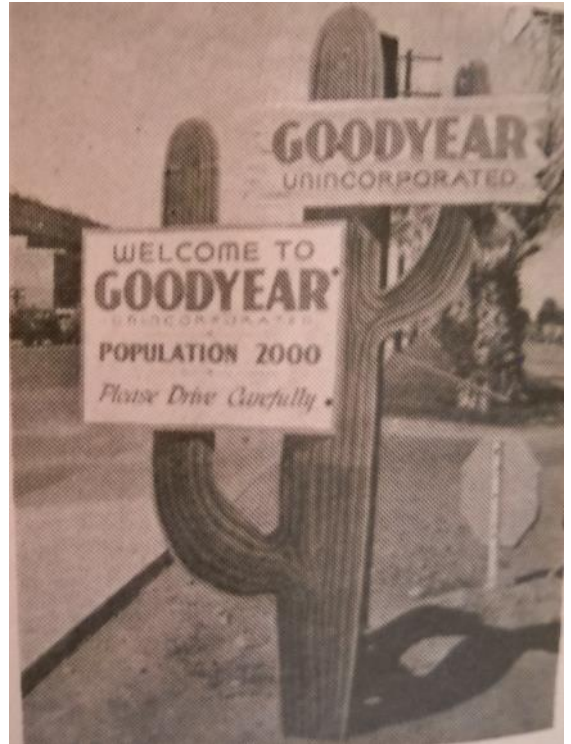


Photo of Early Goodyear Sign Found

A photo of the earliest sign that stood at the entrance to the town of Goodyear was recently found in an October 20, 1944, edition of the “Wingfoot Clan.” Perhaps only really “old timers” will remember this iconic sign that designated this newly formed town. The information given as a descriptor of the photo says, “One of the signs erected this past week on all roads leading into the unincorporated town of Goodyear, Arizona. The town includes the districts of: Avondale Circle, Prefabricated Homes, Subdivision, Trailer Court, and Westwood Manor. Bounds of the unincorporated town are: North, northern limit of Westwood Manor; east, dirt road between Avondale School and the power house just east of Avondale Circle; south, Southern Pacific railway track; west, western boundary of the airport.” Prefabricated Homes were the Wingfoot homes across Litchfield Road from the entrance to Goodyear Aircraft Corporation. Subdivision was the historic subdivision between Western Avenue and Park Shadows. Trailer Court refers to a trailer court that was on the southeast corner of Western Avenue and Litchfield Road. Westwood Manor is now called Park Shadows. The power house refers to an electric substation and building that were located on the southwest corner of Western Avenue and Third Avenue.



This sign was an indication of the progress being made by an organization known as the Community Club. This organization of local residents was working to bring services and improvements to the new town. They met in the community room in the Avondale Circle and were responsible for bringing a movie program, lending library, Teenage Club, community mail, and milk delivery to the community. In May of 1944, it was reported that Goodyear was the name selected after survey of property owners and residents was conducted. With an official name selected, a committee was named to design a sign to serve as a welcome to their new town.

Serving on the sign committee were Webb Scheutzow, Mike Bross, Robert Jenner, O.H. Smith, and Harry Meeker. This iconic sign was the result of their work.

Traveling Travails in the 1920's

Two ambitious young men left their farm in West Texas with five gallons of gasoline, five gallons of water, and a couple of gallons of oil tied to the running boards. Spare tires and “desert bags,” canvas bags of drinking water, were attached where they could find room. They were well equipped with camping gear and tools. Full of bacon and biscuits, they began their trip in the early morning.

It was really hot when they arrived in Deming, New Mexico, late at night. Out of water, low on gas and exhausted from shoveling sand, they had learned the hard way some truths about desert travel; start before sunrise, get down the road a way before the sun comes up, relax in the middle of the day, and travel again in the evening. In Deming they added tarps to their supplies to throw under their tires for traction over soft sand.



A few days later they arrived in Tucson where they replaced a tire before starting out for Gila Bend and Yuma. Along the way they learned a new use for the tarps. If they had to repair tires along the way, they tied the tarp to the car, staked the other end to the ground and worked in the shade!

Across the Colorado River, in California, they came upon deep sand. Finally they reached the famous wooden road that had been built on the sand dunes. It was only wide enough for one car with wider places every mile or so to let one car pass another. Luckily, they didn't meet any oncoming traffic.

When they bought gas in El Centro, they learned that the road over the hills to San Diego was so rough and steep that their Model T might not make it. Gasoline was fed to the “T's” carburetor by gravity. If the hill was too steep, gas might not feed to the carburetor. When they started up the hill, one of the boys sat on the fender with a can of gas and fed gas into the carburetor when needed. It was a dangerous solution, to be sure.

They pulled into Jacumba, at the top of the steep hill; four thousand feet of elevation made it fifteen degrees cooler. It felt so good they decided to camp under a big tree while they worked on the car. After bouncing all over bad roads, the car needed to be cleaned, greased, and inspected, tightening anything that had vibrated loose.

In the new millennium, modern cars with air conditioning and broad freeways have made the five hour drive from the Valley to San Diego so easy. Run-flat tires have caused us to even forget about the chore of changing a tire under the midday sun. We need to tip our hat to the hardy, adventuresome folks who bravely set out for another place, endured the hardships along the way, and paved the way for modern travelers.

We're on Facebook!

Three Rivers has joined the modern age. Thanks to David Meese, our Treasurer, we now are on Facebook. Be sure to look for Three Rivers Historical Society-AZ as there are other Three Rivers Historical Societies. David is in the process of uploading items to our page so we are still a work in progress. We hope you'll take a minute to visit us and “like” us.



Newly Renovated Buckeye Valley Museum A Must See

Bringing the past to life by preserving our local history is the focus of the Buckeye Valley Museum. Established by I.H. Parkman in 1954 and run by the Buckeye Valley Historical and Archeological Society along with volunteers, the doors were opened by then Mayor Jack Gable on April 10, 1954.

Over the years the museum has seen many changes. The Historical Society along with the amazing support of the community added two large gallery rooms to the original building and thousands of hours have been dedicated to the preservation of our local history. Time has seen the exhibit spaces remodeled and plans continuously made for the creation of new exhibits that would bring new life to the history that we share.

The celebration of the Buckeye Centennial in 1988 was a milestone that focused on the 100 years that made Buckeye what it was. There were many projects that intently focused on the story of those first 100 years.

In October, 2007, the city took over the operations of the Buckeye Valley Museum and continues to support the preservation of our local history. With a focus on the local history of Buckeye, the museum has an impressive collection of pottery, historic photographs and artifacts from the early days of Buckeye. It is a great place to come and learn about a city that is rich in history.

Each summer the museum closes for cleaning, inventory and a renovation of sorts. This year a revamp of the interior took place including new paint, flooring and all new displays. The project included building smaller facades of many of the buildings that had specific connections to the early days of Buckeye history. This was an amazing undertaking that could not have been accomplished without incredible community support. Forty-six community members donated their time, resources and materials to build all the main street facades to complete the museum experience. During the month of September, 1395 volunteer hours were devoted to the project. Old barn wood and tin were donated to add to the authenticity of the facades and a 1926 John Deere tractor was even rolled into the museum for display. If anyone remembers getting their hair cut at Fernando's Barbershop in Buckeye, they can come by the museum to see the fully restored station from the barbershop. Anyone remember the Roxy Theatre? The original theatre seats are a great addition to the display.



Museums are charged with a great responsibility, not only to meet their mission but to store, preserve and care for the collection. This can be a very costly responsibility. Many museums are moving toward accepting items on loan for a time to be shared with the public and then items are returned to the owner rather than accepted as permanent donations. Because of our small storage space, this may need to be the practice moving forward at our museum. Included in the changes are plans for additional educational programs and opportunities to share with the schools. It is important for our youth to know the history that surrounds them; the museum is a great place to start.

The best museums are those that you want to re-visit. It is our desire that the Buckeye Valley Museum become a real destination place in the City of Buckeye.

You will find the Buckeye Valley Museum in downtown Buckeye, Arizona, nestled in Town Park at the corner of 10th Street and Monroe. Hours of operations: Friday and Saturday 11:00am to 4:00pm. Questions can be addressed by the Buckeye Public Library at 623-349-6300 or email clarson@buckeyeaz.gov.

By Chris Larson

1949 - Goodyear Aircraft Corp. Returns to Goodyear

Many industrial plants closed all over the country when World War II ended. Goodyear Aircraft Corporation in Goodyear was one of them. The facility was built and financed by the Defense Plant Corporation; when it closed, all of the properties reverted to them. The last of the employees left the plant in early 1946. The buildings stood empty as the machinery was sold.

In an article in the September 2, 1982, issue of *The Wingfoot Clan*, the story of Goodyear Tire and Rubber's successful bid for the facility is recounted.

By the authorization of the War Assets Administration, a public auction was held on January 20, 1949, in front of the administration building. The auction was done by the Milton Wershow Company, Los Angeles, who specialized in the liquidation of real estate and industrial properties. The property being auctioned included 108 acres of land and 26 existing buildings. A representative of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company was present and offered a bid of \$475,000. The only other bidder was one who did not fulfill the terms of the auction; Goodyear became owner of the property.

Cleaning crews began work immediately to clear out the spider webs and debris that had accumulated in the three years of vacancy and neglect. They concentrated first on the modification hanger. One month after the auction, the first two hourly workers reported for work and began the production of blimp envelopes, the outer covering of a blimp. Another nineteen months went into cleaning and refurbishing the remaining buildings.

In 1950, part of the plastics operation was moved to Goodyear from Akron. Soon clear plastic nose bubbles for the Boeing B-50 bombers were being produced at the Goodyear plant. Toward the end of 1950, production activity increased with new contracts to manufacture canopies for Lockheed F-94 fighters and radar towers for General Electric. Goodyear became a leader in the production of airborne plastics and transparent products when they received new contracts to build tow-targets, radomes, windows and windshields.

Several large projects were started in 1951 as an aero physics research and electronics department were added. The laboratory development and flight testing of this new guidance package were done at Goodyear with help from Wright-Patterson AFB. The Air Force aided the mission with required ground support and maintenance equipment. Arizona's excellent weather made it the ideal place for the flight testing. Once the system was developed and flight tested, Akron produced the system. That same year GAC was awarded a contract to build wing and empennage or tail sections for the T-28 trainers.

In spite of all the great contracts at GAC, 1951 brought a near disaster. Heavy August rains hit the area; flooding of the plant caused damage throughout the facility. Lost production and thousands of dollars in damaged buildings and equipment slowed the pace, but in short order it was business as usual. Many programs and projects were continued with extra effort.

Plastic design and manufacture grew with many improvements and safety features for canopies and windshields for airplanes. Fuel tanks for aircraft were developed to help ensure the safety of military pilots. The electronics program grew and Goodyear led the way in the side-looking radar business. This led to other types of radar used for natural resources mapping, reconnaissance and mapping radar. With these advances, GAC changed its name to Goodyear Aerospace Corporation in 1963 to emphasize its place in the aircraft and space industry. NASA used GAC equipment in its LANDSAT satellite program, a program that created a continuous global record of the earth's surface. Their satellites beamed down images that were processed in GAC recorders. Goodyear Aerospace continued to develop new products and grow in the aerospace industry.

In 1986, Sir James Goldsmith, a British-French financier who had amassed approximately one billion dollars, met with two representatives from Merrill Lynch to discuss a hostile takeover attempt on Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. In order to save the basic tire and rubber business, they were forced to sell 19% of the company. Locally, Goodyear Farms and the Wigwam Resort were sold to SunCorp Development Company and Goodyear Aerospace Corporation was sold to Loral.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY
By authority of the War Assets Administration we have been commissioned to conduct this great

Industrial Real Estate AUCTION
of the former

GOODYEAR AIRCRAFT CORPORATION PLANT
LITCHFIELD PARK, ARIZONA
15 MILES FROM PHOENIX
THURSDAY, JAN. 20, 1949
11 A. M.

Sale under Supervision of
MILTON J. WERSHOW COMPANY
Appraisers, Auctioneers and Liquidators of Real Estate and Industrial Properties
1233 SANTA FE AVENUE • TRINITY 5676-Trinity 9433 • LOS ANGELES 21, CALIF.

Laws that Settled the West

Western migration was promoted by a number of laws intended to bring families to settle the West. The Preemption Act of 1841 was the first. This law was widely used by settlers in the Kansas Territory and Nebraska Territory which were opened to settlement in 1854. This law permitted “squatters” who were living on land owned by the federal government to purchase up to 160 acres at a low price before offering the land to the general public to purchase. To qualify the person had to be the head of household, over 21 years of age, a citizen of the United States and a resident of the claimed land for at least fourteen months. The claimant was required to be consistently working to improve the land.

The Homestead Act introduced the era of “free land.” Enacted in May, 1862, it provided a “quarter section,” or 160 acres, to any citizen that was the head of a family and older than twenty-one years of age. It required five years of continuous residence, the raising of a crop, and the payment of a thirty dollar registration fee. This act, signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, also stipulated that the homesteader had to be someone who had never taken up arms against the U.S. government.

The Desert Land Act was passed in 1877. It allowed individuals to acquire 640 acres of land for twenty-five cents per acre provided that the land became irrigated within three years. This law was passed to encourage the development of the arid and semi-arid public lands of the Western states.

The Carey Act of 1894 authorized the President to grant each public land state a minimum of one million acres for irrigation, reclamation, settlement and cultivation. The act established the General Land Office which was controlled by the federal government. Each state had to regulate the new land and select companies to erect irrigation systems, a task felt to be too large for individual settlers. The act was not as successful as envisioned because many of the western states lacked the financial resources to make it effective.

In 1902, the Reclamation Act, also known as the Lowlands Reclamation Act, was enacted to fund irrigation projects for the arid lands of twenty states in the American West. The act set aside money from the sale of semi-arid public lands for the construction and maintenance of irrigation projects. In turn, the newly irrigated land would be sold and money would be put into a revolving fund that supported more such projects. Eventually, nearly every major western river had a dam. In Arizona, this act led to the construction of the Roosevelt Dam completed in 1911, and the Hoover Dam completed in 1936. In addition to the reclamation of land that could only be farmed by irrigation, many of the projects of the Bureau of Reclamation provided jobs during the Depression and after WWII, when jobs were needed. This legislation built dams that provided irrigation to lands making them suitable for growing crops and brought more settlers into the arid west.

An early history of Avondale, written and researched by former Mayor John McCauley, cites several early land owners that acquired their land by either the Desert Land Act or the Reclamation Act.

New Exhibit Opens at Litchfield Park Museum

A new exhibit at the Litchfield Park Museum pays tribute to Los Campos. The camps, communities of mostly Mexican workers employed by Goodyear Farm were built in 1929. The camps, named 50, 51, 52, 53, and 54, were home for the many workers needed to keep this huge farming enterprise running. The homes were small and constructed of either adobe or wood. They were provided, along with utilities, as an employee benefit.

The “Los Campos” exhibit tells the stories of these camps and the families that grew up there. The photo display includes weddings, fiestas, the families, and the young men in uniform. Their devotion to their country is very clearly demonstrated by the many men who fought in World War II. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the history of the West Valley. The Litchfield Park Historical Museum is located at 13912 W. Camelback Road, in Litchfield Park. It is open on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 AM to 4 PM.



Lockheed Martin-Goodyear Aerospace Treasures

Three Rivers Historical Society was recently the beneficiary of many items slated for disposal by Lockheed Martin as the company prepared to close. It was a mixed bag, to be sure; there were many historic photos, marketing pamphlets, brochures and old issues of the Wingfoot Clan, their weekly newsletter.

Along with boxes of the above mentioned items were four beautiful oil paintings by Mel Millsap. We wondered why Goodyear Aircraft Corporation/Loral/Lockheed Martin would have four paintings by the same artist. Could there be a connection between Mel Millsap and GAC or one of the other companies? An online search turned up an artist in Peoria by the same name. Researching further, a Peoria address was found for a Mel Millsap. Crossing our fingers, we wrote a letter to him asking if he was the artist of the paintings and, if so, would he contact us.

We received a reply. Mel Millsap, of Peoria, AZ was the artist and had been an employee of GAC and Loral, and created the paintings. His reply read, "My association with Goodyear (then Aircraft) started in 1961 when I was hired as an illustrator to assist in preparing the mountains of documentation required by the new Goodyear Radar to be installed in the F4H aircraft. I became Group Leader of illustration with a staff of as many as thirty artists illustrating those documents. We also created presentations, proposals for new products and supported many company activities such as the Foreman's Club, annual Engineering Dance, motivational programs, etc. with art and working with skilled writers, editors, typists, etc. and directed by Section Head, Jay Geisel."

"My career took an advantageous turn when in the late '70's I was asked by Plant Engineering to contribute design ideas to management for an upgrade to the cafeteria. This was exciting to me because I was a design major in my schooling and had distinct architectural leanings. Also, up to that time the entire facility interior was a dreary leftover from a WWII factory. All interiors were painted a drab pea green and furniture was uniform gray; a depressing place to spend one's days, however interesting the job."

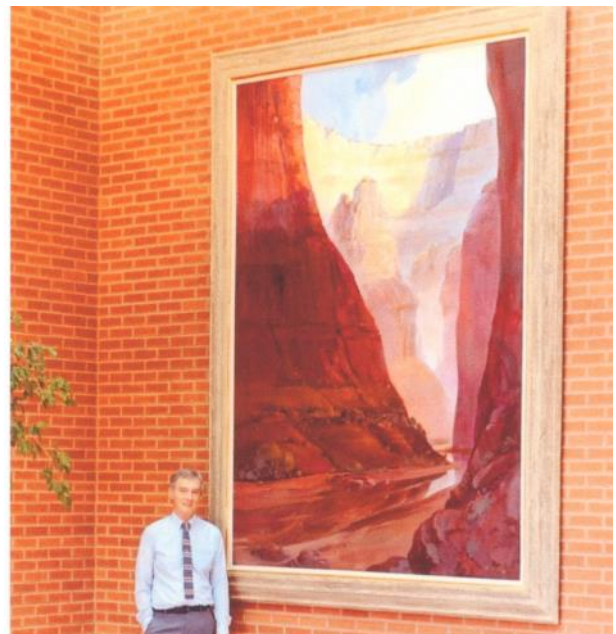
"To shorten the story many years, the cafeteria project was a big success and an Executive Dining room followed, then other areas were rejuvenated, office areas and the entire top floor of Building 10 was gutted and turned into really nice executive offices, including a large and luxurious one for the big boss."

"And, thus the paintings. I designed and made renderings of all these offices and areas for approval by management. I truly believe art enhances life and I indicated art where it was needed. General office areas used lithographic prints of good paintings framed in a consistent manner. Original art was indicated in executive offices, some lobbies and the executive dining room. This arrangement was approved and individual executives were encouraged by management to express their preference for subject matter. I painted mostly in the facility, on company time I could spare from other responsibilities, but often on my own time at night."

"Later a tradition of sorts commenced, as retiring executives were given the paintings in their offices. I have heard from several and they seem to be still enjoying them perhaps mostly as a reminder of the "Goodyear Good Days."

"Toward the end of my tenure I was heavily involved in the exterior and interior design of the new building at the south end of the facility. The lobby featured a huge painting. Doubt it survived the change to Lockheed Martin. It is nine feet by six feet and I can't see anyone sticking that up in any residence. Wonder what happened to it?" Mel went on to thank Jay Geisel, George Phillips, Lenny Laden, Wayne Wood and Jack Wohler for their support and for giving him opportunities to utilize his talents.

Mel retired from Loral in 1989 and has continued to paint. He's now 87 years old and has thought about retiring, but there is always one more painting to create.



Reminiscing with Nelson Chaffin



Can you believe it? We, children of the Sixties, are now in our sixties! Many of us played together as children; we played against each other in sports, from grammar school through high school. We grew up in places nobody ever heard of, like Goodyear, Avondale, Litchfield Park, Dysart, Tolleson and Buckeye.

When we were children, we fearlessly rode our bicycles out past Paul and Carolyn Kano's, Mike Stanton's and Ron Rayner's farms and into the beautiful, not-yet-touched, natural, Sonoran Desert; a uniquely wonder filled place on the planet which loaned its invisible surrounding presence to our childhood years and our nascent spirits. Some of us found arrowheads, stone grinding bowls and old worn places where others had lived before any of our ancestors ever set a foot on these fertile grounds. Van Buren was a dirt road and Dr. Lawrence had a coot T-Bird. Sunsets were a spectacular day-ending event with cooler evenings sweetened with the smell of orange and grapefruit blossoms.

Somehow we mostly managed to get through the first eight years with the help of an occasional whack on the butt with a paddle. We had good people who cared that we learned with names like Coor, Ludlow, Bosworth, Foster, Tolman, Byars and Treadway who got us through. And our parents, every one of them, knew the teacher was right and, much to our chagrin, always backed them up. A boy beat me up in sixth grade while Mr. Bosworth refereed the slaughter. But in fact, he and I emerged with a mutual respect, which served us well all the way through high school. Imagine that, a teacher assuring a fair fight with boxing gloves so no one got hurt.

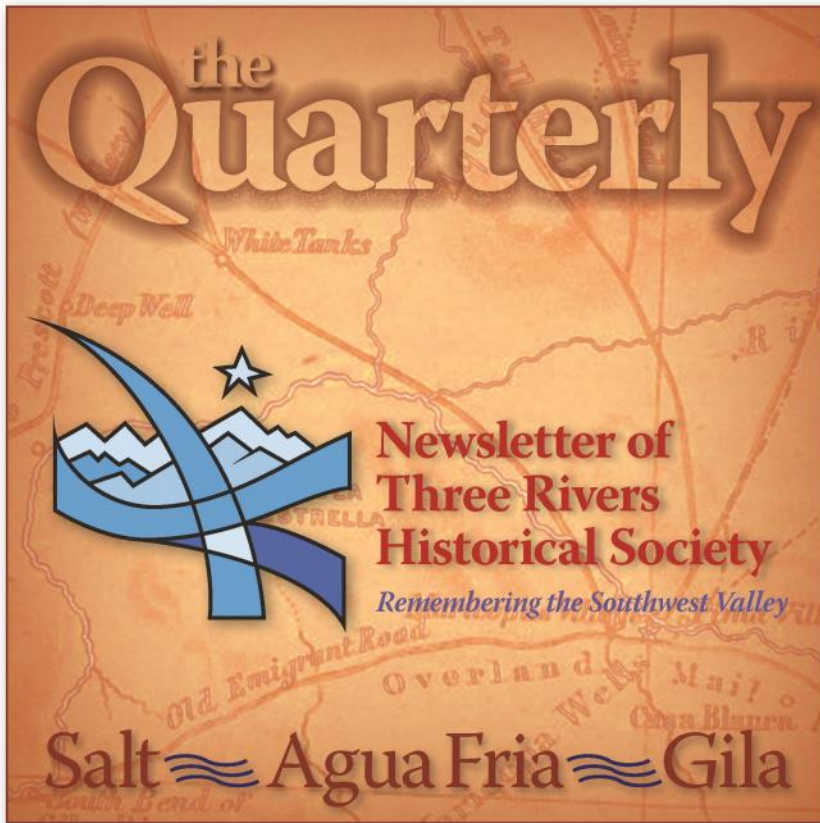
Then "it" happened. They opened a brand new high school and that brought us all together for four, long, historic-to-our-lives years. Some of us were in those very first classes at a strange new place called Agua Fria. All of us, sons and daughters of farmers, merchants, military and factory workers were tossed into that blender called Agua Fria. And boy, oh boy, did we ever blend! Friends with names like Sernas, Garcia, Morales, Camacho who spoke English and made us wish we could understand the Spanish they spoke and which guaranteed them an easy "A" in Spanish class. Air Force kids who had traveled the world became friends with those of us who had barely been out of town or the state.

Geez, can you believe it, Eisenhower was President and none of these people or names ever thought of a hyphen in our heritage. We were all just kids. American kids and we were occupied and required to actually attend classes and pay attention to our teachers! Remember those "real" clubs like FFA. All of us city kids envied those dark blue jackets and the magic Mr. Paul Bell seemed to be able to bring into play and turn otherwise questionable characters into future leaders as well as future farmers. The girls' and boys' letter clubs actually required some performance to earn membership. Key Club helped us with organizational skills and thinking on our feet that we never appreciated until much later.

Our coaches played such an important role in our lives. Coach OK Fulton brought basketball to our school in a big way and positively touched thousands of young lives, even lives that didn't play any sport. Our basketball gym is named after him.

From these small, sleepy communities came some amazing people. We've had young boys and girls go on to become university presidents, school administrators, lawyers, doctors, realtors, entrepreneurs, farmers, engineers, moms, dads and grandparents. Look back at your grade school class photos and count the students. Classes often had forty children and no teacher's aide. We didn't have Common Core or anything fancy. We all learned to read Dick and Jane. But we did learn, and our families encouraged us to aim high.

As the song goes, "Those were the days, my friend; we thought they'd never end..."



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

Bill Arnold, President

Juanita Cappelli, 1st V.P.

Frank Ross, 2nd V.P.

Wendy Neely, Secretary

David Meese, Treasurer

Sally Kiko, Past President

Mark Pelletier, Joann

Gongaware, Diane Fekete

Board Members

The Quarterly

Editor:

Sally Kiko & Diane Fekete

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear Library, 14415 W. Van Buren, 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