

Vol. No 15 Issue No. 2, April—May—June 2018 * <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

Salt  Agua Fria  Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

Welcome New Board Members

The first of the year always brings elections and sometimes changes in leadership. Most of the officers of Three Rivers Historical Society agreed to serve in their present position for another year with the exception of our treasurer, Betty Lynch. We also lost one board member, Al Fields. The Board extends our thanks to both Betty and Al for their excellent service and support. We welcome new board members Stephanie Karlin and Joseph Kinney. We look forward to them bringing their talents and life experiences to our board as we continue to expand our presence in the West Valley.

Williams, AZ, Named for Bill Williams

Have you ever visited the beautiful town of Williams? It takes its name from the Bill Williams Mountains that tower above it. The mountain and the high country town are a fitting place to carry the name of Bill Williams, the “greatest fur trapper of ‘em all.”

William Sherley Williams was born in Polk County, North Carolina, on January 3, 1787. As a boy he liked to explore and learned to trap animals for their fur. He found that he was excellent at trapping, had an affinity for learning languages and loved the outdoors. Williams served as a sergeant and scout with the Mississippi Mounted Rangers during the War of 1812. As he encountered local tribes, he learned their languages and cultures. This ability made him valuable to the government and the military for tribal negotiations.

He also worked as a missionary and translated the Bible into the Osage language. He stayed with them long enough to marry an Osage woman. He served as an interpreter for the 1825 treaty between the Osage and the United States.

“Old Bill” and his wife had two daughters, Mary Ann and Sarah. When his wife died, he headed for the mountains and became a trapper. Trappers and mountain men like Bill Williams were like the Indians with whom they sometimes lived, more at home in the wild. They loved the outdoors, hated fences and restrictions, respected grizzlies and rivers and rode horses or mules. Their knowledge of the untamed wildernesses made them valuable guides for the military and other expeditions.

Bill seemed to have more lives than a cat, surviving several dangerous situations. However, on March 14, 1849, he was killed by a war party of Utes in southern Colorado. At the time of his death he was on his way to Taos to rescue a party of explorers who had become lost.

Williams, Arizona, is now known for being a terminus of the Grand Canyon Railway and the home of Bearizona Wildlife Park.

The Gadsden Purchase

Any of you West Valley residents that live south of the Gila River might be interested to know that where you live used to be part of Mexico.

In 1854, James Gadsden, a Yale graduate, former Army colonel and head of a railroad company, was asked by the U.S. Secretary of State to travel to Mexico and resolve the discord that had been growing since the end of the Mexican War five years prior. After years of meetings, negotiations and surveys, the two countries could not agree on the boundary between the two countries. A six thousand square mile area was being claimed by both.

The size of the territory was not what bothered American authorities. The problem was that Colonel Philip St. George Cooke's popular wagon road traversed part of it. In addition, plans were being made for a transcontinental railroad and one of the proposed routes ran right through the contested land.

Neither party, Democrat or Whig, had any desire to go to war again. Gadsden was expected to steer the dangerous boundary discussions back on track. He had been highly recommended by the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, and it was no secret that Davis preferred the southern route for the transcontinental railroad. Secretary of State, William Marcy instructed Gadsden to "pay liberally" for the border lands, if necessary.

Gadsden arrived in Mexico City a year later. It was an opportune time. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana had recently returned to power in Mexico and was in the midst of a financial crisis. They needed money far more than they needed land. A provision of Article XXI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago stated: "If unhappily any disagreements should hereafter arrive between the Governments of the two Republics... they will endeavor in the most sincere and earnest manner, to settle the differences so arising, and to preserve the state of peace and friendship, in which the two countries are now placing themselves."

After two weeks of meetings, Gadsden signed a treaty that he hoped would finally end the boundary disputes between the two countries. The treaty called for the United States to pay Mexico fifteen million dollars to yield most of the contested area and it placed the boundary from just north of El Paso, Texas, southwest to the 111th meridian. From there, the border was to turn northwest to the head of the Gulf of California.

Of course, nothing is that simple. The U.S. Senate narrowly failed to ratify the treaty. Instead it set the boundary where it is today. This allowed Mexico to keep more territory and cut the payment to Mexico to ten million dollars. Gadsden was angry that they didn't follow his plan. Both countries finally approved it and it was signed by President Franklin Pierce on June 29, 1854.

Source: It Happened in Arizona by James A. Crutchfield

Educating Arizona's Children

It seems as if Arizona may have always had challenges in properly educating its young citizens. "In 1920, those concerned with the education of Arizona's children were horrified when only five applicants were able to pass the teacher's examination in Maricopa County and none could pass at all in Pima County."

Source : Arizona Republic

Tom Bulfer, Master Watchmaker and Businessman

As a young man, Tom Bulfer wanted to live out West. He was born and raised in Minnesota. His first trip to the West Valley was to visit his brother Joseph, who had been selected to be an apprentice farmer in a program that was developed by Paul Litchfield. Tom realized that he would need either college or a trade to be able to make his way in the world. After a visit to another brother in Fresno, California, he returned to the mid-west to attend Watchmaker's School in Albany, Missouri. His first diploma was as a watch repairman. He also had been taught how to repair jewelry.

With that training he returned to the West Valley and entered into his first business venture; a jewelry store in a corner of the Coldwater Mercantile on Western Avenue, near Dysart Road. A tour of duty with the Army interrupted Tom's business in Avondale. Upon his completion of his service in the Army, Tom entered Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, and graduated as a Certified Master Watchmaker.

Upon completion of watchmaker's school, he worked in Roswell, New Mexico, and Tucson, Arizona. While in Tucson, he met and married his wife, Shirley. They moved to Goodyear where Tom started his own business, Bulfer's Jewelry on Western Avenue. He shared a building with the dentist, Dr. Barry Homan. In 1958, he moved to a space in the new A.J. Bayless Shopping Center. He purchased property in 1978 and had a building built that was large enough for his jewelry business and a portion he could rent. This building was located on the north side of Western Avenue. The rental portion housed a beauty school for a number of years. Another business venture came in 1987. Tom left Tom Baggett to manage the Goodyear store while Mr. Bulfer started a second store in Wickenburg, Bulfer's Wickenburg Jewelers. The Goodyear store followed the commercial movement of the town's businesses to a new shopping center at Van Buren and Litchfield Roads.

In 1992, Tom decided to retire! He closed the Wickenburg store, auctioning off the contents of that store and sold the Goodyear store to Tom Baggett. He and Shirley purchased a new motor home and began traveling. Several years later, they moved to Arizona City to get out of the hustle and bustle of growing Goodyear!

Tom Bulfer passed away this past December. He was 89 years old and had failing eye sight, but he continued to mentor and teach young folks the art of watchmaking.



Some Interesting Facts about Tolleson

Tolleson is home to at least 16 Fortune 500 corporations.

In the 1950's Tolleson was known as the "Vegetable Capital of the World."

Tolleson boasts of being the first city in Arizona with paved streets.

Tolleson's downtown was nearly wiped off the map on April 19, 1948 when the Farmer's Oil and Supply Company storage tanks exploded with 54,000 gallons in them. An entire city block was ablaze for two days, injuring 20 people.

1910 Postcard from Michigan

A simple postcard dated 1910 brings us so much history. This postcard was sent to Austin Hill, son of Henry Austin Hill, a very early settler in Coldwater. It's from his brother, Alba, who remained in Michigan.

Joseph Angus Hill appears in the 1900 census, living in Coldwater. His brother Henry A. Hill moved to Coldwater before 1910. Henry acquired patent issued land on the west side of what is now Dysart Road; Joseph had land adjacent to the west of Henry's. They and other local farmers formed the Hill Canal Co., bringing water to farmers in the area. Around 1930 he

subdivided some of his property into residential lots. This is where the Avondale street Hill Drive received its name. A son, Joseph A. Hill, had a service station and auto parts store on Western Ave from the 1940's until the he retired in 1973. (See more about the Hill family in *The Quarterly*, Vol. 9 #4, 2012, which can be accessed from our website.)

Notice the address. Avondale was called Coldwater until incorporation in 1946. Its post office changed its name to Avondale when it was moved from Billy Moore's stage coach stop in 1911 to the Avondale Ranch, at approximately what is now Bullard and Yuma Rd. So this postcard predates an Avondale address by about a year. Notice the stamp. Even though it is upside down, it is a one cent stamp, postmarked 1910. This stamp was first issued in 1895.

Here is a brief history of the United States Postal Service. In the American Colonies, informal independently run postal routes began in the larger cities as early as 1659. Service between cities like Boston to New York started in 1672. Of interest is the fact that at that time it was the recipient who paid the fee for this service.

In 1775, Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster General to oversee the delivery of mail. A Congressional Act in 1845 established uniform postal rates throughout the nation. At that time the rate was five cents for a distance of 300 miles or less and ten cents for 300 to 3000 miles. Two years later Congress authorized the production of postage stamps of five and ten cent denominations. The Post Office became more efficient and postage was reduced to three cents and covered any distance up to 3000 miles. You could still send mail without postage, but the recipient had to pay five cents. Stamps, prepaid postage, became mandatory in 1853. The "penny" postcard was issued in 1861.

All of this from an early postcard with a short message about the weather in Michigan! Isn't history fun!

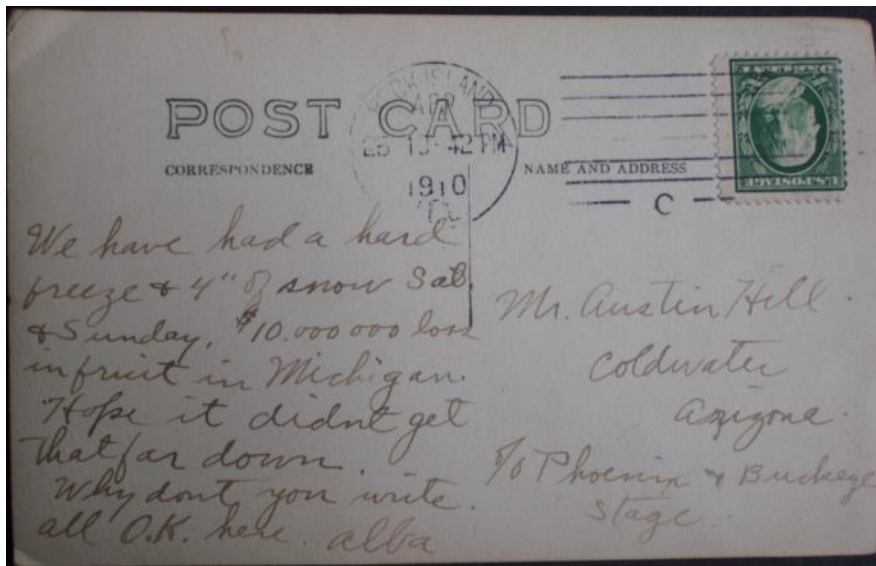
Sponsors of The Quarterly

As we start a new year and encourage membership to Three Rivers Historical Society we offer a unique opportunity to our community: membership as business/professionals or contributors. These membership categories qualify for being listed as Sponsors in each edition of *The Quarterly*. And these and all membership dues are tax deductible.

At press time the following have become sponsors of *The Quarterly*:

Contributors Stan Ashby
Celeste Crouch
Shelly Rasmussen
Business/Prof City of Goodyear

Thank you for your membership your support is truly appreciated!



The WASPs

Note: This article first appeared in January 2008

The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) was a paramilitary organization of women pilots that was formed by the combination of the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) and the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS.) The female pilots, eventually numbering 1,074, freed up male pilots for combat service. They flew more than 60 million miles in every military airplane.

As many as 25,000 women applied to join the WASP, a mere 1,830 were accepted, and only 1,074 passed the training and joined the organization. Jacqueline Cochran submitted proposals for the use of female pilots in non-combat missions after the outbreak of WWII in Europe. The proposal was turned down. She went to England and volunteered to fly for the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) which had been using female pilots since 1940.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, it became quite clear that there was a shortage of pilots. The Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron, headed by Nancy Love, began operation on September 10, 1942. The female pilots began ferrying planes from factory to airfields. The WFTD was established soon after under the command of Jacqueline Cochran. The two similar services were combined in July, 1943, under Cochran.

The women who joined the WASP were already licensed pilots. They were trained at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX, to fly the "Army way." With the exception of combat training, they received the same training that aviation cadets received. Following training they were stationed at 120 U.S. air bases. They flew millions of miles, taking airplanes from factories to military bases, towing targets for live anti-aircraft artillery practice, testing planes after maintenance, and transporting cargo. Almost every type of aircraft used by the Army Air Force was also flown by the women. From September, 1942, to December, 1944, the WASP delivered 12,650 aircraft of 78 different types.

Thirty-eight WASP pilots lost their lives while serving their country during the war. Eleven were killed in training and 27 were lost on active duty. However, because they were not considered to be in the military, a fallen WASP was sent home at family expense without military honors or a U.S. Flag on their coffin. They were civil service personnel and did not receive military benefits. It wasn't until 1977 that the WASP corp was given full military status. In 1984, each WASP was awarded the WWII Victory Medal. Those who had served more than one year also received the American Theater Ribbon/American Campaign Medal for their service during the war. In 2002, WASPs were allowed to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery with honors.

Luke Army Air Base had WASPs during WWII. Their primary duty was to test the AT-6 aircraft coming out of maintenance.



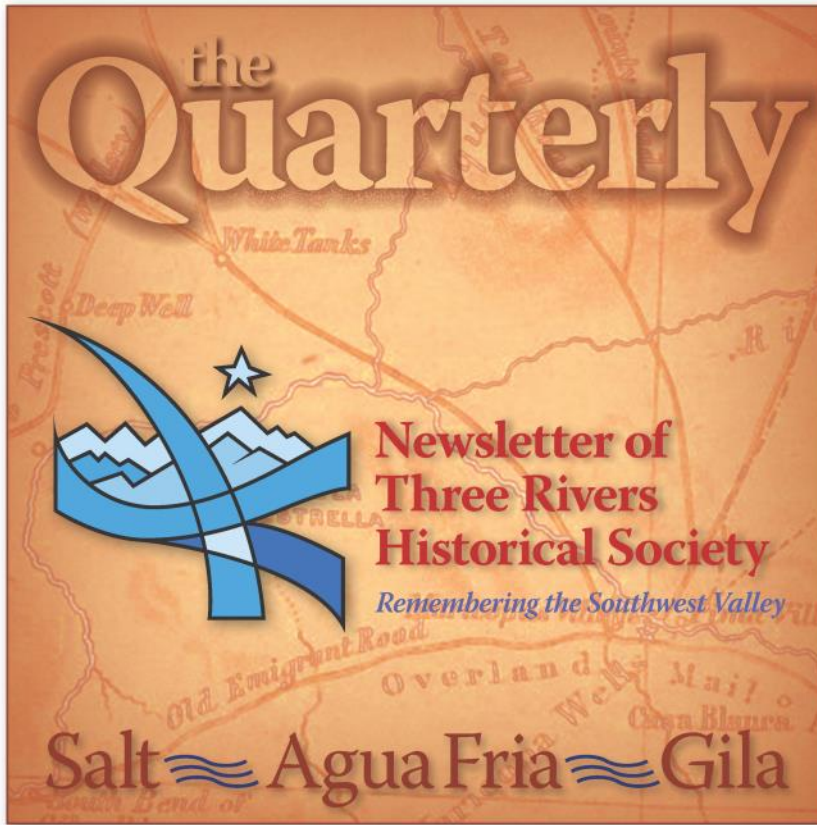
Letters to the Editor

"Mac" McClanaghan added to our "Do You Remember"

...And don't forget the "Big Burger Drive In", the A&W Root beer stand on highway 80, the Avon theater, the Oasis Drive In theater, the hot dog stand right next to Gills Furniture (the Fields family owned it) and Gould's store for penny candy, pick-a-winner suckers and the best wax lips in the country. Planting trees on Arbor Day when attending Avondale Elementary School. Making your own paddle in wood shop so Mr. Bosworth could break it over your butt. (you couldn't get away with that these days) Licking Gold Bond and S&H Green Stamps with my Mom filling books. The smell of fresh excelsior from the cooler at the beginning of summer. Remember the 10 cent popcorn machine in front of Bowman's Drug store in Goodyear. Summer vacation jobs working at Tal'-Wi-Wi grapes in Litchfield Park. If you were in the band in grade school, the Pioneers, the picnic at Encanto Park with all the free pop you could drink was fun. Mr. Tolman the band director, and Mr. Linville, the school bus driver, would drink beer. It's a wonder we got back alive! And do you remember "cooking school" in the Arizona Public Service building on Western Ave. during summer vacation? I think the late Lillian Gill taught the class. I still have my Reddy Kilowatt® pot holder in its original plastic wrapper.



Thanks, Mac, for more wonderful memories!



Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

- Student \$5* Single \$15*
 Family \$30* Business \$50
 Contributor \$100* Lifetime \$500

* Yearly Fee

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

David Meese, President , Treasurer

Mark Pelletier, 1st V.P., Assistant Treasurer

Laura Kaino, 2nd V.P.

Sally Kiko, Secretary

Board Members

Joann Gongaware, Diane Fekete, Wendy Neely,

Stephanie Karlin, Joseph Kinney

The Quarterly

Editors: Sally Kiko and Diane Fekete

Produced and Printed by

BMD Printing & Business Services

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at
The Goodyear Community Room , 14455 West Van Buren
Street, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest
speaker are e-mailed. Be sure to have your correct address.

E-mail Sally at: kskiko@cox.net

