

P.W. Litchfield HERITAGE CENTER



History, Arts, and Culture of the Southwest Valley

FALL 2023

The History Behind Arizona's Initial Point

On a January day in 1867, a man named William H. Pierce stood on a 150-foot, rocky hill in the northern foothills of the Estrella Mountains. He observed that the "Salt River, at this season of the year, is a large stream." The Gila River also flowed with water running 200 feet wide and three to four feet deep. Mostly dry today, the confluence of these rivers was once a distinguishing landmark for mapping Arizona.

Pierce was contracted to lead a surveying party to measure and establish the baseline and meridian of the Arizona territory, and the hilltop he stood on that day had been chosen two years earlier to serve as the initial point. Establishing those lines was the first step in dividing Arizona into tidy squares.

In surveying land for maps, a principal meridian serves as an imaginary line running north to south, which becomes the beginning point for measuring points east or west. These maps also need a baseline, or an east-west running line, for measuring points north or south. This is the basis for the Public Land Survey System which has its roots in the 1785 Land Ordinance, a mathematical system developed by Thomas Jefferson for dividing land into six-mile squares. This system allows for successively smaller subdivisions of these squares to chart land ownership. Maps of this kind meant landowners could accurately identify property boundaries, and they are still in use today.

While proximity to the juncture of the Gila and Salt rivers made the location an easy choice for the initial point, a man-made landmark placed there more than a decade earlier was a more likely factor. Perched on the hill was a fourteen-foot-tall monument. It was built of stone, stood eight feet high, and was topped by a six-foot-



Initial Point Marker

tall post. The structure bore an inscription: "United States and Mexican Boundary Survey, 1851.—This monument erected in 1851 to mark the junction of the Gila and Salt River. —A.H. Gray, U.S. Surveyor."

When the war between the United States and Mexico ended in 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo determined that Mexico would cede over 300 million acres of land to the United States, which makes up much of present-day California, Nevada, Utah, and portions of Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Colorado. What proved tougher to determine was the precise path the international border would take between Texas and California.

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Dear Friends of the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center,

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center Mission Statement

To connect generations by fostering an understanding and appreciation of the history, arts, and culture of the Southwest Valley.

I'd like to first express how grateful I am for the opportunity to serve the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center as Executive Director. Being part of this organization for several years, I've been inspired by the ceaseless devotion of the volunteers who have built an amazing foundation for the LHC. We're entering an exciting time of transition as we grow into a strong regional resource.

I'd also like to acknowledge a change of leadership on our Board of Directors. After serving with dedication and distinction for two terms as President, Nancy Schafer has stepped into the role of Past President. Judy Cook will be serving as Board President and Robert Field as Vice President. Congratulations to them both, and I look forward to working with the entire Board and all of our volunteers in bringing our local history, arts, and culture to life.

The best museum and cultural experiences engage, illuminate, and build understanding. With a multifaceted history enriched by varied human experiences, our corner of the Valley is fertile ground for programming that does just that.

Our latest exhibits trace the story of long-time Southwest Valley landmarks, The Wigwam and Rancho La Loma, while our upcoming Heritage Lecture Series presentations continue to illuminate human experiences of the past. We're also proud to be partnering with Ballet Folklorico Esperanza for our third annual Las Posadas event in December, which honors the Southwest Valley's history and culture while paying tribute to the origins of the St. Thomas Aquinas Mission Church on its centennial.

But there are more stories to uncover and elevate. As recent inheritors of the Three Rivers Historical Society's collections, we are working to broaden our exhibits to better reflect the stories of the Southwest Valley region. We also continue to build on our oral history collection of over 200 recordings of long-time residents of the region, and our team of LHC preservationists is bringing attention to the story of Col. Dale Bumstead and the historic Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch, which you can read about in this newsletter.

I hope the rest of the stories in this issue also bring to light some new facet of our history for you. I look forward to seeing you at the museum and our upcoming events!

Lisa Hegarty,
Executive Director
P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center

The Arizona portion of the boundary was to follow a line from east to west running “down the middle of the Gila River” to the Colorado River. Compared to other segments of the boundary survey, this was perhaps the easiest to accomplish. Crippled by mismanagement, mishap, political wrangling, and dispute, the post-war border survey dragged on into early 1853 whereupon U.S. Minister to Mexico, James Gadsden began negotiating a new border with Mexico. It wasn't until 1854 when the current international border was settled by the Gadsden Purchase. For six years the Gila River marked a significant length of the boundary between the two countries, placing parts of today's southern Arizona counties like Greenlee, Graham, Pinal, Maricopa, and Yuma in Mexico and all of Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise.

The point from which Arizona's land survey was initiated stood alone and apart 158 years ago. Better known today as **Monument Hill**, it finds itself nestled against the Phoenix Racetrack, abutting the south end of Avondale Boulevard. The imposing monument erected in 1851 is long gone. In its place is a circular, five-foot diameter concrete slab with four one-and-a-half foot long arms pointed in each of the cardinal directions. Now inconspicuous and low-lying, a steel disk embedded in the slab's center marks where the monument pole once rose, marking the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico while overlooking a valley ripe for cultivation. As William Pierce meticulously laid out the state's baseline and meridian with his crew of chainmen, he wrote in his field notes: “I consider this valley ... as containing some of the best agricultural land I have yet seen in the Territory, and would recommend that it be subdivided at an early day.” He likely could not have imagined the desert valley below would become a sprawling metropolis.



View of the Gila River from Monument Hill

Board of Directors' Statement

The **Board of Directors** of the **P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center** is very proud to announce that we have hired our **first Executive Director – Lisa Hegarty**. Lisa comes with a broad experience in education, holding a Masters in Bilingual/Multicultural Education from Northern Arizona University and a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from the University of Arizona.

Lisa came to us as a volunteer in 2016 and has done remarkable work over the past eight years. While exhibiting excellent research abilities and writing skills, she has conceptualized several creative and visionary

projects for our organization. Among them are our **Las Posadas** event, our **Bike and Seek** family events, and a hands-on outdoor experience for children called **Waterfest**. She oversees our **Heritage Lecture Series** and our *small class* offerings and designed our **Junior Historian Program**. Lisa coordinates and trains our docents; and has been a **curator** for three of our exhibits. Lisa served two terms as **Vice President** on our Board, as well as having written and administered grants. Leading the way with our **PR and Marketing** endeavors, she has moved us into areas of social media which has raised our visibility with younger audiences.

Please join us in welcoming our new Executive Director!

NEWEST EXHIBIT AT THE MUSEUM

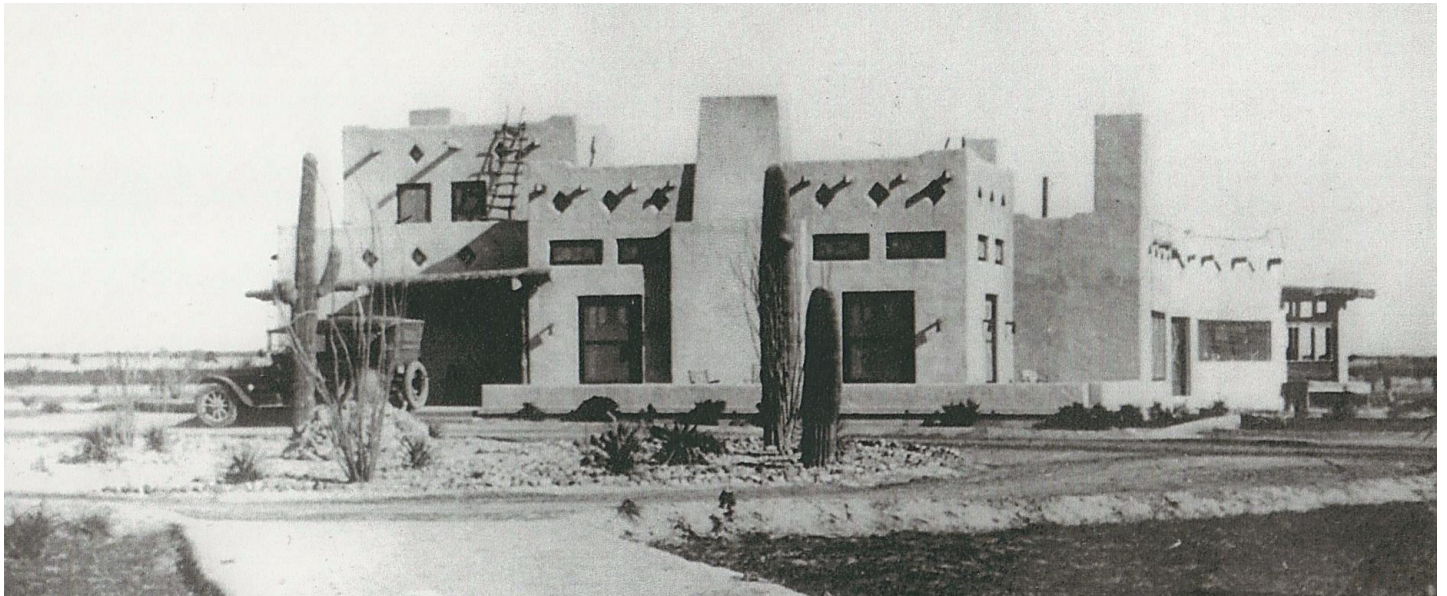


THE WIGWAM

FROM NECESSITY TO LUXURY

Before it grew into an award-winning resort, it was little more than a guest house, just large enough to accommodate six people. Yet the story of the Wigwam's growth is also the story of **change**— that persistent transformer of history. *The Wigwam: From Necessity to Luxury* traces its colorful evolution through the isolated years of *the company town*, the trying times of the Great Depression and World War II, the prosperous years of post-war America, several rocky years of uncertainty, and today's remarkable renewal. It's a fascinating look at over 100 years of the resort's exceptional history in a unique corner of Arizona.

Goodyear executives from Akron who were monitoring the activities of the then cotton-producing ranch. In those days a trip from downtown Phoenix, with a population of about 25,000, to the Ranch took almost one full day to complete. Visitors had to make their way on unpaved roads by horse and buggy or use a somewhat undependable early version of a car. Called "**The Organization House**," the building contained six rooms allowing visiting guests to stay overnight in some degree of comfort in the middle of a desert. This original building is still a part of The Wigwam today, and it's called The Fireplace Room.



The first building of what was to become The Wigwam was a modest adobe structure erected in 1918. Early photos picture it as a lonely building on an empty desert in the midst of Litchfield Ranch (part of the Southwest Cotton Co. – a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. located in Akron, Ohio). Its purpose was to house

The Organization House was renamed **The Wigwam Guest Ranch** and opened to the public on Thanksgiving Day in 1929. More buildings were added along with a small nine-hole golf course. Open only during the winter months, the facility appealed to individuals looking for exotic experiences in comfortable surroundings. Visitors could experience horseback riding, picnics in the desert,

The WIGWAM cont.



The Fireplace Room - 2017

and Western entertainment while at the same time, eating excellent food in a formal dining room with tablecloths.

The Wigwam's history changed abruptly for a short time – 1941-1945. World War II was raging, and the country devoted itself to winning it. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. committed most of its business to the war effort – including their winter resort. All of the hotel rooms were closed to the public and made available for the pilots from neighboring Luke Field.

After a lengthy depression and a massive world war, a time of tranquility settled in, and Americans found themselves turning to more pleasurable pursuits. This ushered in the Wigwam's *Golden Years* – 1951-1986. Room expansion exploded, and the golf course expanded to make The Wigwam one of the leading golf resorts in the world. Celebrities, politicians, and noted sports figures all stayed at the luxurious facility. The resort was described as “*posh*” and enjoyed the Mobil Travel Guide's Five Star rating for 19 years.

A dramatic turn of events later caused Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. to give up its resort after 68 years. Visit the exhibit to find out what happened and view special items from

the Wigwam's history including vintage clubs belonging to legendary Wigwam golf pro, Red Allen, a sampling of the resort's 1930s décor, a 1932 dance card from a resort social, and film footage of guests from 90 years ago.



Red Allen (far right) hosts golfers at the Wigwam

The Organization House was renamed **The Wigwam Guest Ranch** and opened to the public on Thanksgiving Day in 1929.



This Exhibit Is Now Open

NEWEST EXHIBIT AT THE MUSEUM

Paul Litchfield's *Rancho La Loma*

This exhibit portrays life on the verdant hill that was **Paul Litchfield's *Rancho La Loma*** from the 1920s through the early 1970s. Topped with palms and rising just north of our museum, the hilltop once bloomed as a garden with a variety of trees, plants, and lawns, which became a sanctuary for over 130 species of birds. First built as a winter retreat, it was a point of pride for the community and enjoyed by generations of Litchfields.

Four cottages were originally nestled on the hill: Cottage #1 for the Litchfields, Cottage #2 for Edith and Wally Denny and their family, Cottage #3 for Litchfield's office, and Cottage #4 for Katharine and Howard Hyde and their family. Katharine and Edith were the two daughters of Paul and Florence Litchfield. The first three cottages are still in existence, but Cottage #4 burned down many years ago.

Litchfield's property also featured a peaceful, secluded location they called Sunset Terrace where he and his family would take in the sunset over the White Tank Mountains. Located on the western slope near the desert floor, it became a place of thoughtful reflection after the day's energies had been spent.

The Litchfield grandchildren also found joy in visiting Arizona. They rode their horses, swam in the outdoor pool, and sat in the Wigwam stagecoaches, delighting in the Western flavor of the area. It is no wonder that Julia Denny Sweeney (the Litchfield's first grandchild) eventually made her

home in Litchfield Park. Before her death, she spent many hours telling stories to family, friends, and other interested individuals about those by-gone years.



More than a private retreat, Rancho La Loma was a place for public gatherings too. The Open-Air Chapel on the property famously hosted Desert Devotionals – ecumenical gatherings held throughout the 1950s on Sunday afternoons every March and April. Raised in an ecumenical environment himself and encouraged to attend churches of many different denominations, Litchfield invited a variety of religious



Desert Devotional at *Rancho La Loma*



Litchfield grandchildren in *Rancho La Loma* pool.

and lay speakers to these occasions. Immensely popular, the event drew thousands annually from Phoenix and the Southwest Valley. One Sunday in 1953 brought 3,600 souls. Many church choirs lifted their collective voices in this space, and The Church at Litchfield Park, a partner in this endeavor, also held Easter Sunrise Services there. The era ended with a memorial service after Litchfield's death in 1959.

Handed down in the 1970s to their youngest daughter and her husband, Edith and Wally Denny, it became the primary residence for the Dennys until their deaths in the first decade of the 21st century.

On view now through January 2024, the exhibit's photos and film footage evoke a simpler time and reveal a lush setting, cozy cottage interiors, famous visitors who made their way to the hill, and the Litchfields' relaxing Arizona visits.



Sunset Point

This Exhibit Is Now Open.

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Lisa Hegarty

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Special Thanks

The City of Litchfield Park

MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday:

10 am - 4 pm

First Saturday of each Month:

10 am - 1 pm

MUSEUM LOCATION

13912 W. Camelback Rd

Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

623-535-4414

P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center Upcoming Programs and Events

HERITAGE LECTURE SERIES

A Conversation with Author Stella Pope Duarte

November 16, 2023 at 10:00 AM

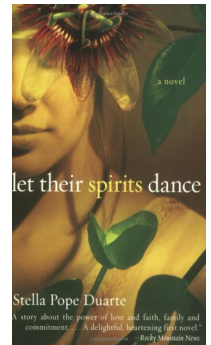
Goodyear City Council Chambers



Local award-winning Irish Latina author, Stella Pope Duarte, will speak about her historical novel, *Let Their Spirits Dance*, a passionate story of a family's spiritual cross-country trip to the Vietnam Memorial Wall. With this year marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, she'll offer her reflections on what it meant to research and write her book, which is built upon numerous interviews of veterans from the U.S. and Vietnamese soldiers who served with U.S. forces.

Hailed by critics as a "major, literary voice in America," Duarte is described by reviewers as a "magical weaver with a sure hand and a pure heart," and as an author who "will enlarge humanity." Her literary works have won awards and honors nationwide, including a 2009

American Book Award, a Pulitzer Prize nomination, Southwest Book of the Year Award, Women in American History Award, and a nomination for ONE BOOK AZ. FREE EVENT



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT

Las Posadas: A Journey Together to the Mission

Saturday, December 16, 2023 4:30 – 8:00 PM

The 3rd annual *Las Posadas: A Journey Together to the Mission* will be on **Saturday, December 16th** in partnership with Ballet Folklórico Esperanza. The event honors the Southwest Valley's history and culture while paying tribute to the origins of the St Thomas Aquinas Mission Church on its centennial this year.

All are invited to walk in the procession. Participants gather at 4:30 pm and the procession begins at 5:00 pm, traveling along Old Litchfield Rd to the original St. Thomas Aquinas Mission Church at Neolin Ave and Wigwam Blvd in the heart of Litchfield Park. This is followed by a fiesta with food vendors, music, dance performances, and activities located on the lawn surrounding the church until 8:00 pm. **We hope you'll join this special community celebration!**

Date: Saturday, December 16, 2023

Time: 4:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Procession begins at 5:00 pm

Fiesta 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Starting Location: South parking lot of Litchfield Elementary School on Old Litchfield Road.

Ending Location: Original St. Thomas Aquinas Mission Church on Neolin Ave & Wigwam Blvd.



ENRICHMENT CLASSES & MORE

The Antique Art of Making Rose Beads

Saturday, February 3, 2024

13912 W. Camelback Rd. Litchfield Park

1:30-3:00PM

Making rose beads from dried rose petals was a popular craft during the Victorian era and may date back to the Middle Ages. Once cured, the beads can be made into fragrant jewelry. 15 plus materials fee.

Classes are held at the Museum. Sign up is required on Enrichment Classes. See website at PWLHC.org or call the Museum at 623.535.4414 to register.

Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 2, 2023

13912 W. Camelback Rd., Litchfield Park, AZ

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Stop by our 1940s cottage home for holiday cheer and refreshments. Take in the latest exhibits, browse the museum shop for unique gifts, and bring the kids to explore our history and culture through crafts and activities.

We are in the planning stages of more events and classes. Keep up to date on all of our events by signing up to receive Email updates. We only send emails related to PWLHC events and activities. You may opt out at any time. Visit our web site - www.PWLHC.org - The sign up button is at the bottom of the webpage.

Thank you to our Sponsors!



LA LOMA VILLAGE

www.SunHealthCommunities.org
14154 Denny Blvd., Litchfield Park AZ 85340
623.537.7450



www.Oceano-Rentals.com
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www.OriginsBedandBreakfast.com
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www.WigwamResort.com
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New Goodyear Public Art Pairs Oral History with Sculpture

iMaGiNe THiS PLaCe

When the Goodyear Arts and Culture Department chose artist Mary Lucking to create public art, the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center was fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute. Lucking's art explores the environments and communities in which people live. Her work includes pedestrian bridges and etched concrete paths in Papago Park in Tempe, mosaics of handmade tiles cast in concrete in Arroyo Chico Park in Tucson, and a giant, playful telescope at the Arizona Science Center in Phoenix. Her new art installation in Goodyear combines sculpture with voices from the past and present.

Unveiled on July 10th at the Goodyear City Council meeting, **Imagine This Place** is a series of five sculptures located along a half-mile stretch of Bullard Wash Park. Glass panels framed in intersecting arcs of steel evoke lenses for viewing the land through time. Each "lens" is layered with circular mirror shapes and dichroic film which refracts different colors depending on the time of day and the viewer's position. The art incorporates 25 audio interviews of individuals accessible through a QR code, which help illuminate the area's past and imagine its future.

Among the voices part of **Imagine This Place** are those of past residents of the Goodyear Farms camps. Pulled from the Litchfield Heritage Center's collection, audio clips of oral histories given by **Gilbert Soto, Amelia Cabrera, Raul Moreno, Gus Gonzales Jr, Armida Vizerra, Loretto Cons, and Lupe Romo Lopez** offer descriptions of life for farm worker families in the



previous century, from picking and chopping cotton, to operating machinery like threshing machines and plows. P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center research consultant, **Dr. Gloria Cuádriz** was instrumental in bringing these voices to the project. While other audio clips offer fanciful imaginings of the future and the past by current area residents, interviews of experts on local ecology and geology are also included.

The sculptures can be viewed between McDowell and Monte Vista Roads along the **Bullard Wash Park Path** between Pebble Creek Parkway and Bullard Avenue. Congratulations to artist Mary Lucking, the Goodyear Arts and Culture Department, and all those who were a part of this project! To learn more about the concept and construction of this installation visit www.imaginthisplace.org



Descendants of past residents of Goodyear Farm camps at opening event.

Historic Preservation Project - *Tal'-wi-wi Ranch*

A famous old local ranch is in danger of being torn down for new commercial construction in the West Valley. At one time, the Tal'-wi-wi Ranch was famous for dates, grapes, citrus, and cattle, and Col. Dale Bumstead had an international reputation for farming success in a desert climate.

Families growing up in Waddell, Litchfield Park, and other communities in the West Valley knew about the farming operation – that is still in use today – and can be seen on both sides of Litchfield Road, between Olive and Peoria Avenues. The name of Col. Dale Bumstead's operation, Ta'-wi-wi Ranch, is Hopi Indian in origin and means "the land the sun first shines upon." Planting of citrus, grapes, and dates began in 1927. An adobe home and office were added in 1930. In 1947, Bumstead had a new home and a housekeeper's cottage added in a lush park setting on the west side of Litchfield Road. On the east side of the road are the farm operations buildings, railroad siding, and the remains of a historic date palm grove. Many of the buildings are still in use. This land has been continuously farmed for almost 100 years.



Col. Dale Bumstead

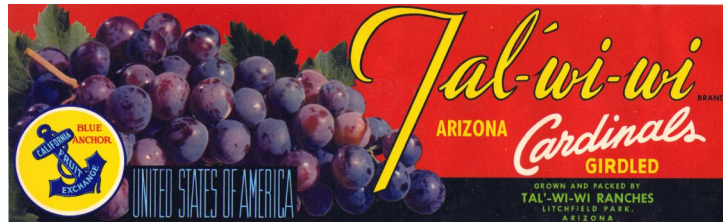
Grapes were always a major crop at Tal'-wi-wi. Citrus orchards included grapefruit and oranges. Tal'-wi-wi Ranch was noted for its dates and raised two varieties. The diversity of the crops allowed for many families to live and work on the ranch full time. Data from 1949 show 23 residences on the site for the permanent workforce. An additional 150 workers were needed during the

grape harvest and General Manager Kenneth McGeorge hired local high school coaches to lead the work teams.

Col. Bumstead led agricultural development in many ways. Bumstead designed and built a 90' long cooling tunnel. With a refrigeration system and fans to blow cold air over the produce, grapes could be pre-cooled before being loaded onto refrigerated rail cars for shipment. Pre-cooling contributed to the quality of the produce at its

destination, an advantage to getting premium prices. Tal'-wi-wi Ranch is noted as the first major grower of Cardinal grapes. The new table grape brought Bumstead and the ranch a national and international reputation.

Col. Bumstead reached out to many experts, locally and nationally, to increase the quality and quantity of the harvest, conserve water, improve the soil, and improve methods of production and transportation. Eventually the United States government reached out to him. In 1949, the



Shah of Iran was a guest of Col. Bumstead to see how his scientific farming methods were used to transform the desert in a short time span. The U.S. State Department also brought His Royal

Highness Saud Al Saud, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, to Tal'-wi-wi Ranch in 1947 to view his methods.

Col. Bumstead died in 1952 and ownership passed to his son. Management continued under the direction of General Manager, Kenneth T. McGeorge. The Bumstead family sold Tal'-wi-wi Ranch to Robert McKee in 1977, who continued to farm. The City of Phoenix Aviation Division acquired the property in 2000 to protect Luke Air Force Base from residential encroachment, and ever since has leased the land to local farmers.

Parts of the Tal'-wi-wi Ranch property, which contain the original buildings, are scheduled to be sold for commercial development later this year. The P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center is working with local farmers, other preservation organizations, and the City of Phoenix to place the property on the National Register of Historic Places. The goals are to preserve what land may be available, and to document the history of Tal'-wi-wi Ranch and the memories of those who worked and lived there.



Current Remains of the Historic Date Palm Grove at Tal'-wi-wi Ranch



PO Box 1936
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Location Address: 13912 W. Camelback Rd.
Email: office@PWLHC.org
www.PWLHC.org
623-535-4414



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P.W. LITCHFIELD HERITAGE CENTER 2024 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2024 membership year

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

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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 _____

Please make your check payable to:

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Would you be interested in volunteering for our organization? Yes

May we add you to our email list? Yes

We only send emails related PWLHC events and activities. You may opt out at any time.

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