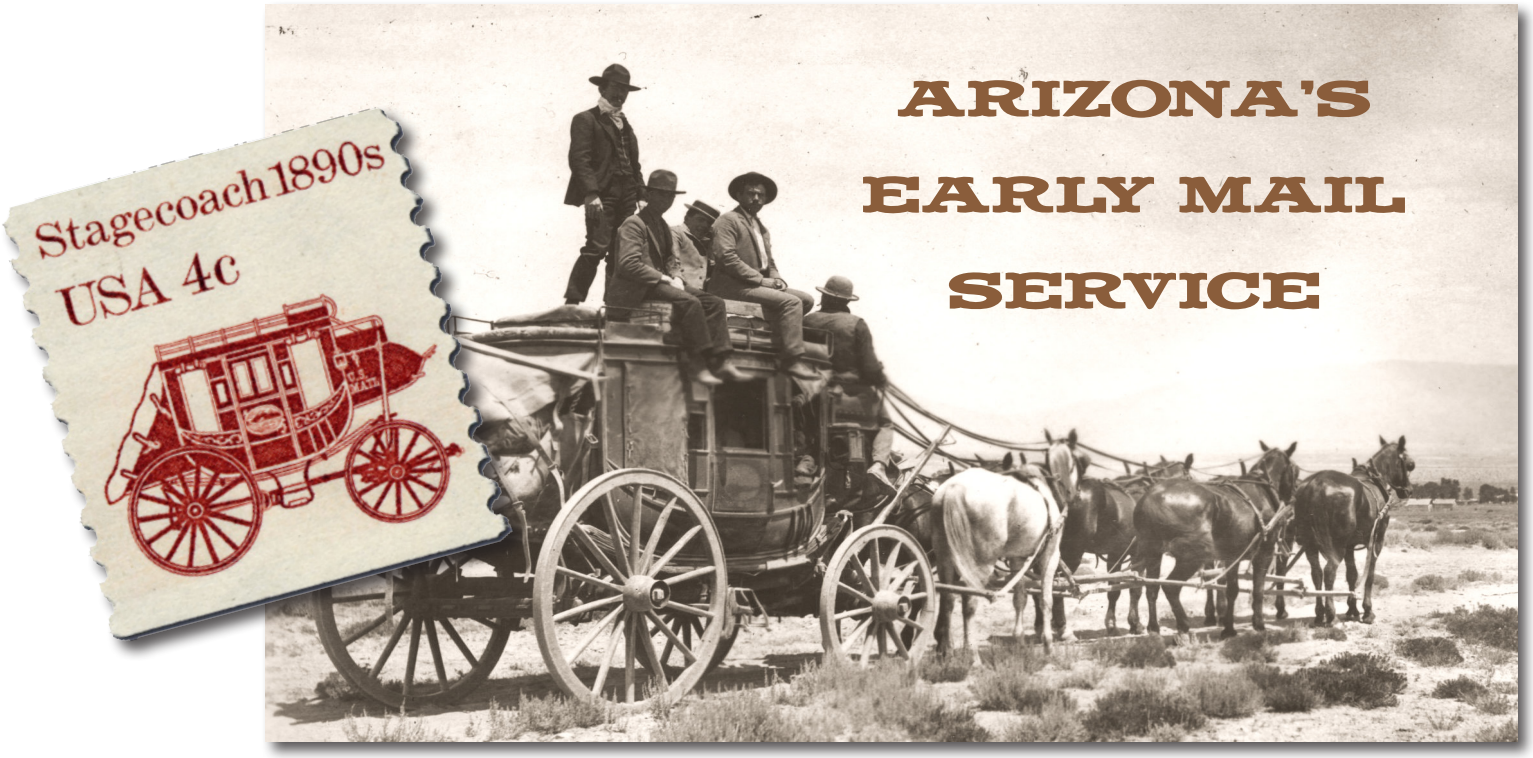
THE Quarterly
Remembering the Southwest Valley
Three Rivers Historical Society
Salt • Agua Fria • Gila



ARIZONA'S EARLY MAIL SERVICE

Contrary to public opinion, the Pony Express mail service wasn't the carrier of mail in Territorial Arizona. The first carrier was nicknamed the "Jackass Express." The name came from the fact that mules were used to carry both rider and mail across Arizona. They made about 40 trips from San Antonio to San Diego in the year before the Overland Mail was established.

In 1857, Congress awarded a six-year contract for John Butterfield to carry the mail twice a week from Missouri to San Francisco. Butterfield was a stage coach driver from New York and had founded the American Express. The contract allowed Mr. Butterfield one year to work out the logistics and get the route open.

In the year he was given, he established about 200 stations along the route that covered 2,812 miles. He stocked and manned the stations. He hired frontiersmen and experienced drivers and bought 250 stagecoaches and spring wagons. Needing horsepower, he purchased 1,800 horses and mules. He stocked each station with hay and grain.

In September 1858, the first two trips of the Butterfield Overland Mail were made, and both were completed in less than the 25 days that the contract specified. The route through Arizona started at Apache Pass, 20 miles southeast of Willcox, went through Tucson and along the Gila River to Yuma. The stagecoaches also carried passengers. One way passenger fare was $200 in gold and included meals.

The Butterfield Overland Mail ran smoothly until 1861, when Cochise with an entourage of Apaches made things very dangerous around Apache Pass. The coming of railroads, the Civil War, and the telegraph combined to end the enterprise. The last run was made in 1861. Even though the Pony Express did not go through Arizona, for the past 50 years, the Hashknife Pony Express has contracted with the Postal Service to commemorate the Pony Express by carrying the mail on horseback each January from Holbrook to Scottsdale to kick off the city's Parada del Sol.

The House that Jack Built

In the Whetstone Mountains, high above Benson, AZ, lies the J-6 Ranch, owned by Jack Speiden. In 1936, he was struggling on his newly purchased ranch to show a profit. There was so much work that needed to be done and no funds to hire help. When friends from back East suggested that they come out and spend some time on the ranch, he would quickly take them up on the offer and put them to work.

Joseph Kennedy, a wealthy soon-to-be ambassador to Britain, wanted his two sons to play football at college and thought they needed the vigorous outdoor experience of ranch work. He sent them to Speiden who didn't care who the boys' parents were. He would put them to work the same as all the rest.

Both boys arrived as gangly young men; Jack was 18, Joe was 20. They were soft but not too far out of shape when they joined the outfit in April. By September, they were leather tough and tanned. Speiden remembered that they were both hard workers and did everything he told them to do. Jack and Joe lived and worked with the other cowboys, a mix of Americans and Mexicans. Unlike the other cowboys, the Kennedy boys were not paid!

The work on the ranch was typical of any ranch: rounding up cattle; branding and doctoring cows; and building fences. They worked right along side the other cowboys. They were able to ride when they arrived, but that skill was honed and improved as they spent hours in the saddle, riding rough-string ponies.

The real test of their work ethic and determination came when Speiden decided to build an office-den building a short distance from the ranch house. True to the traditions in the Southwest, it was built of adobe bricks. The Kennedy boys learned to mix the adobe using the local soil, water and straw. They mixed this with their bare feet, slopped the mud into wooden forms and laid them out in the sun to dry into bricks. They also helped build a fireplace, patting wet adobe over bricks. Their fingerprints remain, but it is unknown which fingerprints belong to which boy.

Jack and Joe returned to the East in the fall, going to Harvard for their college education. They both served in WWII, Joe lost his life and Jack sustained an injury. Jack Speiden treasured the memories of these two young cowboys on his ranch and the house they built.

Information for this article from Arizona Highways, August 1999.

Coming Soon ✦ 3RHS Exhibit a the Litchfield Museum

We are so excited! Litchfield Historical Society has invited us to display photos telling the history of Avondale/Goodyear. We are busy collecting historic photos and getting them ready for the display. We continue to search for photos of the early days of the area.

Photos can be of old businesses, early families, politicians, first responders and events. Please contact Sally Kiko if you have photos you would be willing to share. We can copy the original and return it to you.

Sally Kiko kskiko@cox.net or 623-386-1397.

THE BLUE ANGELS

The Blue Angels, the Navy's Flight Demonstration Team, were formed at the end of World War II by the order of Chief of Naval Operations, Chester Nimitz. He wanted a flight demonstration team to keep the public interested in naval aviation. They performed their first flight demonstration at their home base, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL, in June 1946. Their airplanes at that time were Grumman F6F Hellcats led by Lt Cmdr. Roy Voris. In 1947, the team introduced the now famous diamond formation.

By the end of the 1940's they were flying their first jet aircraft. The Korean Conflict required their talents be used in the war effort, but they reorganized in 1950 and reported to NAS Corpus Christi, Texas flying the Panther F9F-5. They remained in Corus Christi until the winter of 1954, relocating to their present home base at NAS Pensacola, FL. They did their winter training in Key West, FL.

With the start of the Cuban Missile Crisis the base at Key West was needed for military purposes and the Blue Angels wintered at NAS Litchfield, AZ, from 1963-1965. By this time, they were flying the F11F-1 and practiced everyday in the skies over the West Valley. At the end of each season they would perform their show for the local citizens. What a joy it was to watch them practice their maneuvers over the alfalfa fields that line Litchfield Road.

I talked to one of the pilots, Commander Ross and a mechanic, Len Mosey, who were here with the "Blues" in the '60's. The pilot remembered that they never missed a day flying because the weather was so great. The mechanic remembered that it was a great place because with all the planes in "mothballs," there were plenty of spare parts available. Also, the enlisted Men's Club had Lucky Lager for ten cents a glass! In 1966, they began to winter in El Centro, CA.

In 1974, the Navy Flight Demonstration Team was reorganized as the Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron. This established a commanding officer, support officers and further defined the mission supporting the recruitment effort. Their current aircraft is the F/A-18 Hornet, the first dual-role fighter/attack aircraft now serving our military. The Blue Angels perform for more than 11 million spectators a year. In 2006, they returned to Goodyear for a performance at the Phoenix/Goodyear Airport. What a wonderful show they put on! Originally in the Spring 2009 issue.

3RHS Mourns the loss of Arnold and Neely

We recently lost two valuable members of Three Rivers Historical Society.

On October 23, 2018, **Bill Arnold** passed away. Bill was born in Buckeye, the ninth of twelve children. He served in the Air Force, had a BA degree from Phoenix College and worked for Smitty's grocery stores. He was a Goodyear Councilman for eight years and served as mayor. He went on to serve as a representative in the Arizona House of Representatives.

Bill and his wife Joey were Lifetime member of Three Rivers Historical Society. Bill served as president in 2010. Bill cared deeply for his community. He worked to bring about projects like the New Life Center for abused women and the Southwest Lending Closet that loans medical equipment to community members.

Patrick Neely and his wife, Wendy, have been active members of Three Rivers for years. Patrick retired from Prudential Overall Supply in Irvine, CA. He was active in the Model Railroad Club and the Christian Men's Association in Pebble Creek. Wendy has been on the board of 3RHS and served as secretary. Patrick attended most events at 3RHS and always helped set up chairs and stayed to tidy up afterwards. We will miss the help and support that both men so readily provided.

Membership Dues are Due

It's that time of year. If you have not already renewed your membership, now is the time to do it. Our rates are as follows: Student $5, Single $20, Family $30, Business/Professional $50, Contributor $100, and Lifetime $500. Business/Professional and Contributor Members are listed as "Sponsors of The Quarterly" on the back page of "The Quarterly." We thank you for your support; your dues help us cover our basic expenses.

We are always looking for new members so if you know someone that loves history send them our way. Better yet, invite them to come with you to hear one of our great speakers. ***Thank You***

"Mother of Buckeye"

By Gloria Hauser

My grandmother was known as the "Mother of Buckeye." Grace L. Thompson was born in 1904 near Dallas, Texas. She and her husband, Tom Townzen, their two children, George and Lillian, and my mother moved to Arizona in 1922.

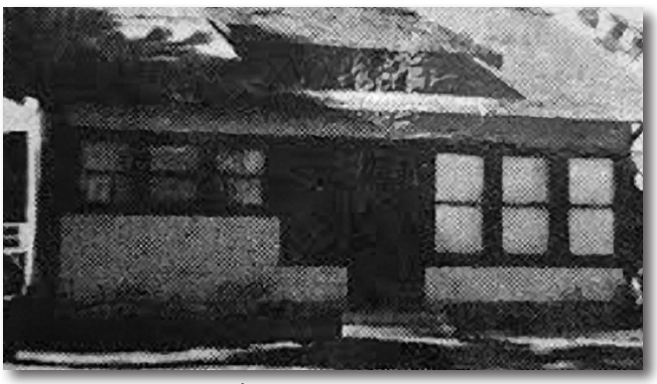
Tom, Grace and the two children settled in Palo Verde. My grandfather, I was told, was a merchant. They remained in Palo Verde until the death of Tom. My grandmother, who had little in the way of education, was left to keep herself and her four children fed, clothed and a roof over their heads. She took on many jobs and was able to keep the family together.

In the early 1930's, Grace was working at a sewing factory in Buckeye. One of the local doctors in town, Dr. Ward, came to the factory looking for a lady who was willing to be his office assistant. Grace was chosen and her career was launched. She accompanied Dr. Ward's partner, Dr. Haines, to assist him in home deliveries.

The Southwest Valley was agricultural in the early '30's; cotton being the largest crop. At that time in Arizona history we were greatly dependent on migrant field workers. There were many migrant camps in and around Buckeye. This created a need for a doctor and assistant to travel from camp to camp to deliver babies.

Eventually a maternity clinic was set up at one end of the local funeral home in Buckeye. One can only imagine going to a funeral home to have a baby. As one life comes in another leaves this world.

Grace then went to work for Dr. Virgil Jefferies as his mid-wife. He helped her establish a maternity home in a house my uncle called the Miller house, across from the old Catholic Church. This made it easier for the doctor. He was now able to deliver babies in the maternity home rather than drive out to the various camps.



Buckeye Maternity Home

My Uncle, Tommy Townzen, has told me many stories of going out to pick up women in labor and bring them into town to have their babies. He once delivered a baby in his car. I wish he would have preserved his memories in writing.

Dr. Jefferies eventually decided to sell the house that was both home and office to my grandmother. He helped Grace get her license as a midwife and set up the home as a maternity home. In 1937, the home at 103 Centre Ave. became the Buckeye Maternity Home.

A little history about the house. It was built in 1903 by Dr. Theyer to use as his residence and office. Dr. Theyer was the first physician to work in the Buckeye area. After his family, three other families lived in the house. Mr. Goodman, who I believe was a town official; the Hanson family who lost a child to an accident while living in the home were next. Then Dr. Jefferies bought the home and used it as his office until he sold it to Grace. It then become the Maternity Home.

The only doctor I remember as I was growing up was Dr. Robert Saide. He had an office up town and enjoyed the convenience of having his women in labor close by. Grace worked with Dr. Saide until she closed the home in 1967. She had brought more than 200 babies into this world; some were her own grandchildren.

The hundreds of women who Grace nursed, remember her kindness and the wonderful meals she provided them. She cared for them for four to five days. For a stay of that duration in the early days it cost $25. Later it eventually rose to $100. Many of those women did not speak English; my grandmother did not speak Spanish, but she was able to communicate and teach the women how to nurse and care for their infant solely by the gestures she made.

To the community she was known as the "Mother of Buckeye"; we her grandchildren simply called her Granny. Some of us girls worked various jobs in the summer as the home had to be dusted, floors scrubbed daily, and endless laundry done. She taught many of us life's important lessons. She was a forward-thinking woman for her time, believing all girls should know about their bodies and how babies were born. I was able to witness a birth when I was 15. We all loved going to Granny's as she was special to us and, of course, we all loved seeing the babies.

In 1967, Grace retired and lived in the home for many years. After her death, my uncle Tommy and his wife Melba lived there until his death. The house has been sold and is now just an old house in an older area of Buckeye. To me it will always be my grandmother's house where babies were born.

Arizona v. California

By David Meese

Part 3 of 4

"Whiskey's for Drinking Water's for Fightin' Over"

A Period of Cooperation
Myths of Western Water War

Water. We fight over it, and, as our headline states, we drink whiskey after we're done fightin'. Or before. Because whiskey's for drinkin'. As opposed to water, which, as noted, is for fightin' over.

The Southwest is in the midst of a long drought. Shifting weather and environmental patterns, population booms, and about every third book on the subject prompts public meeting, gatherings of water professionals, and water conferences that always refer to the meme and then laugh about it, because everyone knows it's true. That's what Southwesterners have done, especially when the watering hole dries up.

Only, it's not true, or not *always* true. It's especially untrue at those times when water scarcity becomes a genuine concern, like now.

According to one of the Southwest's most respected water journalists and Director of the New Mexico Water Resources Department, the real story of water in the arid desert over the last 100 years or so hasn't been about fightin'....it's been about cooperation.

John Fleck, in his book, *Water is for Fighting Over, and Other Myths About Water in the West*, the real story has been, often begrudgingly, the ability of constituents to cooperate, often against their own self-interest, in order to ensure that everyone's faucet continues to keep running.

"The most pervasive of the myths is that we are about to run out of water," writes Fleck. "This ignores history, where again and again we have seen cities and farm communities adapt and continue to grow and prosper without using more water, often, in fact, using less."

Fleck's narrative recalls landmark moments, large and small, in the Southwest's water history in which seemingly irreconcilable conflicts over scarce water resources were resolved, usually settled as a result of civil negotiations. Then they all drank whiskey. Occasionally, the resolution resulted from a chance meeting.

The very existence of the lush Cienega de Santa Clara wetlands in the Colorado Delta was the result of a chance meeting between environmental activist Jennifer Pitt and Sid Wilson, then manager of the Central Arizona Project. The CAP executive and the activist met on a Colorado River rafting trip. Wilson was adamant that every available drop of Colorado River water should be reserved for "human consumption". According to Pitt, "Eight days of wearing shorts and drinking beer (not whiskey) gave them a mutual accommodation that has proven out time and time again."

Fleck writes, "We don't give ourselves enough credit for our successes. We have already demonstrated the ability to use a lot less water. We're going to have to learn from it. We are going to have to use even less."

Arizona has played the role of collaborator in recent years to protect Lake Mead, the country's largest reservoir of water, as water level continue to go down, threatening the Lower Basin states share of the river. Unlike California, Arizona has collaborated on its own internal water management problems with the help of the landmark Groundwater Management Act of 1980.

In 2016, when the rains dried up and reservoirs shrank, California was forced to impose drastic water conservation measures to keep the taps flowing. Arizona to a large extent avoided this fate because it had something that California didn't, The Groundwater Management Act. The legislation was the first of its kind in the nation, and, among other things, outlawed irrigation of any new acres of farmland and required subdivision builders in the most populous areas of the state to be able to demonstrate a 100-year supply of water before approval to build. To be sure, Arizona's legislators tussled with a variety of interests before passing the most novel act in the history of Western water law. Then, we presume, they drank whiskey. Kathleen Ferris, a former Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, and journalist Michael Schaffer have produced a short film telling the story of that achievement. It can be seen at www.groundwatermovie.com.

This story and much of the information it contains was excerpted from John Fleck's *Water is Fighting Over and Other Myths about Water in the West*. Island Press, 2016.

Part 4 of Water Wars will appear in the next issue of *The Quarterly*

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Three Rivers Society Meetings

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