

Fall
2020

Litchfield Legends

A publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum

Looking Back 100 Years: The Year That Was 1920

By Lisa Hegarty

The decade known as the Roaring 20s conjures images of Prohibition, jazz, flappers, and lively dances like the Charleston. Often seen as a period of fun and prosperity, a closer look at the year 1920 itself offers a less rosy picture than what is often depicted in popular culture. In fact, we may note some interesting parallels to today.

Recession The decade dawned with an economic downturn. Though it would only last from January of 1920 to July 1921, a worldwide deflationary recession set in fourteen months after the end of World War I. For the U.S. it was the most severe recession since the American Revolutionary War. Industrial production declined by 30%, and unemployment rose from 5.2% to 8.7%. For context, the current unemployment rate in the U.S. is 8.4% while roughly 4% is considered the natural rate of unemployment.

One factor that fueled the recession was surplus labor. As many factory jobs had been filled by immigrants and African Americans migrating from the South during the war years, returning soldiers found it difficult to reenter the workforce. Factories previously focused on wartime production needed either to shut down or retool their operations. The year before had seen a record number of labor strikes—over 3,600—spanning numerous industries, which added more labor tension.

Increased agricultural output, particularly in Europe after the end of the war, also played a role in the recession. One of the effects felt in Arizona was the drop of the cotton market, which nearly put Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. out of business. Its subsidiary, the Southwest Cotton Company, had grown nearly a third of all cotton in Arizona. The collapsing price of cotton in 1920 caused Goodyear executives to restructure their Arizona farm holdings.

Aftereffects of a Pandemic In 1920, the world was just emerging from the deadly pandemic, which infected 500 million and killed as many as 50 million. Burning through the globe in three waves, the influenza pandemic of 1918, often referred to as the Spanish flu, had only subsided by the summer of 1919. Freshly etched in the collective memory were publically implemented measures of social distancing, mask wearing, and the shutdown of non-essential services to mitigate the spread of disease. Historians note that, like the war, the pandemic took a significant psychological toll on survivors as many people experienced the loss of a loved one.



A Black soldier and a National Guardsman meet on the street in Chicago in 1919 after militia were brought in to quell violence

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www.LPHSMuseum.org

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Letter From the President

Hi everyone,

We are excited to announce that beginning Wednesday, October 21, the LPHS Museum will reopen to the public. In March we were faced with an immediate closure due to the rapid spread of Covid-19 throughout the country. The closing of the museum was done in compliance with the order from Governor Doug Ducey, followed by Litchfield Park Mayor Tom Schoaf, requiring all non-essential businesses to close. We have continued to remain closed until the order was lifted, and we felt reopening would be safe for our visitors and volunteers. We have received approval to reopen from City Manager Bill Stephens providing we follow these PPE safety regulations: ALL visitors must wear face masks, have no indication of illness, use hand sanitizer provided upon entering the museum, and maintain distancing of 6 ft. We are limiting museum occupancy to a maximum of 10 visitors at one time. We are considering this our “soft” opening. If either Mayor Schoaf or Governor Ducey order businesses closed again, we will immediately comply.

Meanwhile, our volunteers have been busy behind the scenes during our closure. We have a great new exhibit coming up in spring on *rubber*; and we have new videos available through Facebook, as well as offering online lectures. We are in the process of updating our website to make it more user friendly for viewing on your phone, tablet, or computer. In addition to all of this, we are expanding our online store for purchases of event tickets and our gift shop items.

Our P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center project is continuing to move forward. We want to thank the Litchfield Independent newspaper for the fabulous article published on the Center’s fundraising progress. We appreciate their continuing efforts to bring you updates as we move forward.

In closing, we hope and pray that every one of you and your loved ones continue to remain safe during this time of great duress. We look forward to getting back to our “new normal” soon. Until then, enjoy this great issue of *Litchfield Legends*, check out our new website, and stay in touch through Facebook.

My very best to all of you.

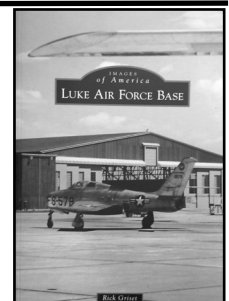

Nancy Schafer

President, LPHS and MUSEUM



New at the Museum Gift Shop

We have copies of the much anticipated book from Luke Air Force Base historian Rick Griset. Stop by to pick up a copy or purchase on our web site and we will mail it to you. **Luke Air Force Base** is from the Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing. The book covers the history of the local base from its’ beginnings as Luke Field in 1941 to the home of the 56th Fighter Wing in 2019.

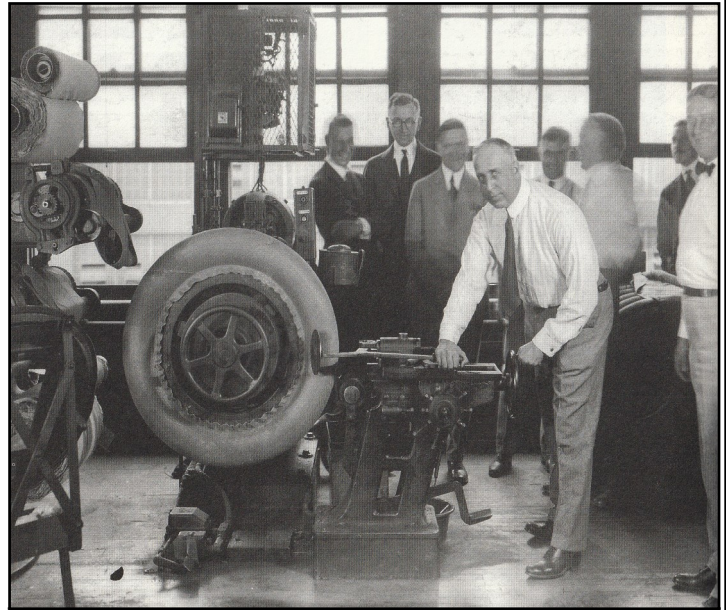


Rolling on Rubber

“Rolling on Rubber” is the working title for a new exhibit being planned for the Litchfield Park Museum. Curators Libby Rouse, Lisa Hegarty, and Judy Cook have been working for the past several months on an exhibit that will trace the development of the rubber tire during the first half of the 20th century.

Tire companies transitioned from the use of natural resources to their synthetic replacements in the production of tires in an ongoing quest to improve the quality of their product. The exhibit will showcase such things as vulcanization, tire types, tire reinforcements, the development of synthetic rubber, advertising, and the many ingenious uses found for rubber derivatives. Included will be the role that the Southwest Cotton Co. and the Southwest Valley played in the production of the long-staple cotton that was needed by Goodyear during the early years of tire manufacturing. Visitors to this exhibit will also discover exactly who Charles Goodyear was and his relationship to the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

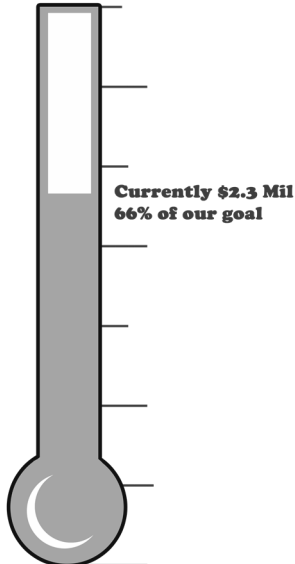
You will not want to miss this exhibit that will relate the story of this extraordinary leap in transportation. The opening is being scheduled for some time in the spring of 2021.



P.W. Litchfield, then factory manager, personally helped build Goodyear’s 45-millionth tire in 1922.

Capital Campaign Update

Our Goal - \$3.5 Million



Currently \$2.3 Mil
66% of our goal

The P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center is well on its way to becoming a reality.

Learn more on our website.

LPHSMuseum.org



WANTED: Items to Add to Our Collections

Do you have toys from the 30s and 40s? We are looking for all types of old toys, including red-handled jump ropes, metal toys, original tinker toy sets, marbles, and roller skates with the key.

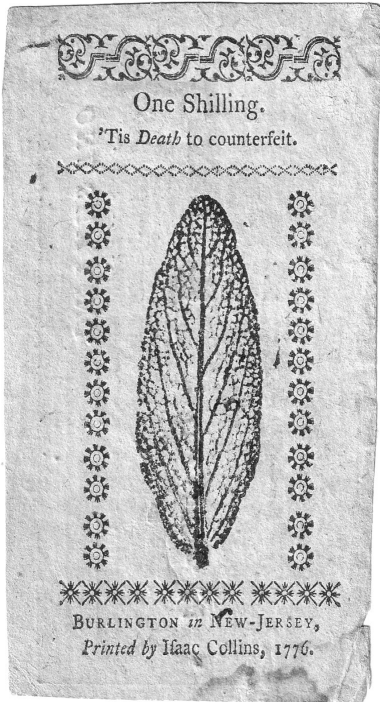


We are also collecting Covid-19 memorabilia. Now is the best time to document the response of our community to the coronavirus. We are asking for unusual masks, signage, photos, and personal stories that reflect the impact this has had on our lives.



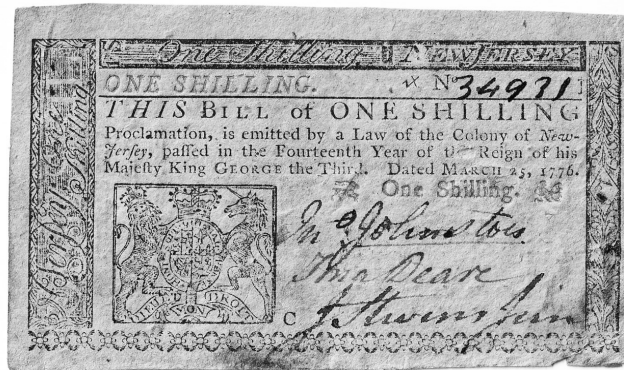
NEW IN OUR ARCHIVE: COLONIAL MONEY

The LPHS recently received four Colonial Currency bills that once belonged to Kenneth McMicken, first cousin of Paul Litchfield. McMicken came to Arizona in 1917 with a degree in agriculture at the behest of Litchfield. His job was to become a leader in the Southwest Cotton Company, a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. Eventually he oversaw the experimental methods that were developed at Goodyear Farms. He became an expert in cotton, irrigation farming, the *green-feeding* of cattle, water management, and the raising of quarter horses. He was also the first president of the Litchfield Park Kiwanis.



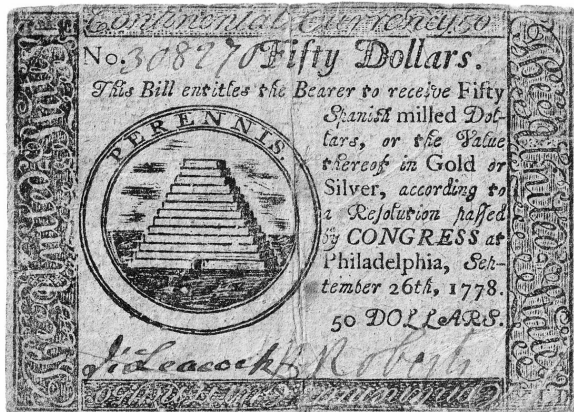
One Shilling (back) Printed in New Jersey in 1776. Note: "Tis Death to counterfeit."

McMicken had grown up in Brooklyn; and his father James was a stockbroker. James had an avid interest in actual printed money; and the Colonial Currency was a part of his collection which his son Kenneth inherited. Now part of the LPHS McMicken Collection, the bills are all different and date from 1775 to 1780. They come from the State of Massachusetts Bay, New Jersey, The United States (Colonial Currency), and The United Colonies (Continental Currency). Because the bills were printed on paper made from cotton linters, it was easy to remove a small strip of tree-pulp paper from the back of each bill. Each bill is signed and dated; and on the back of one of them is printed *'Tis death to counterfeit.* Counterfeit gangs were in existence at that time and contributed to the devaluing of the currency.

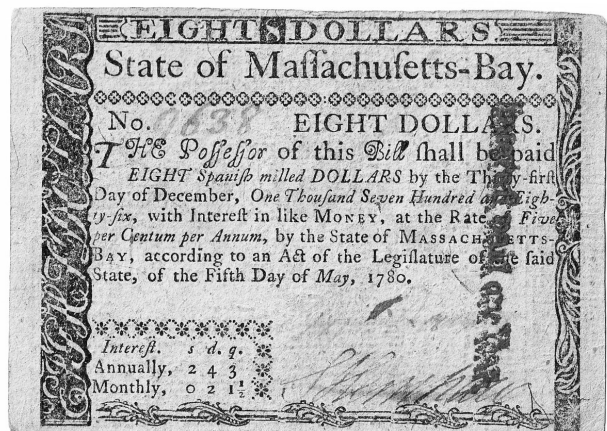


One Shilling (front). "by law of the Colony of New Jersey, passed in the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of his Majesty, King George the Third." 1776

These bills will be on exhibit in the new P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center. It will be fun for children to speculate on whether or not one of our Founding Fathers may have owned one of these bills.



"Bearer to receive Fifty Spanish milled Dollars, or the value thereof in Gold or Silver, according to a Resolution passed by Congress at Philadelphia, September 26th, 1778"



State of Massachusetts-Bay pays the owner of this Eight Dollar bill interest at 5% through 1786 in Spanish milled Dollars. (1780)

WHY BE A MEMBER?

For most of us a Membership Card to an organization, museum or club is something we pay our dues for and then put in our wallet, purse or a desk drawer and never give it another thought.

But a membership is something that has value to you, or you wouldn't have joined in the first place. Your membership to the **Litchfield Park Historical Society and MUSEUM (LPHS)** is much more than a card indicating you have paid your dues. When you become a member of the LPHS:

YOU become part of a family that cares passionately about the cultural heritage of the Southwest Valley, and recognizes the value of the history, culture, and arts of this unique area.

YOU encourage us to continue our goal to preserve priceless historic artifacts, photos, and memorabilia with your continuous donations. We currently house a vast number of archival items, research files and recorded oral history interviews.

YOU urge us to continue with our offerings of quality educational programming for children and adults. Our free lectures, classroom visitations, and "hands on" teaching events inspire new learning opportunities among the young and old.

YOU will be joining a group of people and businesses supporting the growth and expansion of the LPHS to become the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center. Our new home will include informative galleries providing hi-tech exhibits that bring history alive, a research library for historians, and a community center providing educational enrichment opportunities for lectures, programming, and cultural events.



We invite you to join the LPHS, to "Step Up" and become part of our continually growing family. Enjoy the programs and events we offer. Stop by our museum and walk through our permanent collection. Enrich your mind with our changing exhibits, bringing you exciting topics that have been researched and professionally displayed for your enjoyment. Our museum is where "The Past Comes Alive."



As a member you receive: Collectors' Corner publications, your name listed in our Annual Report, an invitation to our Annual Meeting and Celebration, and personal invitations to special exhibits and events.



The aftermath of the pandemic had an economic impact as well. Especially deadly to those between the ages of 20 and 40, it decimated a significant portion of the workforce. From 1918-1921 most countries experienced an estimated 6% reduction in real GDP per capita, a measurement of the average standard of living for individuals.

At the same time, the pandemic led to better-organized efforts to monitor and maintain public health with the development of a national system for reporting disease across the U.S. Other health coordination efforts were also getting underway around the world in 1920, and historians cite the pandemic as a major impetus for socialized healthcare in Europe.

Prohibition Though signed in 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment, which prohibited the sale and transport of alcohol, went into effect January 16, 1920. An age of illegal trade and bars sprang up as a result, but among the outcomes of prohibition was an estimated 30% to 50% decrease in alcohol consumption and a drop in deaths caused by cirrhosis of the liver. However, by the end of the decade, alcoholism was a bigger problem than before, and tainted liquor contributed to over 50,000 deaths.

Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment

The women’s suffrage movement was already 100 years old before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Needless to say, it had been a long uphill battle. Piecemeal gains varying from state to state allowed women to vote in some but not all elections. The West, however, proved to be progressive in this measure. All states west of the Mississippi allowed women to vote by 1920. Arizona gave women the right to vote in 1912. On August 18, 1920, ratification finally granted women’s suffrage nationwide.

Racial Unrest The year 1920 sat squarely between the Red Summer of 1919 and the Tulsa race massacre of 1921. The summer of 1919 saw racial unrest in

Chicago, Illinois; Washington D.C.; Knoxville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Phillips County, Arkansas; and Omaha, Nebraska. Competition for jobs and housing among returning war veterans, immigrants, and African Americans was an ingredient in the racial tensions. Financial insecurity compounded by the recession and prejudices fomented unrest. African American war vets asserted themselves when confronted with the denial of basic rights and adequate housing. While 1920 was relatively quieter, the KKK was experiencing a revival, and the devastating Tulsa race massacre, which would bring destruction to a prospering black community, loomed on the horizon.

Deadly Terrorist Attack on Wall Street It was the deadliest terrorist attack in America at that time and



The scene of the Wall Street bombing in 1920

remains unsolved today. On September 16, 1920, a man parked a horse cart loaded with explosives in the middle of Wall Street during the lunch rush. It’s believed he dismounted and vanished into the crowd minutes before an explosion, which killed 38 people and injured 300. The crime remained unsolved, but investigators surmised

it was the work of Italian anarchists based on analysis of communications similar to those used in bombings from the previous year. The attack occurred in the midst of the first Red Scare immediately following WWI, which centered on perceived threats from the American labor movement, anarchist movements, and political radicalism.

The Birth of Radio Prior to World War I, radio was a method of one-to-one communication often relegated to hobbyists. Few saw any practical application for the technology as it seemed hardly different from the telephone. Following the war, with the expansion of appliance use in the home, new radio manufacturers produced and marketed ready-made radios to the public, rendering the older and more elaborate equipment obsolete. Searching for ways to attract more buyers, they developed radio programming.

On November 2, 1920, the

first commercially licensed radio station broadcast live results of that year's presidential election. It demonstrated radio's potential to reach large numbers of people in real time. This ushered in the era of mass communication, which fostered the development of American popular culture. People in all



Listening to the radio in the 1920s

parts of the country could listen to the same music and be informed of current events as they unfolded. In 1922 there were 28 radio stations in the U.S., which jumped to 1,400 in two years. By 1923, 1.5 million households owned radio sets, and by the end of the decade, half of all households in America had radios.

A Transfer of Power and the 1920 Election Republican Warren G. Harding won the 1920 presidential election, signaling a turning away from President Woodrow Wilson's era of internationalism and economic reforms toward a more conservative agenda of minimizing government involvement in the economy while implementing higher tariffs and larger tax cuts. Though the public was unaware of it at the time, the country had already undergone a kind of transfer of power before the election. First Lady Edith Wilson was essentially the de-facto president from October 1919 to the end of Wilson's term in the spring of 1920 following a stroke he suffered while campaigning for U.S. acceptance of the League of Nations. With her husband now an invalid suffering from paralysis, partial blindness, and brain damage, she became his gatekeeper in the West Wing, controlling access and making policy decisions on his behalf. Few in the upper echelons of government were ever aware of the degree of his ill health.

Then and Now Americans in 1920 faced a period of flux, leaving them to navigate the aftereffects of several calamitous events that would bruise the economy and fray the fabric of society: a mystifying pandemic, a global conflict, a terrorist attack, and racial unrest. Some events led to change, such as better public health initiatives. Others remained unresolved. Not unlike today, a new mass communication technology introduced both benefits and challenges in responsibly disseminating information and ideas; and though the economy improved by 1921, an income gap persisted for the remainder of the decade. Over 30% of the nation's income went to a privileged 5%. While the years surrounding 1920 set precedents, their events uncannily mirror today's issues and bring to light history's cyclical nature. ♦

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Sun Health

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Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



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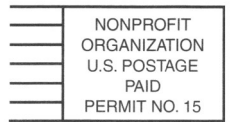
Margie Martinez, La Loma Mexican Grille



PO Box 1936
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340

Location Address: 13912 W Camelback Rd.

Email: office@LPHSMuseum.org
www.LPHSMuseum.org



Do you have empty aluminum cans?

The LPHS will recycle them for you. Leave them at the garage door of 610 N. Old Litchfield Road, Litchfield Park. The money will help the LPHS pay its utility bills. *Aluminum only. No tin cans please.



Join Us. It is through your dues and donations that we are able to continue our efforts to preserve the history of Litchfield Park. ***Become a member today.***

LPHS 2021 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2021 membership year

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Annual Membership Dues Single Adult \$25 Family \$35 Business/Professional \$60
 Contributor \$125 Benefactor \$300

I would like to make an additional Special Donation of: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Thank you! Please make your check payable to: **Litchfield Park Historical Society**
PO Box 1936, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Would you be interested in volunteering for our organization? Yes

The Litchfield Park Historical Society is an official IRS 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation, and membership dues and other donations are tax deductible for persons who itemize.

Online Membership Form is available on our website: www.LPHSMuseum.org