

The Quarterly

Remembering the Southwest Valley

Three Rivers Historical Society

Salt • Agua Fria • Gila



The Grand Canyon celebrated one-hundred years as a National Park this year. The Grand Canyon, in northwestern Arizona, became a National Park by an act of Congress and was signed into law by **President Woodrow Wilson** on February 26, 1919. While not the deepest canyon in the world, it is known for its visually overwhelming size and intricate and colorful landscape. The Canyon is 277 miles long, up to 18 miles wide and as deep as one mile. It is agreed that the Colorado River established its course about 5 to 6 million years ago. Over time, the river has driven the shape and depth of the canyon. About 2 billion years of the earth's geological history have been exposed as the river cut their channels through layer after layer of rock. The Colorado Plateau was uplifted about that same time.

The area has been continuously inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years. They built settlements within the canyon and its many caves. The first European known to have seen the Grand Canyon was **Garcia Lopez de Cardenas** from Spain. He arrived in 1540. Members of his party, Pablo de Melgrossa, Juan Galeras and a third soldier, descended one third of the way down the canyon and turned back because of lack of water.

The Ancestral Puebloans, a Native American culture centered on the present-day Four Corners area, were the first known to live in the area of the canyon. It is currently believed that these Ancestral Puebloans are ancestors of the

modern Pueblo peoples. In addition, several distinct cultures have inhabited the Grand Canyon area: the Cohonina, the Havasupai, the Hualapai and the Sinagua. By the 16th century, newer cultures had evolved. The Hualapai inhabit an area on the southern side of the canyon; the Havasupai have been living in the area of Cataract Canyon since the beginning of the 13th century. The Navaho and Hopi live in a wide area from the San Francisco Peaks across northern Arizona.

In 1826, **James Ohio Pattie** and a group of mountain men are said to have explored the rim of the canyon. **Jacob Hamblin**, a Mormon missionary, was sent by Brigham Young to find a suitable river crossing. With the help of local Hualapai and white settlers, they found the Crossing of the Fathers and the locations that would become Lee's Ferry and Pearce Ferry.

John Strong Newberry was the first geologist to visit the Grand Canyon in 1858. **Major John Wesley Powell** led the first expedition down the Canyon in four reinforced rowboats built in Chicago for the expedition. Powell and his party set out from Green River, Wyoming on May 24, 1869. They traveled down to the confluence with the Colorado River. Their food spoiled after getting wet in rainstorms and waves. At Moab, Utah, three men left the expedition and chose to walk 75 miles to a Mormon settlement. They were

El Tovar Hotel Early 1900s



never seen again. The remaining men completed the journey through the canyon on August 13, 1869. In 1871, Powell was the first to use the term “Grand Canyon”; previously it had been called the “Big Canyon”.

The Grand Canyon became a national monument in 1908 and a national park in 1919. The federal administrators who manage the park and its resources face many challenges including negotiating water issues with various tribal representatives, controlling tour overflight noise levels, and forest fire management. Between 2003 and 2011, 2,215 mining claims had been requested adjacent to the canyon. Mining has been suspended since 2009, when Interior Secretary **Ken Salazar** withdrew 1 million acres from the permitting process. Legal procedures continue to be heard in the court system regarding mining near the canyon.

The famous El Trovar hotel, built on the South Rim in 1905, has been welcoming visitors to its beautiful rooms and impressive lobby. Nearby is the Buckey O’Neill Cabin built in the 1890’s by **William “Buckey” O’Neill**. It is the oldest standing structure on the South Rim and is currently used as a guest house. Kolb Studio built in 1904 by brothers **Ellsworth and Emery Kolb**, photographers, today serves as an art gallery and exhibit. The Hopi House, built by **Mary Jane Coulter** in 1905, was built to resemble an ancient Hopi settlement called Old Oraibi, located on the Third Mesa in eastern Arizona. The Hopi, who sold arts and crafts to South Rim visitors, lived in the house.

Arizona is known as the *Grand Canyon State*. This national park attracts visitors from around the world. More than 6 million people visited the Grand Canyon in 2018.

From Stagecoaches to Spacecraft

Three Rivers Historical Society has been invited to develop an exhibit at the Litchfield Park Historical Society Museum. We are honored to have a venue to showcase our photos and the stories of the people who founded, settled, encouraged growth and led the cities of Avondale and Goodyear. It’s been fun to trace the history of the area that began with a stagecoach stop on the banks of the Agua Fria River to two modern cities that can brag of contributing to the space program and astronauts that were a part of our communities. Avondale and Goodyear continue to embrace growth and strive to improve the lives of their citizens.

It all began on the west bank of the Agua Fria River where **Billy Moore** built a stagecoach stop complete with horse corrals, a cold-water well and eventually a general store and post office. The stage stop was called Coldwater. The Homestead Act and the Desert Land Act allowed farmers with little money, but with a desire to own their own land, to settle in our area and contribute to our community. The construction of Roosevelt dam assured a reliable water supply. Soon merchants, barbers, doctors, bankers and



restauranters came to contribute their skills to enrich our lives.

The Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, but most of all World War II, impacted our history. The town of Coldwater was on one of the routes to California where many fleeing the Dust Bowl thought they could find work and a new start.

Ulysses S. Grant

United States President

On March 4, 1869, a rather unlikely candidate took the oath of office as the eighteenth president of the United States. The image of Ulysses S. Grant as a cigar chomping, rumpled Union general whose dogged determination helped win the Civil War and gained him two turbulent terms as commander in chief has basis in fact.

But there was much more to Grant than this familiar portrait. He was a complex product of many experiences that helped forge the man who became one of the great leaders of 19th century America.

Above all Grant was a true Westerner. As a newly commissioned second lieutenant, Grant reported to his first posting at Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis. After nearly three quiet years with the U.S. Army 4th Infantry, his regiment received orders for Mexico.

Sam, as his fellow cadets knew him, gained a reputation as the best horseman at the United States Military Academy where it was claimed “rider and horse held together like the fabled centaur...” Now in Mexico mounted on a barely broken mustang, Grant humbly admitted the recurring struggle to master his stubborn steed “as to which way we should go and sometimes whether we would go at all”.

In Mexico City, Grant underwent his baptism under fire. Drawing on his gunnery training at the Academy, Grant formed a small party of his infantrymen to drag a mobile mountain howitzer through a series of ditches. He and his cobbled together crew of cannoneers hauled it up into a church’s bell tower. From this height they lobbed 12-pound shot and shell into the enemy. Grant’s innovative actions and those of some of his fellow junior officers drove the Mexicans from their defenses. With Mexico City won, the end of the war was in sight.

In 1848, Grant triumphantly returned to St. Louis, where he married Julia Dent. The couple spent the next several years at eastern duty stations. Despite the boredom of garrison routine, they enjoyed themselves.

All this changed in 1852 when the Army shipped Grant off to a tour at far away Fort Vancouver, which became Washington Territory. A lonely, lowly infantry officer,

separated from his new family, Grant found life there tedious at best. One positive aspect of Grant’s early days in the West was periodic contact with some of the local American Indians. These encounters likely influenced his future views on the treatment of the Western tribes. Early on he observed,

“It is really my opinin (*sic*), that the whole [Indian] race would be harmless and peaceable if they were not put upon by the whites”.

In August 1853, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis informed Grant of his promotion to captain. This news brought a transfer to Fort Humboldt, California. Spending less than a half-year at the remote assignment, Grant missed his family and entrepreneurial prospects in Vancouver. Charges of drinking, which began during his days on the West Coast, marred his reputation. Sinking to the depths, Grant took leave, briefly returned to Fort Vancouver to conclude some of his remaining business affairs and headed back to Julia and his two young sons in St. Louis.

By August 1854, Grant again was in St. Louis, having resigned his commission to try and make his mark in the civilian world. For the next four years, his labors to provide for his little family by running a 60-acre farm and selling cordwood resulted in nothing but hardship. In 1858 he tried his hand in real estate. Regrettably he sometimes failed to collect rents.

With his finances in ruins, Grant returned to his home in Galena, Illinois. His fortunes remained uncertain, at least until May of 1860 when he accepted an \$800-a-year clerkship in his hard-driving father’s leather business. Settling the family into a modest house, Grant finally made ends meet.

The turning point came when Grant returned to the military. It brought him the success he had long sought. On June 17, 1861, Grant became the commanding colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry regiment. Less than two months later, his West Point training and martial knowledge brought a commission as a brigadier general of Union volunteers, a promotion that was requested by President Abraham Lincoln.



Bob Schulke, Lifetime Member

Bob Schulke, a longtime West Valley resident, passed away on August 23, 2019.

He joined the Navy when WWII began. He was one of the early naval aviators to come to Goodyear to test airplanes modified by Goodyear Aircraft Corporation and to ferry them to where they were needed. The Litchfield Naval Air Facility was under construction, so he and his fellow flyers lived in local apartments. The luck came when he met and married Margaret Collier and decided to stay in the area.

After the war, he became a partner with his father-in-law running the Collier Ranch on the east bank of the Agua Fria River near Cashion. After retiring from farming, he became a real estate broker and developer. Bob served as a Maricopa County Planning Commissioner, a Tolleson Union High School Board member and a member of the Estrella Rotary. More importantly to us, he believed in what the Three Rivers Historical Society was doing; he became a lifetime member. He was one of our guest speakers, too. One story he told was of a flood that damaged many acres of farm land; he spent a lot of time getting the land level again and rebuilding irrigation canals.

The joke came when he told us that he sold the farm to the developers of Coldwater Springs and they contoured the land he had so carefully leveled to make a golf course!

Bob and his daughter, Sally Marcotte, recently helped me by providing more information about the Collier family.

We are so grateful that Bob Schulke decided to call the West Valley home and serve our communities so well in so many ways.



Grant Cont'd

Grant eventually gained a much-deserved reputation for leadership fighting in the Civil War. His fame grew as he delivered results, although these were often costly in both blood and national treasure. He led the Federal Army to victory. Grant was elevated to General of the Army with a four-star rank in July 1866. President Andrew Johnson appointed Grant Secretary of War in August 1867.

This former general turned commander in chief should be considered the second most important president of the 19th century after Lincoln. Grant's presidential tenure (1869-1877) saw the massive growth of railroads in the West, the encouragement of homesteading, which led to increases in agricultural production, support of mining operations and his well-meaning, but controversial "peace policy" to resolve white interactions with the native peoples of the West. All of this demonstrated a desire to bind the nation together and deal fairly with the diverse population in Gilded Age America. In this, Grant genuinely attempted to take up Lincoln's mantle.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

On June 18th, the Three Rivers Historic Society met for an historical happy hour at Aguila's Hideaway on Dysart Road. We enjoyed hearing about the history of the building from Frank Scott. We also enjoyed appetizers, libations and a tour of the underground bar.

Originally built by local businessman, Cecil Howe in about 1960, it was built underground to get around a deed restriction that would not allow a bar "on" the property. The only portion above ground at that time was the entrance and the restrooms. In the Sixties, it was a popular place to drink and dance on weekends. The Hideaway Trio consisting of Duane Henry, Allen "Mack" McCarley and Tom Hilton provided the music.



The Hideaway Trio

The bar was long and curved around the corner of the room. When air conditioning was added, they had to jack hammer the floor to lower the bar area to provide space for the duct work. This left the booths and dance floor at a higher level. A few of our members remembered the heyday of this unique bar, the music and fun they had enjoyed there.

Cecil Howe also owned the Western Lanes Bowling Alley adjacent to the bar. There was a wooden walkway between the bar and the rear of the bowling alley that allowed the bar to deliver alcoholic drinks ordered by the bowlers. I wonder if that was legal even then?

However, car trouble or finding a good job here convinced them to settle in the area. Some families came for the warm, dry weather advised for tuberculosis.



When war seemed to be imminent, Goodyear Tire and Rubber came to the West Valley to manage an aircraft factory built by the Department of Defense. Experienced workers and supervisors moved from Akron, Ohio, to the not yet formed town of Goodyear. They began building aircraft parts for the military. The need for production workers was great; gas rationing made living nearby particularly attractive. Homes, apartments and trailer parks were built to help accommodate the workers.

The new residents met regularly to bring improvements to their new community. Paved roads were an early priority; home delivery of milk was another service they were able to obtain. They eventually agreed to form a new town and chose the name Goodyear. In 1946, both Avondale, formerly Coldwater, and Goodyear incorporated. Town governments were formed; ordinary people became leaders of their respective towns. Each town had citizens who influenced their culture and growth.

The early families inspire us; they experienced hardships, they worked hard to either establish a business or make a farm successful. Many, while working long hours, took time to serve on school boards or in civic organizations to better their communities.

We hope you will take the time to visit the Litchfield Park Historical Society Museum at 13912 W. Camelback Rd, Litchfield Park. The Grand Opening of the exhibit will be on October 20, 2019 from 1-4 PM. The museum is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 – 4. All are welcome.

Mid-Air Collision near Avondale - 1952

Having military bases as neighbors can mean near disaster for our towns. On the sunny day of June 13, 1952, a mid-air collision occurred in the airspace southeast of Luke AFB. Three airmen were killed in the crash, two in the B-26B bomber, the tow operator and the aerial engineer. The bomber pilot parachuted to safety. Also killed was the pilot of the F-84G. Both planes were based at Luke and were returning after a gunnery range practice mission.

Mrs. L.R. Betterton, who lived a quarter-mile south of Van Buren near where the crash occurred, was a witness. She said, "I looked up and saw the larger plane disintegrating and the jet coming down toward the home of my neighbor Fred Swick. The jet roared over my house and broke into pieces as it crashed into a shed where Mr. Swick stores gasoline and oil. The shed caught fire. I was standing about 75 feet from where the jet fell."

In the Swick home were LaVonna Manning, her mother and her sister Betty. "It was terrible, we thought it had hit us for a while. Everybody screamed." The wreckage

of the jet landed behind the Swick home on Dysart Road. The remains of the B-26 landed in a cotton field about ½ mile away. Burned wreckage from the collision narrowly missed a farm labor camp and two homes. Several out buildings were set afire. No one on the ground was injured. Luke AFB reported that a board of officers had been set up to investigate the crash.



Republic F-84G Thunderjet

US Air Force Incident Report: 13 June 1952

13 June 1952 - Republic F-84G-11-RE Thunderjet, 51-10121, of the 127th Pilot Training Group, crashes south of Luke AFB, Arizona, after colliding with Douglas B-26B-66-DL Invader



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Three Rivers Society Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 5pm.

Check website for location of meetings.

Be sure we have your correct address.

Email Sally: kdkiko@cox.net



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