



## **Early Life Along the Salt River**

undreds of years before any of the cities in the eastern part of our country were so much as clearings in the wilderness, a well established, civilized community populated the land we know as Phoenix. The Pueblo Grande ruins, which were occupied between 700 A.D. and 1400 A.D., are a testament to our city's ancient roots.

The wide Salt River ran through the Valley of the Sun, but there was little rain or melting snow to moisten the brown earth from river to mountain range on either side. But former residents were industrious, enterprising and imaginative. They built an irrigation system, consisting mostly of some 135 miles of canals,

and the land became fertile. The ultimate fate of this ancient society, however, is a mystery. The accepted belief is that it was destroyed by a prolonged drought. Roving Indians, observing the Pueblo Grande ruins and the vast canal system these people left behind, gave them the name "Ho Ho Kam" – meaning the people who have gone.

Phoenix's modern history begins in the second half of the 19th century. In 1867, Jack Swilling of Wickenburg stopped to rest his horse at the foot of the north slopes of the White Tank Mountains. He looked down and across the expansive Salt River Valley and his eyes caught the rich gleam of the brown, dry soil turned up by the horse's hooves. He saw

farm land, predominately free of rocks, and in a place beyond the reach of heavy frost or snow. All it needed was water.

Returning to Wickenburg, he organized the Swilling Irrigation Canal Company, and moved into the Valley. The same year, the company began digging a canal to divert some of the water from the Salt River onto the lands of the Valley. By March 1868, water flowed through the canal, and a few members of the company raised meager crops that summer.



Jack Swilling, one of the founders of Phoenix.

#### **Phoenix is Born**

By 1868, a small colony had formed approximately four miles east of the present city. Swilling's Mill became the new name of the area. It was then changed to Helling Mill, then Mill City, and years later, East Phoenix. Swilling, having been a confederate soldier, wanted to name the new settlement Stonewall after Stonewall Jackson.

Others suggested the name Salina, but neither name suited the inhabitants. It was Darrell Duppa who suggested the name Phoenix, inasmuch as the new town would spring from the ruins of a former civilization. That is the accepted derivation of our name.

Phoenix officially was recognized on May 4, 1868, when the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors, the county of which we were then a part, formed an election precinct here.

A post office was established in Phoenix on June 15, 1868, and Jack Swilling was named postmaster.

The sharp whistle of the first steam mill in the Valley added a brisk note to the sound of emerging industry. It announced the Richard Flour Mills, built in 1869, where the Luhrs Tower now stands.

## **Selecting a Townsite**

The rapid influx of pioneers continued and by 1870 it was clear that a townsite had to be

selected. On Oct. 20, 1870, a meeting to select such a site took place in the home of John Moore.

This well-known farmer offered 40 acres to the cause, but 320 were purchased by a popular subscription that raised \$50. The official designation of this new townsite was the North Half of Section 8, Township 1 North, Range 3 East. It encompassed the area – today's downtown business section – bounded on the north by Van Buren Street, on the south by Jackson Street, on the east by Seventh Street and on the west by Seventh Avenue.

To administer this new townsite, the Salt River Valley Town Association was formed with its articles bearings the following signatures: Darrell Duppa Barnett and Block James Murphy William A. Holmes Jacob Starar Columbus H. Gray James McC. Elliot William Rowe Daniel Twomey Edward Irvine Andrew Starar James D. Monihon

Wm. B. Hellings & Co. Thomas Barnum John T. Dennis James M. Buck John T. Alsap Martin P. Griffin J. P. Perry Michael Connell Charles C. McDermott John P. Osborn Paul Becker

Washington Street in the 1870s.

John T. Alsap, James Murphy and J. P. Perry were selected by majority vote to be the townsite commissioners. Alsap was the chairman and Capt. William A. Hancock was secretary.





Parades were common in downtown Phoenix (far left) in 1884.

The Columbus and Adeline Gray mansion (left) on Seventh and Mohave streets was a Phoenix showplace in the 1890s. Capt. Hancock was also a surveyor, and he conducted the first survey of the townsite and laid out the lots and the town. The first town of Phoenix was one mile long, a half-mile wide and contained 96 blocks. Washington Street was the main roadway and on the early maps is shown to be 100 feet wide.

The east and west streets were named after our presidents. Washington Street was placed in the middle and Adams, who was the second president, was given the first street to the north. Our third president, Jefferson, had the first street south of Washington named after him. And the pattern followed – one to the north and one to the south – until recent years.

The north-south streets originally carried Indian names, but these were changed in favor

of the more easily remembered numbers – with streets designated to the east of Central Avenue and avenues to the west.

#### The Great Sale

The *Prescott Miner* carried the following advertisement on December 7, 1870:

"GREAT SALE OF LOTS AT PHOENIX, ARIZONA on the 23rd and 24th of December."

The first effort resulted in the sale of 61 lots at an average price of \$48 each. The first lot was purchased by Judge William Berry of Prescott. His purchase of the southwest corner

of First and Washington streets cost him the rather steep price of \$116.

The first store building in the new town was Hancock's Store, a general store opened in July 1871, by William Smith. The adobe structure was built on the northwest corner of First and Washington streets and served as the town hall, county offices and general meeting place for early Phoenicians.

Although various religious organizations had been formed by 1870, the first church building in Phoenix was the Central Methodist Church built in 1871 at the corner of Second Avenue and Washington Street.

The first Catholic priest came to Phoenix in 1872, but it was not until after 1881 that an

adobe church building, the Sacred Heart of St. Louis at Third and Monroe streets, replaced a home as a place for Catholics to worship.

Yavapai County was divided on Feb. 12, 1871, when Maricopa County was created by the Legislature. Maricopa, the sixth county in the state, gave up portions of land in 1875 and 1881 to help form Pinal and Gila counties.

The first county election was held in 1871, when Tom Barnum was selected the first sheriff of Maricopa County. It was a contentious race. As a matter of fact, a shooting between two other candidates for the office, J. A. Chenowth and Jim Favorite, resulted in Favorite's death and Chenowth's withdrawal from the race.

Schooling for Phoenix's youth began on September 5, 1872. About 20 children studied under the guidance of Jean Rudolph Derroche in the courtroom of the county building. By October 1873, a small adobe school building was completed on Center Street (now Central Avenue), a short distance north of where the San Carlos Hotel now stands. Miss Nellie Shaver, a newcomer from Wisconsin, was appointed as the first female schoolteacher in Phoenix.

#### Whole Town Worth \$550

On April 10, 1874, President Grant issued a patent to Judge Alsap for the present site of Phoenix. The declaratory statement was filed at

the Prescott Land Office on Feb. 15, 1872. Official entry was made at the Florence Land Office on Nov. 19, 1873. The total cost of the 320-acre Phoenix Townsite was \$550, including all expenses for services.

In 1874, downtown lots were selling for \$7 to \$11 each. That year also marked the entry of the first telegraph line into Phoenix. Morris Goldwater was the first operator of the telegraph station, located in his father's store on the northwest corner of First and Jefferson streets.

By 1875, there were 16 saloons, four dance halls, two monte banks and one faro table in Phoenix. The townsite-commissioner form of government, however, was not working well.



Cyclists add to the heavy traffic at Washington and First streets in the late 1880s.

At a mass meeting held at the courthouse on Oct. 20, 1875, an election was held to select three village trustees and other officials.

John Smith became the chairman of the trustees, Charles W. Stearns was selected treasurer and Capt. Hancock was chosen secretary.

As business flourished, a safe place was needed for the Valley's money. To solve the problem, the National Bank was established in 1878 with capital stock of \$200,000.

The first newspaper in Phoenix, the Salt River Valley Herald, changed its name to the Phoenix Herald in 1880. By this time, the paper had progressed from a weekly to a semiweekly publication.

In 1880, Phoenix had 2,453 residents, 379 pupils enrolled in school, an ice factory and a

new brick sidewalk in front of the Tiger Saloon. On Nov. 26 of that year, Maricopa County had its first legal hanging.

# **Incorporation in 1881**

Just as Phoenix had outgrown its original townsite-commissioner form of government, it grew too large for the village trustee operation. "The Phoenix Charter Bill" was passed by the 11th Territorial Legislature. The bill made Phoenix an incorporated city and provided for a government consisting of a mayor and four council members. It was signed by Governor John C. Fremont on Feb. 25, 1881.

On May 3, 1881, the first election took place in the newly incorporated city with a

population of approximately 2,500.

The outcome:

# Mayor

John T. Alsap 127 votes James D. Monihon 102 votes

## Council

T.W. Brown 198 votes
John H. Burger 144 votes
W.T. Smith. 120 votes
James M. Cotton 107 votes
Mark Richardson 104 votes
J.W. Clark 98 votes
Dr. Sheets 91 votes

#### **Treasurer**

M.W. Kales 224 votes

### Marshal

Henry Garfias 97 votes James K. Burnett 79 votes Thomas Childs 53 votes

The first regular meeting of the City Council was held on May 9, 1881. The first ordinance adopted was the one relating to the official seal of the city described as follows:

> "In the center a bird rising, and surrounding this, the inscription Phoenix, Arizonan – Incorporated February 25, 1881."

The 11th Legislature attempted to have the United States Government establish a mint in Phoenix. The effort wasn't successful, but another enterprise saw its beginning. Holsum Bakery realized the opportunities Phoenix had to offer and opened its doors in 1881.

Within the next 10 years, great strides were made toward the maturity of a modern city. In 1886, one of the first electric plants in the west was installed in Phoenix. It was a steam plant with boilers fired by mesquite wood.

That same year, Phoenix Fire Engine Company Number 1 was organized. It was operated by a volunteer group that served the city for many years.

## **Transportation: Horses and Rails**

The first horse-drawn streetcar line was built along some 2 1/2 miles of Washington Street in 1887, and the kick off for this new mode of transportation was on Nov. 5. An additional line was installed along Center Street, and the first car moved over those shaky rails on Dec. 30, 1889. The streetcar system became rather extensive in later years, with tracks covering most of Phoenix and extending even to Glendale.

July 4, 1887, would have been just another Independence Day had not the first Southern Pacific train arrived that day from Maricopa Wells. This had been a long-anticipated event.

The coming of the railroad was the first of

several important events that revolutionized the economy of this area. Merchandise now flowed into the city by rail instead of wagon. Phoenix products went quickly to eastern and western markets. In recognition of the increased tempo of economic life, the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce was organized on Nov. 4, 1888.

In that year, city offices were moved into the new City Hall, built where the downtown bus terminal once stood. This building also provided temporary offices for the territorial government when they were moved to Phoenix from Prescott in 1889.

The location of Arizona's Capitol had been moved several times since 1864. It was first established at Navajo Springs, then Prescott,



Horse-drawn streetcars pass by the old courthouse in the 1890s.

then Tucson after an attempt to move it to La Paz failed, then back to Prescott, and finally to Phoenix.

## The Bustling 1890s

Twenty years had passed since Phoenix, like its legendary namesake, had risen from the ashes of a bygone community. The 1890s showed further indications of the heights to which this city would some day soar. The Arizona Republic became a daily paper in 1890, with Ed Gill as its editor.

In those days, none of the great reservoirs north of the Valley had been created to control the flow of water to the Valley. The year 1891 was marked by the greatest flood in the Valley's history, as well as by the advent of the first

telephone system in Phoenix.

The horse-drawn streetcars were replaced in 1893 by electric cars. The electric cars stayed on the streets until the automobile replaced them on Feb. 17, 1948.

On March 12, 1895, the Santa Fe, Prescott and Phoenix Railroad ran its first train to Phoenix. It connected Phoenix with the northern part of Arizona and gave travelers another outlet to the east and west via the Santa Fe.

The additional railroad advanced the capital city's rise to economic supremacy in the state. Also in 1895, the Phoenix Union High School was established, and 90 young people were enrolled.

In 1897, the Friday Club, an organization of

14 women, started the public library movement in Phoenix. Their efforts led to formation of the Phoenix Library Association in 1899. The members subscribed at an annual rate of \$3 for the maintenance of the small library housed in two upstairs rooms in the Fleming Building at First Avenue and Washington Street. The Phoenix City Council, however, levied a 5-mill tax for its public library a few months after the 1901 Legislature passed a bill allowing a tax to be applied to the support of free libraries. This action satisfied the conditions set by Mr. Andrew Carnegie in his proposal to donate a library building to the city. The Carnegie Free Library was opened on Feb. 18, 1908.

By the turn of the century, the population of Phoenix had reached 5,554. More social outlets were being promoted, such as the Phoenix Country Club and the Women's Club, both organized in 1900.

The Capitol finally got a permanent home when a 10-acre plot was donated at the west end of Washington Street. A building was constructed for \$130,000 and it was dedicated by Gov. Murphy on Feb. 25, 1901. Newspaper reports of the event were set in type by members of Phoenix Typographical Union 352, Arizona's first labor union established Feb. 14, 1901.

President Theodore Roosevelt (far right) at the dedication of the Roosevelt Dam (right) in 1911.



#### **Roosevelt and Reclamation**

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the National Reclamation Act making it possible to build dams on western streams for reclamation purposes, an important event for the people of Phoenix and the Valley.

Valley residents were quick to supplement this federal action by organizing the Salt River Valley Waters Users' Association on February 4, 1903, to assure proper management of the precious water supply. This organization still functions as the major agency for controlled use of irrigation water in the Valley.

The Theodore Roosevelt Dam was started in 1906. It was the first multiple-purpose

dam, supplying both water and electric power constructed under the National Reclamation Act. On May 18, 1911, the former president dedicated the dam, which was the largest masonry dam in the world. This opened a new era in farming for the Valley and secured the part of our economy that depended on water for its life.

President William Howard Taft approved Arizona's statehood on Feb. 14, 1912. On March 18 of the same year, Gov. George Hunt called the first State Legislature into session.

# Establishing a Council-Manager Government

This was an auspicious step in the state's history, and in the following year, the City of Phoenix took an equally important one. At a special election on October 11, 1913, the people of Phoenix, by a vote of nearly two to one, ratified a new charter. The charter provided for a council-manager form of government, making Phoenix one of the first cities in the nation to adopt this progressive form of government.

Phoenix's charter also provided for home rule, although the city is not home rule in the complete sense of the phrase. Courts ruled that if the State Legislature passes a law that concerns cities and towns, the court determines

if the law was of state-wide interest or of municipal concern. If the law was of statewide interest, it was binding on Phoenix, even though it contravened some provision of the charter.

Therefore, the government of Phoenix is operated by authority of the powers granted by its charter, as limited by the State Legislature. This is in contrast to the operation of the government of cities and towns that do not have charters but operate by the general statutes of the state relating to cities and towns.

An election was held on March 19, 1914, with the following results:

#### Mayor

George U. Young	2336 votes
Ernest W. Lewis	1835 votes

### **Commissioners**

Joseph Cope	2618 votes
Peter Corpstein	2131 votes
Michael J. Foley	1950 votes
Frank Woods	1933 votes
Victor R. Norris	1873 votes
George Norman McBean	1744 votes
L. D. Dameron	1617 votes
Harry A. Diehl	1461 votes

In the presence of Thomas J. Prescott, on April 17, 1914, the new Mayor and the

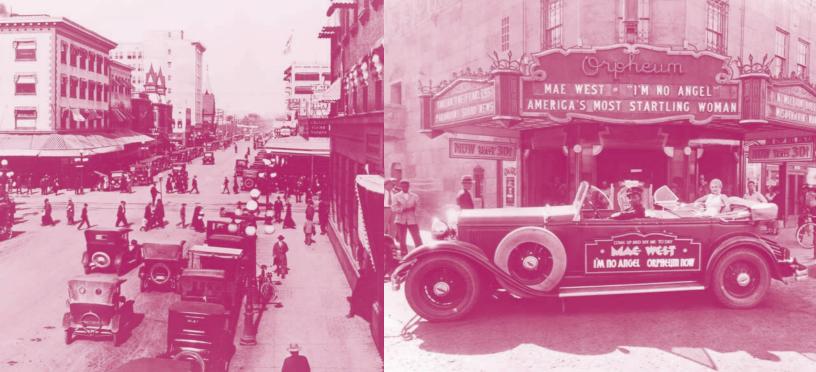
winning four commissioners took their oaths of office. Thus began a third form of government for Phoenix.

William Addison Farish, a widely known civil engineer, was selected as the first city manager. City officials appointed by Farish, according to the provisions of the new charter, were the following:

C.M. Cooper	Auditor
George D. Christy	Attorney
J. C. C.H. Boone	Treasurer
John McBride	Magistrate
George Brisbois	Chief of Police

Looking north at Central Avenue and Washington Street (right) in the 1920s.

Mae West (far right) came to town in 1929 to impress the locals that she wasn't playacting in "I'm No Angel."



## **Growing into a Metropolis**

Phoenix, as well as Arizona, had come of age. The casual, easy growth that characterized a farming community slowly came to a stop. Phoenix began to grow into a young metropolis. At the end of its first eight years under statehood, Phoenix was no longer a town – it was an important city with 29,053 people.

Two thousand youngsters were attending Phoenix Union High School in 1920. They would playfully throw each other into Jack Swilling's first canal, which ran through the campus and had become the "Town Ditch." A total of 1,080 buildings went up that year. Among them was Arizona's first skyscraper, the Heard Building.

During those eight years, Phoenix also developed the makings of its first political scandal – the \$1.3 million bond issue of 1919 to build a redwood pipeline from the Verde River to Phoenix. The pipeline was finished in 1920, but never worked very well. Today, that portion of the redwood that isn't still underground serves to form walls for the houses of the Indians living near Fort McDowell.

By 1930, the size of Phoenix nearly doubled again with a 48,118 census count. There were 120 miles of sidewalks and 161 miles of streets – only 77 which were paved. The public library had 51,000 books, and the police force had 70 officers. The budget for the city was \$2,033,886. Another pipeline was built – this time constructed with 48 inches of concrete –

Sky Harbor Airport was just getting started in 1934.



that still carries Verde River water to the city.

Another turning point in Phoenix life came in 1940. The city had gone far as a farming center and then as a distribution center. When the United States went to war, Phoenix rapidly turned into an embryonic industrial city. Luke Field, Williams Field and Falcon Field, coupled with the giant ground training center at Hyder, west of Phoenix, brought thousands of men into Phoenix. Their needs, both military and personal, were met in part by small industries in Phoenix.

When the war ended, many of these men returned to Phoenix, and their families came with them. Suddenly thousands of people were wondering what to do for a living. Large industry learned of this labor pool and

started to move branches here. Smaller plants were started by private capital and initiative. While water again began to run out as it had several times before, the citizens were more fortunate than the Ho Ho Kam who built the first canals and saw them go dry. Phoenix had American technology to fall back on. The era commencing with 1940 marked the end of agriculture's role as chief provider. It was the beginning of a greater prosperity than Phoenix had ever known.

In 1950, 105,000 people lived within the city limits of Phoenix and thousands more lived immediately adjacent to and depended upon Phoenix for their livelihoods. The city had 148 miles of paved streets and 163 miles of unpaved streets, a total of 311.

#### **Governmental Reform**

The men who changed the governmental system to the council-manager form in 1914 had hoped that this would provide better city government. Their hopes had not been fulfilled, however. A long succession of managers, nearly one a year, had indicated that the council placed political favor above running the city efficiently.

In November 1948, the people voted to strengthen the city manager's position in municipal government. This change, plus raising the council membership to seven, seemed to position the city to have an operable council-manager form of government. But it didn't happen. The council then in power

selected its own manager and continued to rule the administrative roost.

In 1949, the people, tired of this continued abuse, elected an entirely new slate of council members, including the first female council member, Margaret Kober (Mrs. Leslie R. Kober).

The results of these governmental reforms have been spectacularly demonstrated. The same city manager selected by that first council remained in office more than 11 years, despite the fact that he served under five different mayors and 27 different council members. This provided continuity in management that proved invaluable, considering the city's tremendous growth.

Despite predictions that he wouldn't last six months, City Manager Ray Wilson remained at his desk until his voluntary retirement in early 1961. His term broke every record established by previous managers.

## **A Major American City**

Perhaps the development of Phoenix since 1950 has been the most spectacular.

Consider that at the time, Phoenix had an area of 17.1 square miles and a population of 106,000, placing it 99th among American cities.

Today, the city covers almost 520 square miles, has a population of 1.5 million and ranks as the county's fifth largest city.

While Phoenix is the corporate and

industrial center of the Southwest, it has not forgotten its past. It has retained its long-time reputation of friendliness and of concern by its citizens for each other and their government.

This has been attested to by the National Civic League, which four times since 1950 selected Phoenix as an "All-America City" in competition with hundreds of other cities and towns across the nation.

The hallmark of an All-America City is the extent that its private citizens get involved in the workings of their government. Thousands of citizens have served on various city committees, boards and commissions to assure that major decisions are in the people's best interest.

A toll gate at Central and McDowell avenues in the 1880s was owned by the Central Avenue Improvement Association, a subsidiary of the Arizona Water Co. The toll for wagons and buggies was 25 cents. Bicycles were free, and the town was full of bicycles.

Central Avenue (far right) in 1948.







Since 1950, the residents of Phoenix have shown their faith in city government by approving bond issues totaling about \$5.1 billion for necessary improvements in urban facilities and services. The 1988 Phoenix bond election, which authorized the issuance of more than \$1 billion in bonds, was one of the largest general-purpose municipal bond elections ever.

Among the major projects funded by the 1988 bonds were the establishment of the 6,000-acre Phoenix Mountains Preserve Program, construction of the 20-story Phoenix City Hall, the Burton Barr Central Library, the Phoenix History Museum and the Arizona Science Center, renovation of the Orpheum Theatre and expansion of the Civic Plaza and the Phoenix Art Museum.

The latest bond proposal – this one for \$878.5 million – was approved by voters in 2006. It allowed funding for an assortment of major projects in all parts of the city.

Among them were:

- Building police precinct and neighborhood fire stations, a new crime lab, a new fire training center and hightech radio communication facilities for Police, Fire and other city departments.
- Developing small specialty high schools and the Arizona State University downtown campus, including a nursing school, a life sciences research park, a bioscience campus and University of Arizona schools of medicine and pharmacy.

- Acquiring land for new parks and recreational facilities and expanding and upgrading existing parks.
- Purchasing land for new libraries, senior, family and social service centers, and youth and family cultural facilities, and renovating and expanding existing facilities.
- Developing affordable housing for families and seniors, neighborhood revitalization programs and shelters for the homeless.
- Constructing, improving and maintaining streets, storm sewers and detention basins.

Currently, millions of dollars in public and private projects are under construction or planned in the city. The City Council guides this unprecedented growth with an approach designed to preserve and enhance the lifestyle that originally attracted so many people to Phoenix.

The work of the council, the city staff and the many citizen volunteers has earned Phoenix much recognition over the years, both nationally and internationally.

In addition to its four "All-America City" awards, other notable honors included:

Best Run City in U.S. — A yearlong, in-depth Syracuse University study in 1999 of management efficiency among the nation's 35 largest urban centers concluded that Phoenix was the nation's best-run city. Phoenix was the only city in the survey to earn an overall grade of "A."

Carl Bertelsmann Prize — Phoenix was praised for its highly efficient and citizen-oriented programs in sharing this prestigious international honor in 1993 with Christchurch, New Zealand. The one-time award, given by the nonprofit Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany, recognized the best-run city government in the world.

**Best-Managed American City** — Financial World magazine ranked Phoenix the best-managed of the nation's 30 largest cities in 1995 and in 1991

Among the Best — Over the years, Phoenix has won national recognition for being among the best in the country in many important areas. Expansion Magazine in 2000 called it the best city in the country in which to locate or expand a business; Inc. Magazine selected it in 1999 as the best city in which to start or grow a business; a Cushman & Wakefield nationwide survey of business executives in 1999 listed it among the top two most desirable cities in the country in which to work; a national Lou Harris Poll in 1999 put it among the top 10 cities in the country in which to live; and Hispanic Magazine in 1999 listed it among the top four cities in the country for Hispanics to live and work.

Miscellaneous — Hotwire.com recognized Phoenix in 2008 as the most affordable vacation spot in its annual Travel Value Index; The National League of Cities and National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials gave the city its Excellence in Diversity Award for a

"Healing Racism" community dialogue series conducted in 2008; USA Today listed Burton Barr Central Library in 2008 as one of the 10 greatest places to curl up and read; Phoenix received straight A's in a 2008 Valley Forward Association assessment of environmental issues that impact the quality of life for residents today and tomorrow; Sister Cities International in 2008 awarded the city of Phoenix its highest honor for having the Best Overall Sister City Program in the U.S. among cities with a population of 500,000 or more: and the National Parks and Recreation Association gave its 2007 Excellence in Aguatics Award to the Parks and Recreation Department for demonstrating excellence in

planning and managing diversified aquatics services.

Blessed with energetic and interested residents willing to give their time to solve tremendous problems of growth, Phoenix faces an era of unlimited development. As long as the people have vision, the past will be but a prologue of what is to come.

James M. Barney, Arizona historian, and Barry M. Goldwater, former Phoenix City Councilman and U.S. Senator, prepared the history for the 1951 Phoenix City Code. It was brought up to date for the 1962 Code by Jack Williams, former City Councilman, Mayor and Governor.

Photographs from SRP (page 17), Bob Rink (cover and page 28) and the collection of Herb and Dorothy McLaughlin, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, University Libraries, Arizona State University (all others).





City of Phoenix Public Information Office 11/08 5,000