



the Quarterly

Remembering the Southwest Valley

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Salt ≈ Agua Fria ≈ Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

Frank Luke, Jr. “Arizona Balloon Buster”



The Luke family has been a part of Arizona since Charles Luke arrived in Mohave County in 1866. In 1873, after visiting his brother Lorenz in New York, he brought his nephew, Frank Luke, Sr. back to Arizona with him. Frank Luke, Sr. was interested in politics and served as Maricopa County Supervisor and later held a seat on the State Tax Commission.

Frank Luke, Jr. was born in Phoenix on May 19, 1897. He was the fifth of nine children. As a teenager, he was a big, good-looking, blue-eyed blond who was captain of the football team at Phoenix Union High School. His courage developed early; he once scored a touchdown

with a broken collarbone. He spent his free time hunting, fishing and shooting in the open country that surrounded Phoenix. After graduation he worked at the New Cornelia copper mine in Ajo. He earned a reputation of being a cocky, hard nosed kid, once knocking out a traveling prizefighter. When America entered World War I, Frank followed his oldest brother, Edwin, enlisting in the Signal Corp in September 1917. He completed pilot training and was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant. He arrived in France in 1918.

It is hard for us today to understand how very simple the early aircraft were. Most were about

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20 feet long and consisted of a wooden frame covered with fabric. They were powered by rotary engines with a top speed of about 100 miles per hour. The instrumentation was crude and they were flown from an open cockpit without a parachute.

Luke's first duty consisted of ferrying new aircraft to the frontline. Next, he was assigned to the First Pursuit Group, 27th Squadron. When the squadron moved into the Verdun sector in France, Luke became interested in the German observation balloons. The balloons were sausage shaped gas bags filled with hydrogen and were kept about 4000 feet above the ground. Their purpose was to observe troop movement and direct artillery fire. The balloons were protected by anti-aircraft guns and fighter aircraft. Luke and his friend, Lt. Joe Wehner teamed up to destroy the balloons. Wehner would take on the fighters while Luke went down for the balloon. Luke took out his first balloon on September 11, 1918. On September 14, they nailed two more balloons. Luke and Wehner both became aces by September 17. Wehner had eight kills, Luke had nine. The next day Luke downed two more balloons and three fighters, but lost his friend, Wehner. Luke was devastated at the loss of his friend and was sent to Paris for a week's leave.

On his return to the squadron he had a new partner, 2nd Lt. Ivan Roberts. Luke killed one more fighter, but Roberts was shot down and was presumed missing. His commanding officer recommended Luke for the Distinguished Service Cross. About that time, Luke was grounded after taking an unauthorized flight. However, he managed to get to his airplane and take off again against orders. On this flight he took out three more balloons and strafed a column of German infantry, but in the process his plane was hit. He landed in a field and was surrounded by Germans. He drew his gun and was killed in a brief firefight. Luke was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously about a year later for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity."

Luke Air Force Base is named for Frank Luke, Jr., a WWI ace and the first aviator to be awarded the Medal of Honor. On October 3, 2008, Luke AFB dedicated an F-16 Fighting Falcon to Frank Luke, Jr. in recognition of the 90th anniversary of his death. The F-16 was adorned with Lieutenant Luke's name and his nickname, "Arizona Balloon Buster." Lieutenant Luke's nephew, Don Luke attended the dedication.

Reader's Contest



We're going to give you another chance to win big here at "The Quarterly." Even though we had no winners in the previous contest, I feel sure some of you can name the educators in the picture. This photo is of the teachers at Avondale Elementary School in 1946, the same year that both Avondale and Goodyear incorporated. A \$25 gift card will be awarded to the first person

who names the most teachers in the picture. Please send all entries to kskiko@cox.net. I cannot, of course, award the prize to any of you who helped me find the correct names. You know who you are!

So put on your "thinking caps," get out your old annuals, and get to work! You could be the WINNER!

Floods in the Desert?

Yes, we have had floods in the desert. Sixty years ago, the Westside area experienced three floods, on July 27, August 3, and August 28, 1951. A summer of heavy rains with inadequate flood control resulted in damaging floods. The first two were considered large floods by the Soil Conservation Service, perhaps the largest floods on record up to that time. They caused extensive damage to the newly re-opened Luke AFB and agricultural land. Then on August 28 we had the "big one."

The Westside received even more rain and the largest flood of record occurred causing severe damage throughout the entire area. Flood waters from the east side of the White Tank Mountains and the Trilby Wash hit the Beardsley Canal at the western side of the developed area of Maricopa County. Below the Beardsley Canal farmers had cultivated nearly all available land allowing the floodwaters to spread out in sheet flow fashion because of the flat terrain. The sheet flow was modified by roads and irrigation ditches, but soon they filled and the flood water continued and eroded roads to a depth of 3 to 4 feet. The flood waters continued a southeasterly flow until reaching the Agua Fria and Gila Rivers.

The flood caused severe damage to the area. About 20,000 cultivated acres were inundated. Extensive damage occurred to Goodyear Farms and the surrounding farm land. Many breaks occurred in the canals and many sections of canal lining were torn out. Earth canals were washed out and had to be repaired. Some pump motors were ruined by sediment; some wells caved in and had to be abandoned. The cotton crop which made up about 50 percent of the acreage was reduced in both quantity and quality. In all, more than \$900,000 in damages occurred in the agricultural industry.

Our military installations were also heavily damaged. Luke AFB was completely inundated as you can see in the picture. The railway spur entering the base was undermined and washed out in numerous places. About 200 buildings sustained flood damage. The wheel housings of many aircraft were inundated so the wheels had to be removed, cleaned and reassembled prior to being placed in operation. Training schedules were delayed 3 days, an indication of the tireless work performed by the maintenance crews. The estimated direct damage was \$300,000. The Litchfield Naval Air Facility sustained damaged roads, culverts and ditches. The generators in the auxiliary power plant



Flood at Luke AFB



1951 flood. Businesses at Litchfield Road and Western Ave.

and heating room in the firehouse were damaged and the water supply was contaminated forcing the base to use an emergency water supply for 3 weeks. Base housing facilities, fencing and parking lots sustained damage. The estimated direct damage was \$53,000.

Goodyear Aircraft Company was inundated to a depth of one foot. A number of machines at ground level had to be completely overhauled because of the damaging water and sediment. Full production was resumed in about 7 days. The estimated direct damage was \$375,000. On a lighter note, there is a picture of a fish being pulled out of the flood waters in front of the loading dock.

The town of Goodyear was inundated by about 2 feet of water. The main business street, the town hall and about 170 homes were flooded, and required the evacuation of about 600 people. Sandbagging was used to prevent damage to more homes. The estimated direct damage was \$70,000.

Tolleson Led the Way in School Desegregation

We've all heard of the Brown vs. Board of Education case of 1954 in which the United States Supreme Court ruled that racially separate education facilities were inherently unequal and brought about integrated schools across the country. Well, Tolleson led the way with the case, Gonzales vs. Sheely.

For years the Tolleson Elementary School had separate classrooms, one for the white children and another for the Mexican-American children. They all went to one school, but the classes were racially separated. Then in 1943, they were in separate buildings. Kenneth Dyer, the Principal at the time, defended the segregation by saying it facilitated learning and the Hispanic students weren't always reminded of their language difficulties.

John Camacho, 16 at the time, felt the practice was cruel and created barriers. He met with Mr. Dyer and they discussed the issue vehemently. With Mr. Dyer defending segregation, John enlisted the help of others in the community including Angelita Contreras, Patsy Murrietta, and Guadalupe Favela. This small group soon rallied community support. Camacho, manning a bullhorn in the back of a pick-up announced upcoming meetings. They garnered some monetary support mostly from the Hispanic community. Attorneys Greg Garcia and Ralph Estrada of Phoenix, and A.L. Wirin, Los Angeles, took the case to court. The May 1950 lawsuit named the district superintendent, Ross Sheeley, as the defendant and Porfirio Gonzales and Faustino Curiel, Sr. as the plaintiffs. Principal Dyer's defense of separation because of "language handicap" failed to work since the district didn't test to determine a student's English proficiency.

Tolleson's school segregation was ruled discriminatory and illegal in 1951, by a federal judge. In an article in the Phoenix Magazine in August 2010, Camacho said that he was amazed that as a teenager he had the determination to push this issue and he was proud of the group of local citizens who decided to take a stand. Historians point to this case and similar cases across the country as signs of things to come for school segregation and cases like this one paved the way for Brown vs. Board of Education.

In Arizona, state law mandated segregation of black students in elementary school but it was optional in high schools. In 1951, Hayzel Daniels, a Representative in the Arizona Legislature, introduced a bill to allow schools to voluntarily desegregate. An initiative to mandate desegregation in 1952 lost in the polls. Attorneys, Herbert B. Finn and Hayzel Daniels filed a suit in Maricopa County Superior Court to desegregate Arizona Schools. In 1953 Superior Court Judge Fred Struckmeyer declared school segregation unconstitutional a year ahead of the U.S. Supreme Court.

On a personal note, as a student at Avondale Elementary School, I can remember the black children coming into the cafeteria for lunch after all the white children had been served. And then, when I was in about sixth grade, I returned to school in the fall and the black students were integrated into our classrooms. I don't recall any problems as a result of this change.

Sally Kiko

Correction for Did You Know- Buckeye Vol. 8 #2

I received this note from Barbara Macnider, President of the Buckeye Valley Historical Society:

Actually, Thomas Newton (TN) Clanton and Oscar L. Mahoney platted Sidney in 1888. The post office with Cora Clanton, TN's daughter, was established in 1888. The post office was named Buckeye after the nearby canal. TN Clanton changed the name of the town to Buckeye in 1920 because most people called the area Buckeye since that was the name of the post office.

Thank you, Barbara, for bringing this to our attention.



West Valley Bids Farewell

Jewel Wood 1913-2011

The west valley lost a great friend with the passing of Jewel Wood. The Ronald and Jewel Wood family has been staunch friends to the west side as farmers, church members, friends, neighbors, and supporters of education. While Ron spent many years on the Agua Fria School Board, Jewel was "Team Mom" for all the boys that played sports with Ken & Pug. Jewel was a volunteer at Maryvale Hospital for 33 years, greeting patients, visitors and making all feel welcome and cared for. She received awards from the hospital for her tireless service. Jewel is survived by a sister, Pearl Crisp, two sons, Ken and Pug Wood, and a daughter Margaret Carl, six grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great-grandchildren. Her love, generosity and gracious smile will be missed. Only last November, Jewel and her daughter-in-law, Sharon Wood, were shopping together when Jewel proposed they race the electric riding carts down the aisles of Sam's Club. Sharon said that Jewel often forgot that she was 97 years old! She enjoyed life to the fullest.

Map 1867, Milita

Three Rivers Historical Society Website

Visit our website, threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org, for back issues of *The Quarterly*. Thanks to our webmaster, Mark Pelletier, you will find other information there, too, such as meeting information, how to contact us and how to join.

Photographs of Arizona State University Needed

ASU faculty member, Dr. Denise Bates, requests your memories and old photos! She is working on a book that chronicles—largely through photographs—the rich social, academic, and community history of ASU to be released in time for Arizona's centennial celebration. She's eager to visit with you over that old box of photos you might have and to gain more personal perspectives on ASU's key activities, changes, projects, and people. The emphasis of the project is pre-1980, but there's room for more recent information too. Please help her with this project by contacting her at Denise. Bates@asu.edu <mailto:Denise.Bates@asu.edu> or 623-986-3838. She hopes to hear from you and that you'll kindly spread the word to others who worked at, attended, lived near, or helped build ASU. Thank you!



Centennial Trail Update

As reported in *The Quarterly*, Vol. 8 Issue #2 Three Rivers Historical Society has received approval to develop a historical and educational trail incorporating visual and artistic structures that will depict the history of the region. The trail will be located in Estrella Mountain Regional Park.

The half mile trail, to be named the Centennial Trail in honor of Arizona's upcoming Centennial Celebration celebrating 100 years of statehood, will follow a yet to be determined old Hohokan canal or old braid of the Gila River and include numerous displays highlighting our area's history. The "canal" will run with water from the aquifer directly below the site. Historical and educational features such as sculptural markers, benches, kiosks and exhibit nodes, will be created and installed. These features will describe and depict the geological history of the Estrella Mountains, explain the history of the Hohokam people and their culture, provide information on the first explorers and settlers of the region, discuss important historical events, and track the effect of agriculture, industry and war on the economy of the Three Rivers Region to 2012.

As planning and fundraising proceeds, an outline for each of the nodes has been proposed (pending future revisions) and approved by 3RHS Board of Directors:

Node #1, Science & Technology This node is the beginning of the trail and the site of a windmill and or solar panels that would supply power to the pumps that supply water to the canal.

Node #2, Geologic History to Present A geologic description of the formation of the Valley of the Sun, it's mountains and rivers and especially the Estrella Mountains.

Node #3, Flora and Fauna Ancient to Present Tracks the history of plants and animals in the region of the Three Rivers including the Estrella mountains to the present landscape of the Sonoran Desert.

Node #4, 500AD to 1500, Hohokam Culture Documents the history of the Hohokam people, their way of life and their disappearance.

Node #5, 1500 to 1700, European Explorers, Jesuits, Native Americans Tells the story of the European Explorers, the Jesuit missionaries, introduction of the Pima Indians and their influence on each other.

Node #6, 1700 to 1800 Continues the story of the Jesuit missionaries, the Pima Indians, the Apaches, the Spanish and the Mexicans.

Node #7, 1800 to 1850 Illustrates Arizona's increasingly complex society as a result of the mix of diverse cultures.

Node #8, 1850 to 1912 Illustrates Arizona's journey from Mexican ownership, a US Territory to finally a state in 1912.

Node #9, 1912 to 1950 Documents Arizona's Statehood the 5c's, people and events contributing to Arizona's growth.

Node #10, 1950 to 2012 Documents Arizona's Post war boom, economic growth and continued modernizing of Arizona and it's historic economic recession in 2007 to it's centennial in 2012..

Node #11, Estrella Mountain Regional Park History Dedicated to the Maricopa County Park system and specifically to Estrella Mountain Regional Park, to be located adjacent to the EMRP Nature Center.

A more detailed version of the above proposal and description of the Centennial Project can be found at the 3RHS website at: threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org.

Be a part of this effort: make tax-deductible donations to develop this Trail by sending a check payable to: Three Rivers Historical Society, PO box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338. Be sure to indicate "Centennial Trail" on the check. For another option to support the Centennial Trail be sure to read the article on page 6 about: ***The Centennial Trail Cookbook Fundraising Project.***

For more informaton contact Centennial Committee Chair Ed Buonvecchio at 623-556-7988 or email at: eddibon@yahoo.com.

Cecil R. Palmateer

Served Goodyear Farms & Town of Goodyear

Cecil Palmateer came to Arizona with his parents when he was nine years old and was raised in the Phoenix area. As a young man his first job was working in construction in California. Several years later, in 1929, he joined Southwest Cotton Company as a carpenter. When he joined the farming subsidiary of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, there were still 200 mules being used on the 38,000 acre ranches. In his thirty-six years with the company Cecil was involved in almost every project in some way. During his long career at Goodyear, he advanced to Resident Engineer, General Superintendent of the Farms in 1958 and assistant to the Vice President in 1964. In 1943, Southwest Cotton Company sold some of its acreage near Glendale and Marinette and changed its name to Goodyear Farms. Cecil was involved in most of the projects of this unique ranch that carried out scientific research and developed programs that changed farming methods. They tested custom cattle feeding, tractors, tractor tires, and new methods for grain storage.

As Resident Engineer he directed the construction of almost every company building in Litchfield Park. He was charged with the construction of the Wigwam Inn, the original 18-hole golf course and the expansion to 36 holes. Cecil was construction superintendent for Goodyear's Wingfoot Homes, manufactured, low-cost war-time housing. One of the most unusual projects he became involved with was the building of the "bubble house." These were homes created by spraying

concrete over inflated rubber forms. This construction method was invented by a Goodyear customer and eventually took Cecil to Mexico for a year to teach the Mexicans how to construct the unique bubble house.



Ranch life wasn't always just construction projects. One exciting day, a bunch of Brahma bulls got spooked in the feeding pens and got loose. Cecil joined the round-up which covered most of the west side. It was quite a job to round up those unhappy bulls with cars but it was finally accomplished but not until after one decided to charge his car with head lowered and aiming for the radiator. At the last moment the bull decided to jump over the car and left a dent in the roof right behind the driver's seat!

Cecil, his wife, Margaret and three daughters lived in Goodyear on Los Flores. He was first appointed to the Goodyear Town Council by the Maricopa County Supervisors when the town was incorporated. He was elected to that office in the first election in 1947. He was a council member for many of the years from 1946 until he was elected Mayor in 1959

and served as Mayor until 1969. He was also a member of the Litchfield Park Kiwanis Club. He retired from Goodyear Farms in 1965. Cecil died in 1980 and Margaret in 1986.

Goodyear's first park, the park in Historic Goodyear on Western Avenue is named in honor of Cecil Palmateer, a man who guided the town in its early years.

Give Us Your Best Recipe for Feeding Your Tired, Hungry and Ravenous Masses

The Centennial Trail Cookbook Fundraising Project

We know you've read the article about The Three Rivers Historical Society plans for a Centennial Trail Project at Estrella Mountain Regional Park in the last issue of *The Quarterly*. In an effort to raise funds for this worthy project, we are embarking on our first fund raising project. It is a community centennial cookbook. The cookbook will be entitled A Taste of History in keeping with the nature of our organization and the Centennial theme. The dividers that begin each category will have historical photos that celebrate our unique area. Linda Wyman and Sally Kiko are heading up the project.

We will need your help because a community cookbook is, of course, made up of the favorite recipes of the folks in the four communities we serve, Avondale, Goodyear Litchfield Park and



Tolleson. So start thinking; begin your search now for that favorite recipe. You guys can get involved with your greatest grilling or smoking recipes. We want recipes from everyone; it's not limited to the historical society and its friends. This is a great way to get involved in this exciting trail project.

Another way to help would be to purchase a "Patrons Ad" in the cookbook. There are 14 Patrons listed on each page; the ads sell for \$15 each. E-mail Linda or Sally as listed below for more information on the Patron Ads.

Recipes can be submitted to Linda Wyman by e-mail at: lindawyman119@cox.net, or by mail at: 15055 W. Verde Ln, Goodyear, AZ 85395 or to Sally Kiko at: kskiko@cox.net.

How Phoenix Got its Name

Back around 1870, there was a Phoenician named Darrell Duppa. Duppa was well educated and was a world traveler. It was rumored that “Lord” Duppa was awarded a lavish allowance by his rich English relatives to remain out of their hair. Even though he was fluent in seven languages, his affection for alcoholic beverages, his raucous lifestyle and bouts of drinking were reason enough to encourage him to stay out of England. Mr. Duppa was on the committee to choose a name for the new town that was taking shape on the banks of the Salt River. Jack Swilling and a few of his business friends had cleaned out some of the Hohokam’s early canals, organized an irrigation company and were planning to open land to farmers. Crops were needed to supply food to the mining camps in the Bradshaw Mountains and the military post at Fort McDowell.

It seemed the appropriate time to decide on a name for this community.

Swilling liked the name “Stonewall” in honor of his hero “Stonewall” Jackson. Another committee member preferred the name Pumpkinville for the wild pumpkins that grew in the area. Salina was proposed by another for the Salt River. When it came to be Mr. Duppa’s turn he arose and began telling the story of the great civilization that had once flourished on this same site and predicted that another great society would rise here. He went on as the great orator he thought he was, to compare this to the mythical Phoenix bird that lived in Egypt for 500 years, and then arose from its own funeral to flourish again. And that’s how the great metropolitan area, the Arizona state capital, became known as Phoenix!



Darrell Duppa

Have You Missed These Great Speakers?

If you have missed our meetings, held on the third Tuesday of each month, you’ve missed some great stories.

We started the year with Dan O’Conner. Dan and his family moved to Avondale in 1945; his dad had a service station on Western Ave. He described the interesting way his dad found to obtain the auto parts he so desperately needed for his business but were in such short supply during WWII. Dan told of raising chickens in the backyard and going to Phoenix to see the movies and the Lew King show. After high school he was drafted and served in Vietnam. When he returned he began his career as a builder.

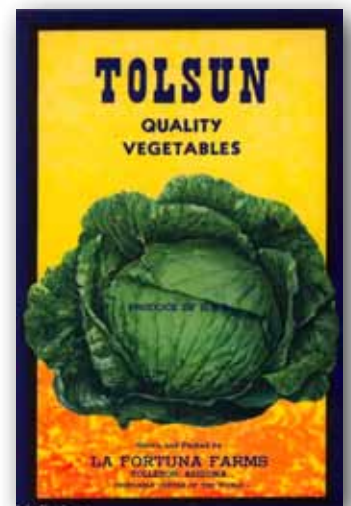
Captain Larry Coor had interesting stories of growing up in the west valley as the son of educators, Lattie and Elnora Coor. He served in the Navy as a pilot and then went on to serve as a foreign diplomat in the Middle East, Mexico, and Europe.

Pat Aragon told of growing up in Avondale as one of 13 children; his father was Tomas Aragon. After high school he joined the Navy as a way of getting an education. While serving on a ship docked in southern California, he witnessed the short flight of Howard Hughes airplane, The Spruce Goose. He attended NAU and became a teacher. He taught at Avondale Elementary School, Phoenix Union, and Trevor Brown High School, many of those years in special education classrooms.

In April, Elwood Phillips was scheduled to speak, but illness kept him away. Not to let the folks down, Ed King, Bill Bedoya, Aliene Beluzzi, Lillie Robertson, Ken Wood, Lenore Semmler, and Frank Ross regaled us with stories of the early days in the west valley.

Do you Remember?

- Tolleson being called the Vegetable Center of the World!
- Buying groceries at DeRosier’s, Abraham’s, Garcia’s, or Jeff’s Food Fair.
- Picking up your mail at the Avondale Post Office, next door to Coldwater Mercantile.
- Going to Litchfield Park to the bank.
- Having your saddle shoes or loafers resoled at Luque’s.
- Attending a dance in the community building in the Avondale Circle.
- Phoenix without freeways.
- Going to downtown Phoenix to shop at Korrick’s, Diamonds, Hanny’s. (Hanny’s carried the newest summer necessity, thong sandals.)
- Getting your car fixed at Fowler’s or Ludlow’s garages.
- The soda fountain at Bowman’s drug or the Coldwater Mercantile.



July, August, September 2011

Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!



- Student \$5*
- Family \$25*
- Contributor \$100*
- Lifetime \$500
- Single \$15*
- Business/Professional \$45*
- Benefactor \$250*
- * 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
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Three Rivers Historical Society

Remembering the Southwest Valley

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The Quarterly

Editor: Sally Kiko

Graphics Editor: Ed Buonvecchio

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear City Hall, 190 North Litchfield Road, Suite 117, 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