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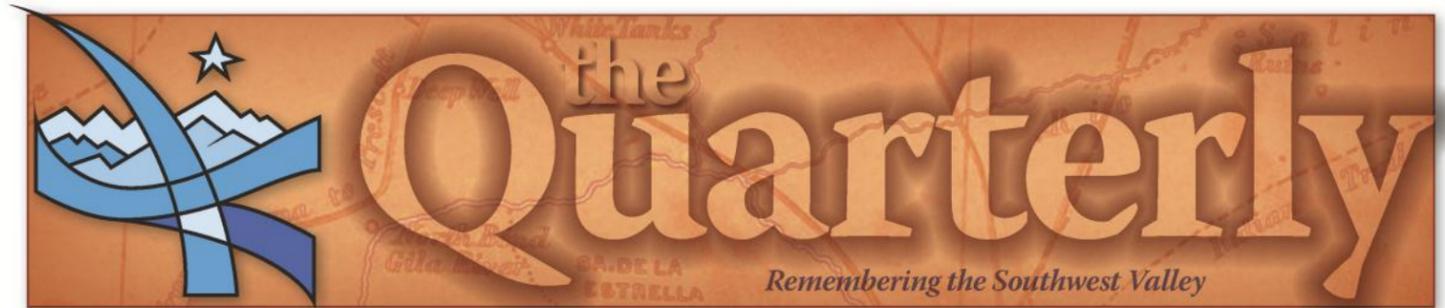
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Make out your check and mail to:

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P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

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Vol. No 9 Issue No. 4, October, November, December 2012 \* <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

## Ed Buonvecchio Named Historian of the Year

Recently, Three Rivers Historical Society named Ed Buonvecchio "Historian of the Year." It may surprise folks that a relative "new comer" would receive this honor. However, after arriving in Goodyear in 2004 with his wife, Julie Richards, who had accepted a position with the West Valley Arts Council, Ed took an interest in the history of the communities and joined the Three Rivers Historical Society in 2006. He quickly became involved by sharing his graphic design talents with us. He designed our first brochure and then he collaborated with then President, Gloria King, as she reintroduced a newsletter for the historical society. His graphic designs were used to create the front page banner and other graphics used in the newsletter. His artist's eye has been an asset as he did the layout of the articles and placement of the photos. He became a member of the Board of Directors for the society in 2009 and has been chairman of our centennial project, the Centennial Trail at Estrella Park. As chairman he has led a committee made up of folks from 3RHS, Maricopa County Parks and West Valley Arts that has worked diligently to implement the trail construction. He has been a tireless "Tammywhacker" working many Saturdays to clear the area of the invasive tamarack or salt cedar. Thanks to his skill as an accomplished artist and muralist he has completed the renderings of the 12 exhibit pads that will tell the history of the area along the half mile, barrier free, trail. He also earned Arizona Legacy Project status for our trail from the Arizona Centennial Commission.



Since moving to Goodyear Ed has accomplished a great deal personally with his art work. He was featured artist for one of the St. John Vianney's Galas; he painted a number of amazing murals at the Wildlife World Zoo, Liberty Elementary School, Avondale's Friendship Park and the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in both Goodyear and Tulsa. His work can be seen on his website [eddibon.shutterfly.com](http://eddibon.shutterfly.com).

So, "new comers" don't be shy. Come on in, the waters fine! Don't let us "old timer's" reminiscing turn you off, dig in, learn a little about the area and the history that makes our towns unique. We proudly boast of other "new comers" that are relatively new to the area but already involved as a member of our Board and/or helping us in so many ways, namely Mark Pelletier, Wendy Neely, and Don and Linda Wyman. We may be able to use your skills in one of the following areas, computer, graphic design, publicity, event planning, baking, selling, or helping to staff a booth at a community event. There is so much more we could accomplish with more active members. Come on in and give it a try. Our meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month at 3pm at the Goodyear Civic Center, 190 N. Litchfield Rd., Suite 117. We have an interesting guest speaker each month and would love to welcome you to visit or join our group.

## Three Rivers Historical Society

Remembering the Southwest Valley  
P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

Sally Kiko, President

JoAnn Gongaware, 1st V.P.

Ken Wood, 2nd V.P.

Wendy Neely, Secretary

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Frank Ross, Past President

Mark Pelletier, Lenore Semmler

*The Quarterly*

Editor: Sally Kiko

Produced and Printed by

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### 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](mailto:kskiko@cox.net)

Salt ≈ Agua Fria ≈ Gila  
Three Rivers Historical Society

## Merchant Takes Care of Our Soldiers

Sometime in late 1943 to early 1944 my dad purchased what was then called Avondale Cleaners located on Western Avenue in Old Town Avondale. He ran this business while continuing to work at Goodyear Aircraft. The dry cleaning business was located in a small building and had a shower located at the rear of the store. So, when Army or Air Force members who were stationed near Gila Bend at the desert training bases, came into Phoenix my dad would let them shower, clean up and put on a clean uniform, the one they had left the last time they were on weekend pass. They would then leave their dirty uniform for cleaning and changing on their next leave. This continued all during 1944 and 1945 until he moved the store to Litchfield Park and changed the name to Litchfield Cleaners. In about 1947 he built a new store next to the drug store. The last time I was there, that building still stands but has been remodeled.

By Joe Lipscomb

## A Little Tale About the Trail

Early Saturday mornings, you can find a great group of volunteers pushing rakes to pile weeds and leaves, cutting branches and sawing trees down. But, it's not all hard work; sometimes a fun thing happens. For example, a few weeks ago the Trail Blazers (aka known as "Tammywackers") were on the job when Ray Shuey



made a unique discovery. A nest of quail eggs on the ground!

Ed Buonvecchio, he's a tender heart, came over to investigate. He wanted to add some protection for the tiny eggs, so yellow ribbon was hung around the area. Ken Wood

hears the words, "quail eggs" and before he can get his chef's apron on, he has announced that he has two recipes for quail egg omelets. Next, Gloria King comes up with a fund raiser idea. "Annual Breakfast - Quail Egg Omelet's in the Park."

Sally Kiko says, "NO WAY – WE ARE NOT TAKING MAMA QUAIL'S EGGS FROM HER NEST! BACK TO WACKING TREES DOWN."

By Gloria King



## Westside Memories

I'm thinking back to Goodyear and Avondale as they were in 1951/52. There used to be a trailer park on the southeast corner of Litchfield Road and Western Avenue in Goodyear. I remember that because I lived there while our house was under construction. It wasn't like any trailer park you might live in today, though. The trailers...mobile homes... had no bathrooms, at least ours didn't. There was a communal bath with showers, toilets, etc. located at the center of the park. One side was for men the other for women. It sounds a little inconvenient having to leave the comfort of your home to use the bathroom, but it was okay. That is, until you had to go in the middle of the night, then it became downright inconvenient, and more so if it was raining! But we survived. I wonder what sort of reaction such a setup would bring today.

Having just moved here from Iowa in 1951, there was a lot to learn about how things were done in Arizona. For one thing, the schools were totally different. The schools I had attended in Iowa seemed to be behind those out here...at least my folks thought so. For me, I couldn't have cared less. At eleven years old I thought school was a big waste of time. I could always think of hundreds of ways to better spend my time. To me the best part of school was summer vacation...and that's the where Arizona schools, and Avondale Elementary, in particular, led the way as far as I was concerned. In Iowa, summer vacation didn't start until sometime after the first week in June and classes resumed in the last week of August. Out here, to my unbounded joy, summer vacation started on May 15...remember that???...and we didn't have to go back until the middle of September. For joy! For joy! Nearly four months of NO SCHOOL! To an eleven year old it didn't get much better than that.

Who remembers the "rainy day schedule" at school? School let out early on rainy days because the farm kids lived on dirt roads and the school buses took longer to get the kids home because of the muddy roads. Remember that?

Remember when there was an actual soda fountain in the corner drug store in Goodyear? Where you could get a cherry Coke or chocolate Coke for 10 cents and an ice cream soda or a milk shake for a quarter? Remember Mom's Drive-In in Avondale? Best apple pie in the west valley!

Oh, oh, I started writing about Goodyear and Avondale as they were in 1951/52 and ended up writing about memories of good times. Sorry about that. But, isn't that what history is...just memories of the past, some good, some bad? I prefer the good memories, myself. Give this some thought and I think you'll agree...those of us who were lucky enough to grow up in the Goodyear, Avondale area in the 1950s have actually lived a real life version of the TV show, "Happy Days." We had our "Fonz," our Richie Cunningham, and our Ralph and it was a good life.

By Tom Kampert

## Barbara B. Robey

Small communities are the heartbeat of America. Every small town has at least a few individuals who are dedicated leaders including Litchfield Park, Arizona. What Litchfield Park has that no other community has is a Barbara Robey. One of the Park's leaders once described Barbara as "pound for pound the toughest little thing to ever set foot in Litchfield Park." That comment was a supreme compliment to this young lady, for after all, Barbara has dedicated her life to her community. To paraphrase and modify a quote from President Reagan, Barbara wants to make Litchfield Park "a shining city on a hill, La Loma Hill."

Barbara's legacy is monumental and far-reaching. She was born in 1934, in Roanoke, Virginia. She graduated from Duke University with a degree in Chemistry. While taking a summer course in organic chemistry from Professor, Doctor Robey, she met her instructor's son, Bill, who later became her husband. In 1964, when Bill finished Medical School, Dr. and Mrs. Robey, along with their two children, Pamela and David moved to the Valley of the Sun. They eventually settled in this quiet little shady palm and orange tree-lined community with its parks, lakes and playgrounds.

Being a stay-at-home mom and wanting to be more involved in here children's school activities, Barbara quickly volunteered wherever she could be of assistance.

About this time, ASU had completed an in depth study of the Litchfield Elementary School District and suggested some changes needed to make the district more effective. The result of the study perplexed Barbara. The district was rapidly growing and something had to be done to meet the challenges. So, in 1969 Barbara decided to run for the school's governing board and she won.

At the beginning of her twenty-year tenure as a school board member, Barbara recalls there was still a heavy migrant population with a lot of preschoolers. Several of the Goodyear Farms labor camps fed into the district and many of the migrant students left school at the end of the eighth grade. A one school district, LES had a variety of complex demands. Carefully, with the addition of new board members, community support and years of implementing effective change, the district had added ten campuses and by the end of Barbara's leadership became nationally acclaimed schools. Today there are thirteen schools, one of which is named Barbara B. Robey Elementary School.

In addition to her regular school board responsibilities, Barbara's many talents did not go unnoticed, and in 1974 Barbara was elected director of the Arizona School Board Association. Hmm...where is she going to find the time? Finding the time she did and Barbara would continue her service and eventually became the ASBA Board President. She then embarked on a journey to incorporate the City of Litchfield Park. Prior to 1987, Litchfield Park was a county island, utilizing Maricopa County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement and Goodyear Farms to provide the fiscal and legal concerns.

In 1987, Litchfield Park became Arizona's 82<sup>nd</sup> city. Mrs. Robey was asked to sit in on the first Litchfield Park City Council and in 1990 she was elected Mayor. While serving as Mayor, Barbara became an employee of the Arizona School Boards Association as the organization's first full-time lobbyist. She found this a fulfilling task and was successful in establishing a non-partisan relationship between Arizona school districts and the state legislators, promoting vital educational programs. While working for ASBA, Barbara established an insurance trust providing health and dental insurance for over 167 school districts in Arizona. Barbara was chairperson of the trust for twenty-eight years and she considers it her finest endeavor. In 2004, she retired from her position with the ASBA.

After many years dedicated to the community she so loves, her many elected and appointed positions are not forgotten and she will continue to serve her beloved Litchfield Park as long as the Good Lord gives her strength to carry on. On most school days, Barbara can be found at the school named in her honor volunteering wherever she is needed. She continues to serve on a variety of boards; she attends school board meetings and city council meetings and dog-sits for her friends and neighbors.

Personal note: I had the privilege of working with Barbara on the "Last Dance, so Kiss Your Gym Goodbye" committee in honor of the LES/LHS 1928 gymnasium demolition and I must say serving with her was an honor and a privilege.

By Ken Wood



## We Have a Winner

Within minutes, or so it seemed we had a winner on the Reader's Contest. Drum roll, please! Bob Shelton correctly named all three items AND included a story about skating. I soon had another person who answered correctly, Dan Cook, who told a great story about the drive-in movie speaker.

The correct answers:

45 rpm record adaptor. Snap that sucker into the large hole of a 45 record and you could play it on a record player that had a skinny spindle!

A drive-in movie speaker. Remember the drive-in movies...Whole car full paid \$1 to get in. Drive up on the bump so you could visualize the screen, hang the speaker on the window and sit back and enjoy the movie...or cuddle with that special guy or gal!

A roller skate key. You remember those old roller skates...one size fits all. You could lengthen the skate with a wing nut on the bottom of the skate and the key adjusted the width of the skate across the toe of your shoe. The real problem with skating when we were young was the lack of cement sidewalks and driveways!

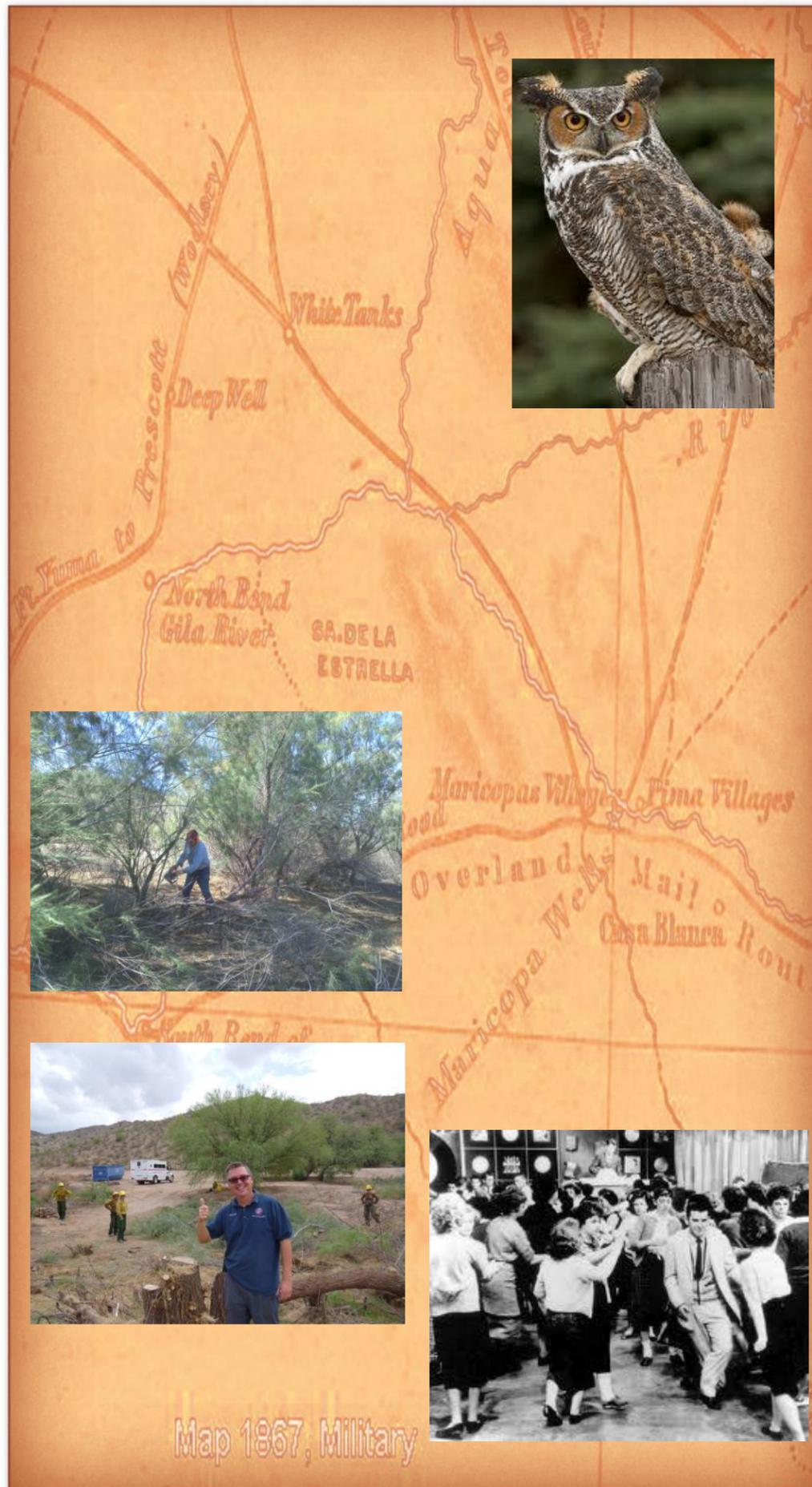
Now to share some of the stories you told. From Bob: I lived in the Kansas City area, and we had a basement. We would often skate there, as it had an obstacle-free concrete floor. One time when I was skating (of course after using my skate key!!) alone, my feet went out from under me and I landed on my back. It knocked the wind out of me, and I had difficulty getting my breath. It was one of those scary moments. I could not yell or anything. I thought it was the end. It took me a while to want to ever skate again!

Dan Cook wrote, "I once drove halfway home with one (speaker) clinging to the left rear window of my car. My date finally noticed the cold air coming in on her neck and located its source. I made a quick U-Turn and took it back to the Starlight Drive In. The manager thanked me for returning it and gave me two passes to be used anytime that season."

## The Centennial Trail- Where Have all the Salt Cedar Gone?

After a long, hot summer of persistence and many volunteer hours, the last of the invasive salt cedar was removed in August. That, of course, has not meant the end of the hard work. Volunteers have continued to work to load the cuttings into dumpsters, run them through chippers, remove stumps and dig it up where it has regrown or sprouted from seeds left behind! It has seemed like an endless chore, but as you can see from the before and after photos, much has been accomplished.

The Centennial Trail has also experienced a change in leadership. Our fearless leader and the man with the dream of what the trail could become, Ed Buonvecchio, has stepped down because he is moving to Maine. Denise Bates, Ph.D., has graciously stepped forward to chair the trail committee as the work transitions from the removal of salt cedars to planning, budgeting and implementation of the trail design. Denise has been an active member of the trail committee since the beginning, so it is a smooth transition. Since stepping into her new role, Denise has been working to draft a master plan and budget so your support is appreciated as we move into the next phase of this wonderful project.



## The Great Horned Owl, A Majestic Bird

Long ago, when Litchfield Parks High School was formed, the students chose a mascot for their sports teams. They chose the OWLS.

There are many varieties of owls in our area. The burrowing owls are quite diminutive in size and the Great Horned owls are quite large, about 33-35 inches tall! When Agua Fria High School began and Litchfield High School was made a part of the newly consolidated district, the owl mascot was continued.

This is a significant choice because during the war when the Litchfield Naval Air Facility was humming with activity, servicemen and civilians knew there was a great horned owl in Hanger 18 or the one behind it. He was considered "good luck" and legend says the owls were protected. To this day there has always been an owl in the hanger and word has been passed down over the years by the servicemen and others who have worked there. The current owl is named "Orville" after Orville Wright. This owl has a mate and two owlets were born this year. One is named "Wilbur" and the other "Octave" after Octave Chanute. Generations of owls have lived in the hanger over the years. According to Ryan Reeve, General Manager of Lux-Air Jet Centers, they leave behind feathers, droppings and golf-ball sized regurgitations containing hair and bones from their prey. The owls of the Goodyear Airport live on as symbols of good fortune and will always be a part of our history.

GO OWLS!

*Lenore Semmler, AFUHS Class of '58*

## We've Come a Long Way, Baby!

An email from one of our members commented on the newspaper article that the Arizona Republic was changing its subscriptions to be more in tuned with our digital age. Joe Lipscomb reminded me that we used to see a weekly newsreel with the feature film at the old Avon Theater on Western Avenue. And, I'm sure we all remember where we were when the television program was interrupted to tell of the shooting of President Kennedy, or the 9/11 attack.

I can remember gathering around the radio to listen to the news. Even farther back, when radios were not in every home the newspaper would print an Extra Edition and send the news boys out to the busy corners of the city to cry out, "Extra Extra, read all about it, Allied Troops Land on Normandy." In Territorial Arizona both the Pony Express and the Stage Coach Lines brought the mail and the news to the small towns and homesteads of Arizona.

## Arizona's Bandstand

A few months ago, a newscast made me think. A music icon had died. The man who started TV's "American Bandstand", Dick Clark, was no longer with us. Much was said about Dick that day, but what very few of you may know is that American Bandstand inspired the creation of our own local "Arizona Bandstand!" Arizona's teenagers, just like the rest of the nation's teens, were hooked on the rock and roll music they heard on the radio, television and played on jukeboxes. Arizona Bandstand was on the air in the afternoon after school. A group of Agua Fria High School teens carpoiled to the studio in Phoenix and danced to the music just like the teens in Philadelphia. I was one of those teens and it was a blast!

*By Lenore Semmler*

## The Hill/Baker Families in Coldwater/Avondale 1899-2007

The Hill family was one of the early residents of Coldwater(Avondale) that maintained their presence into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Joseph Angus Hill was born 6/28/1863 in Madison, Sandusky County, Ohio. His father, and 6 uncles, had served in Union army units during the Civil War. Before 1870 the family moved to Van Buren County, Michigan, west of Kalamazoo.

In 1884, at age 21, Joseph, and his 18 year old brother, William F., ventured to San Francisco, California. They worked on the Southern Pacific Railroad in Northern California until late 1885, when they moved to Jackson County, Oregon. In the spring of 1886 they began farming adjacent parcels north of Merrill, Klamath County, Oregon and filed for homestead entries. Conserving energy and assets they built a cabin with a room on each of the brother's land, and farmed, to qualify for their homesteads. In 1894 patents, for 160 acres each, were issued to them.

Prior to 1899 Joseph moved to Coldwater, Arizona, leaving William in Klamath, Oregon. The 1900 census shows him living alone, near the Alanson L. Baker and Lilee F. Powers families, in Township 2 N. 1 W.

Alanson Baker, born in Chautauqua County, New York, in 1844, had joined the Union Army in 1861, in DeKalb County, Illinois, at the start of the Civil War. After the war he moved to LaSalle County and, in 1870, married Alice Powers, the daughter of a soldier in his Army unit. They homesteaded in Adams County, Nebraska, in 1875. In 1881 Mabel A. Baker was born. The family, with 6 children, moved to Elmira County, Oregon, in the mid -1880s, and on to Coldwater, Arizona by 1896. Some of the Powers family accompanied the Bakers.

Alanson Baker's daughter, Mabel, and Joseph Angus Hill were married on 9/23/1900 in Coldwater. Mabel's sister, Hattie Jane Baker, married Frank Asher in 1902 in Phoenix, where she remained until her death in 1976.

The Alanson Baker and the Powers families moved on, to Montrose County, Colorado, in 1908.

Joseph had some farm land in Coldwater but was working as a Policeman in Phoenix. (One of his grandsons was also a Phoenix Policeman, in the 1960s) Problems with obtaining adequate water for farming, in the early 1900s, caused the Hills and Baker family to move closer to Phoenix. Joseph and Mabel bought property at 1024 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., (between Maricopa and Yavapai Streets) in Phoenix. He worked as a Policeman until 1903. He went to Prescott to open the Iron Springs resort that summer. Iron Springs Resort was a primary summer getaway for valley residents, easily accessible by train. They sold the Phoenix property in 1904 and returned to Coldwater. In 1903 they had bought land from Edmund Elvy, an Englishman (who had also homesteaded in Klamath County, Oregon). They later acquired 80 acres, as a Desert Land Entry, from the government. Joseph cleared the desert land and farmed some of it, usually truck farming.

Joseph's brother, Henry A. Hill, moved to Coldwater before 1910, from Michigan, and had a patent issued for land in Coldwater in 1914. He, and his son, Homer A., lived there for several years before moving to Los Angeles, where he died in 1919. Henry's land was on the west side of the current Dysart Road. Joseph's land was adjacent, on the west side, to Henry's.

In 1908, to make farming reliable Joseph, Henry, and others, formed the Hill Canal Co., to bring water to his property and other farmers in the area. A canal was built, starting near the confluence of the New River and the Agua



Fria River. Water was obtained from a well, and from the river which ran intermittently. The main canal ran south between Joseph's and Henry's land. The Hill Canal Co. operated until 1918.

Joseph Angus Hill continued with the truck farming and sold firewood until the late 1930s. He had sold some of the farm land to Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company which bought much land in Maricopa County to grow cotton, then used in tire manufacturing. He subdivided the remaining property into residential lots. He sold some of the lots and gave some away free, in an attempt to encourage prospective residents to stay in the area. Many people were coming to the area during WW II to work at Goodyear Aircraft and the Navy base in Goodyear. Joseph died in 1944. After his death Mabel moved into a house on a lot adjacent to the original family home. Mabel died in 1961.

Three daughters and two sons, including Joseph Alanson Hill, were born to Joseph Angus and Mabel between 1903 and 1914. They attended schools in Avondale, Litchfield Park, and Phoenix. The oldest daughter, Mabel L. moved to Southern California in the 1940s where she died in 1987.

Laura E. Hill became a Salvation Army officer and served for several years in El Paso, Texas before returning to Phoenix, as a nurse. She died there in 1973. Alice M., the youngest daughter, married, and lived in Phoenix until the early 1950s when she and her family moved to Grants Pass, Oregon, where she died in 1957.

William Austin Hill, the oldest son, was married in 1925, had one child, Evelyn F., and lived in Phoenix, working as a grocery store manager and salesman. He was killed in a vehicle accident west of Phoenix in 1939.

Joseph Alanson Hill, (also known as Joseph A. Hill, Jr.), the youngest child, remained in Avondale. He attended Avondale Elementary School and Litchfield High School. He left school to help the family, working at various jobs from Gila Bend to Skull Valley. In 1937 he married Juanita C. Knight, a relatively newcomer to the area, from Oklahoma. They built a house on a lot, at the south end of the original Hill property. He worked in the family's general store, and gas station, on the current Western Ave., just south of Joseph and Mabel's home. At the start of WW II he worked in several industries supplying materials for the military, including Goodyear Aircraft and Reynolds Aluminum. After the war he returned full time to the Hill store, gradually transforming it to an auto supply business.

Joseph Alanson Hill had a service station and garage built on the block west of his store on Western Ave., in 1955. He had removed the gasoline part of his business when he had replaced the store with a new building in late 1940s. He retired from the auto parts business in 1973. He and Juanita continued to live in the house they had built in 1937. He died there in 1999, the last of his siblings. Juanita lived there until 2007 when she moved to Sun City, where she lived until her death in 2009.

Joseph and Juanita had three children, William A. (Bill), (named after his uncle William Austin who died two weeks before his birth), Sandra L., and Steven B. Sandra and Steven both left the Avondale area soon after graduating from Agua Fria High School.

A daughter of Alice Hill, two granddaughters of William Austin Hill, and Bill Hill, and their respective families, still reside in Maricopa County, but none in Avondale. Neither Laura Hill nor Mabel had children.

Mabel Baker and Joseph Hill had moved into the area when it was completely undeveloped and saw it grow into a fully developed community, partially through their efforts. The Avondale street, on the north side of the original Hill home, was named Hill Drive, by the City of Avondale at the time of incorporation, 1946, as it passed through the original Hill farm, in recognition of their efforts.



By Bill Hill