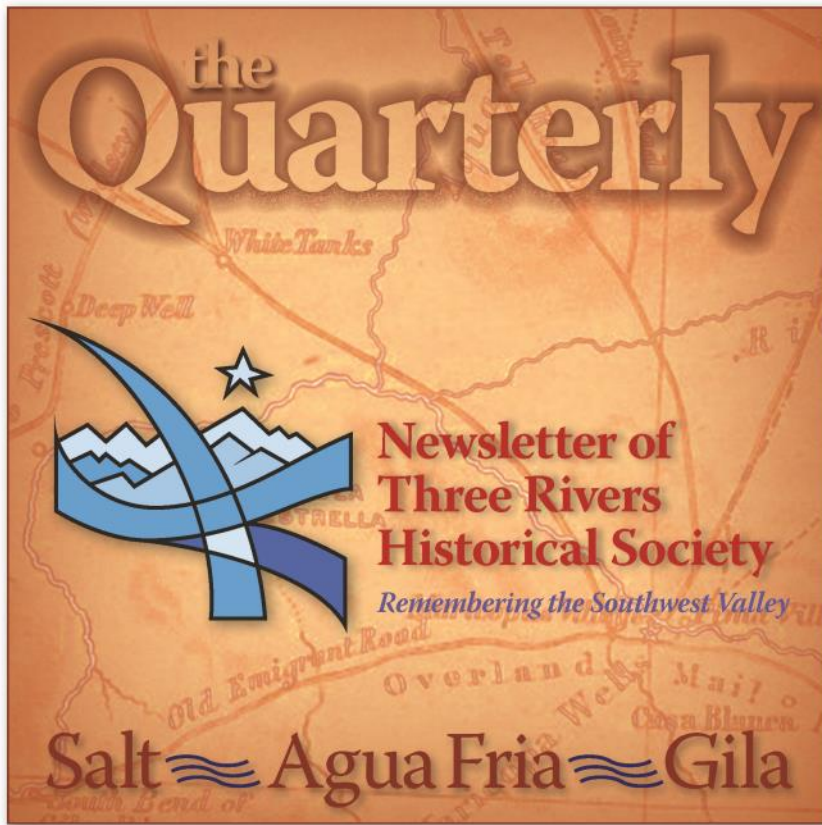
In addition to helping to finance the organization we are always looking for "a few good men" (and women) to help with our various projects. As the weather cools down the event calendar heats up. We try to be represented at the various civic events to help get our name and mission out there so volunteers are always needed for that.

Our Centennial Trail Project is another area of need. We need folks to help in so many ways, marketing, tree watering, fund raising, to name a few.

Membership information is on the last page of this newsletter. Sign up; you'll be glad you did!

Do You Make Videos of You Kids, Grandkids?

Three Rivers Historical Society is in need of a person with experience doing home videos to run our camcorder each month to record our guest speakers. For years now, we've recorded our various guest speakers and then edit and burn them to a CD so that we have a library of oral histories of the West Valley and its people. All we need is someone to run the camera during the meeting. Is that something you could help us with? Please call or email Sally Kiko (cell) 623-256-5892 or kskiko@cox.net.



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:

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P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

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Three Rivers Historical Society

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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