



# Glendale Arizona Historical Society

*"preservation of the past"*

MARCH 2021 NEWSLETTER

Volume 42, Issue 3

ALL TOURS, MEETINGS AND  
WEDDINGS ARE STILL  
CANCELLED



## GLENDALE'S UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFIL BUILDING



First United Methodist Church sanctuary located at 7102 N. 58<sup>th</sup> Drive was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 1, 2006. The building was designed by the Los Angeles architectural firm of G. A. Faithful and L.B. Baker. The building was built by contractor W.M. Mullen of Glendale with volunteer labor from church members. The sanctuary was dedicated on February 3, 1929. Glendale enjoys many wonderful historic buildings, but none as beautiful as the First United Methodist Church Sanctuary.

The church had bought Lots 5, 6 and 7 of Block 10 of the Glendale Townsite in 1897 and built a small wooden church. Lot 8 was added in 1899. In 1918, it was decided the wooden church was too small and in 1919 the church bought lots 9, 10 and 11. Architect M. L. Fitzhugh designed a two-story Gothic style building with a three-story buttressed tower at the corner of 58<sup>th</sup> Drive and Glenn Drive. The wooden church was sold and relocated. The parsonage was moved north of the new church location. The \$60,000-\$80,000 cost for the full church was too much so only the basement and Sunday school rooms were approved at that time. It was discovered that the building would be unsafe as planned. Plans were abandoned, and the congregation moved into the basement and first floor on July 1, 1923. The membership grew and in 1928 the church leadership tried again. They hired an architect and contractor and even church members volunteered for construction tasks. Each member pledged a donation beyond their regular tithes. The parsonage moved again and remained in church ownership until 1949.

The membership used the Gothic style for the sanctuary. The distinctive characteristics of the building were use of "clinker" bricks, granite columns and arches, and a 50-foot tower. The building cost \$12,000 but with furnishings, parsonage relocation, refinishing the old building and paying off debts the total project cost was \$23,000. Mayor O.D. Betts, along with ministers from several churches, dedicated the sanctuary. The depression hit and the church had trouble paying the mortgage. Members pledged \$1,000 in personal loans to meet the mortgage payments. The women of the church cooked and served dinners for the Rotary Club for eight years to make money. The church survived the 1930s and was known as the most beautiful building in Glendale. It still is.

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## “THE STRAW THAT STIRS THE DRINK”

Rarely has a non-native Glendale resident made such significant changes and betterment for our community as those achieved by Mayor Elaine Scruggs. Elaine and her husband Larry, as a young married couple in 1971, followed her parents from Pasadena, California to the Phoenix metro area, settling in north Glendale. Elaine was working in management for Mountain Bell, but in 1979 left the company. She and Larry had adopted an infant daughter, Jennifer, and Elaine wanted to be a stay-at-home mom.

After a few years she began to look at ways she could help her community and was selected to be in the first Chamber of Commerce Glendale Leadership class. The next year she managed the leadership program. Elaine believes in civic engagement as a noble way to spend your life. She ran for Glendale City Council in 1990 and won. Then in 1993 when the Mayor resigned, the city council appointed her as Mayor. She ran and won her races for Mayor in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008, serving as Mayor from 1993-2013. Elaine had an issue with breast cancer in 2009, but that did not slow her down.

She was strong on economic development and saw the critical role that the Agua Fria/Loop 101 would play for Glendale in the future. Elaine was able, in cooperation with west valley leaders, to get the Loop 101 done seven years earlier than planned. Midwestern University's decision to locate in Glendale was based on the early Loop 101 completion adjacent to their northern boundary. Then, developer Steve Ellman proposed building an arena (ice hockey) and 200 acres of mixed-use development next to the Loop 101. In 2002, Glendale was approached as a location in Westgate for the new football stadium. No other NFL football stadium had a dedicated freeway off-ramp, lodging, restaurants, shopping and entertainment within walking distance. The football stadium opened in 2006. Mayor Scruggs said: "A city only gets to paint its blank canvas once."

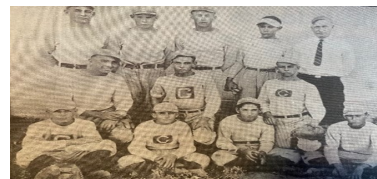
The mayor was strongly committed to historic preservation such as the National Register of Historic Places nominations and the Bronze Plaque project (30 historical bronze plaques plus small bronze plaques for all contributing houses in Historic Districts). Elaine was also a strong supporter of Luke Air Force Base. She was committed to youth development projects and saw Glendale named the first Kids at Hope city in the United States. She fostered leadership, helping to create Glendale University for citizens to become community leaders. Elaine was also active in regional leadership roles in the Maricopa Association of Governments. Yes, Elaine was "the straw that stirred the drink" to move Glendale and the West Valley forward. Thank you, Elaine, for a job well done for Glendale.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The first few months of 2021 are still filled with uncertainty. The coronavirus vaccines are becoming available, and those eligible to take the two injections need to do so. You are not only helping to stamp out the pandemic and protect others, but you are also making history. We all still need to wear masks in public and practice social distancing, as well as wash our hands and use sanitizer.

The Board can be proud of the intense effort made to accomplish the considerable repairs to the Manistee Ranch historic buildings and grounds. Maintenance is being done by member volunteers and repairs by local contractor J B. Espinoza. Making Manistee Ranch one of the best maintained National Register of Historic Places sites in Arizona is also due to the financial donations of society members and Glendale City Councilmembers. The City of Glendale Department of Parks and Recreation has continually provided help to Manistee Ranch, for which the Board is grateful. Thank you all for helping to preserve and promote Glendale's history.



1923 Glendale Cardinals State Champion



1938 Glendale Greys State Champion

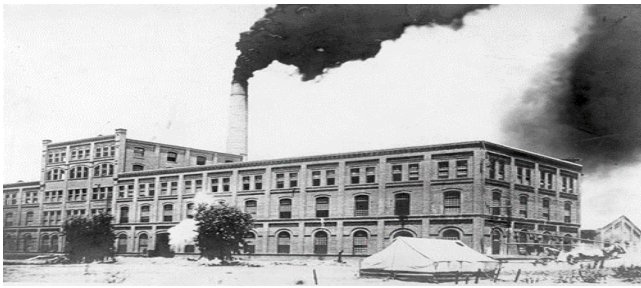
## GLENDALÉ, THE LITTLE TOWN THAT WON

Glendale had powerful high school men's baseball teams in the 1920s and a successful semi-professional baseball team, the Glendale Greys. The Greys played on a field at the site of the post office at 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grand Avenue. Guy Hadley managed the team from its start in 1920 to his death in 1954. The Glendale Cardinals high school team won the 1923 and 1926 state championships beating schools in Phoenix and Tucson. A couple of the high school champs, Willis Moore and Elton Yancy, played on all three of those teams. Elton Yancy, pitcher, was known as the "Glendale Cyclone." He was probably, according to baseball historian Eddie Pullins, the most outstanding baseball player Glendale ever had.

Merle "PeeWee" Heatwole borrowed his uncle's car to go to Tucson for the 1923 state championship baseball game. Merle was so short he had to sit on Elton's lap to steer while Elton worked the pedals. Glendale beat Phoenix Union to win the state championship. Pitcher Elton Yancy struck out 18 men. There were only three seniors on the team; all the rest were freshmen. One, Frank Sanctet, became a legend coaching the University of Arizona baseball team for 23 years.

In 1926, the freshmen were then seniors. The last regular game before the championship game was played against the Phoenix Union High School Coyotes for the Valley Championship. Five thousand fans watched a fantastic duel between pitchers Elton Yancy of Glendale and Ivan Green of Phoenix. Elton hit a home run off of Green's pitch for a home run and won the game. Two weeks later, the Glendale players drove to Tucson again (it is not known if Merle had grown tall enough to drive) and beat the Tucson Badgers 7-2 for their second state championship in four years. Elton became a successful farmer, Willis Moore a rancher and Merle a minister in Prescott.





## **BEET SUGAR FACTORY: FIRST GLENDALE BUILDING PLACED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The National Register of Historic Places was created by the National Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665) to honor those buildings, sites and objects that are worthy of preservation. Currently there are over 90,000 buildings included on the National Register. It is a great honor for both the building and its owner and can have financial tax benefits for the property owner.

The nomination form for the Beet Sugar Factory was prepared by Marjorie Wilson, National Register Contract Historian, through the Arizona State Parks Board. It was approved by Dorothy H. Hall, Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer, on August 30, 1977. The National Register received the nomination on September 6, 1977, and the building was entered into the National Register on January 30, 1978.

The Beet Sugar Factory, located at 5243 West Glendale Avenue, was a private, occupied, restricted-access industrial building. The owner at that time was Anna Ringer. The building was described as a large rectilinear 3-story building with a 3-bay wing and an 11-bay wing flanking a 5-story, 3-bay core. Ground floor openings on the wings are arched, but semi-arched on the second floor. Brick detailing separated the floors and the cornice is denticulated. The 184-foot round smokestack was dismantled in December, 1951 after it had been split 80 feet from the top by lightning. The factory is served by three spurs of the Santa Fe Railway. The building is one of the earliest riveted steel constructions in Arizona.

The Beet Sugar Factory was a duplicate of the Janesville, Wisconsin beet sugar factory, which closed in 1938. W. J. Murphy talked processors in Michigan into investing in a Glendale beet sugar factory. The contractor was American Construction and Supply founded by architect H. T. Jules Fuehrman. Construction started in 1903 but paused with just a steel skeleton when the Michigan company that financed the project folded. Murphy then got funding through the Southwest Sugar and Land Company, and construction resumed in December, 1905. The factory layout was planned by construction engineers Joseph Eckert, Eugen Stoeckly, and James Dooley. Fritz Treskow was superintendent (1906-1908). Teodor Hapke, who helped build the factory, was an expert in beet farming, so he and Jules made good partners. The factory was completed and started processing beets on August 11, 1906. The factory had a capacity of 1,000 tons of beets per day. The sugar beets were washed, floated into a big wheel, carried to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and back before being sliced and made into pulp. The beet sugar industry in Glendale lasted about six years but folded due to low sugar content in the sugar beets, curly top (insects), summer heat spoilage, and better use of the crop land. The machinery was moved in 1920, and Philip Ringer bought the factory in 1937 and used it as a bottling facility.

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## **CARETAKER FOR SAHUARO RANCH**

The City of Glendale bought Sahuaro Ranch and its historical buildings in 1977. This required someone to look after the complex of grounds and buildings. In 1979, Janet Corcoran was hired as caretaker and held that position until 1992. In 2010, John Akers did an oral history of Janet Corcoran, focusing on her experiences as the Sahuaro Ranch caretaker.

Janet was born in New Jersey in 1944. She lived in Indiana and at age 13 moved to Arizona due to her dad's and sister's sinus infections. She moved to Portland, Oregon for two years and then back to Glendale.

Janet's husband John, who worked for the City of Glendale in the Parks department, told Janet the city was looking for a caretaker, but he could not do it because he was already working for the city. She applied and two weeks later was told by her husband that she got the job, which meant she got free housing, a small stipend, and city-paid utilities. Richard Watanabe was her supervisor. Her job was to walk the grounds a couple of times a day to check for needed repairs and to prevent trespassing since it was a closed park site. Access to Sahuaro Ranch was on a dirt road that had a double row of palm trees from the Glendale College parking lot and was hard to use when it rained. The grounds were badly overgrown. She was thrilled with the historic buildings. Janet took classes at Glendale College and became a social studies teacher. History was her major, especially Arizona history. The house they lived in was called the "honeymoon house" because it had been Dick and Sharon Smith's honeymoon cottage. Dick was six feet tall and had built the cottage to his specifications, so Janet, who was five feet two, had to stand on a box to use the kitchen counter. The Smiths' horses were left on site next to their house and Janet had a side job taking care of them. She would often get calls from Sharon about the horses.

The city constructed Mountain View Road as the main access. The biggest problem as caretaker was people trespassing and doing harm to the peacocks and animals. There was no rose garden when Janet came to Sahuaro Ranch – just an overgrown brushy area. Melvin Taylor, who had worked on the ranch as a boy and later became involved with the rose society, designed the rose garden. When Janet's daughter was 15, she convinced her parents to move out of Sahuaro Ranch. Janet was pleased that the city restored Sahuaro Ranch according to the approved master plan.

Glendale Arizona Historical Society

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## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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*The Glendale Arizona Historical Society is  
designated as a Certified Historical Society*



## GLENDAL: HOME OF GOOD NEIGHBORS

The 1900s life in Glendale, as a small town where people knew and cared for one another, was exemplified by Homer and Effie (Sine) Swisher. In 1918, the couple moved from West Virginia and moved into their home at 128 W. Glendale Avenue, which was surrounded by fields and orchards. Effie was the youngest of the Sine siblings that made the move. Glendale had no paved roads, only wagon ruts; only a dirt road connected Glendale to Phoenix. The couple realized, "The light of friendship is like the light of phosphorus, seen plainest when it is dark." Soon after the Swishers came to Glendale, the D.E. Cooper family came from Texas and could not find any housing. The Swishers converted their garage into a living space for the family. The Swishers came to the rescue many more times through the years. At various times during WWII Mrs. Swisher opened her home to 28 servicemen or their wives. All of the 28 people came back to visit with their children and called them "Grandma and Grandpa Swisher." When the next door neighbor came home from the hospital and her husband was too ill to care for her, the Swishers took her into their home and cared for her. Cheerfulness was the hallmark of the Swishers in every way possible. Their yard was full of bright cheerful flowers. As active members of the Glendale Christian Church, Mrs. Swisher taught Sunday school for 25 years and was active in the Women's Service Club of the church as President. The kindness did not end with the couple but continued with their daughter Oma Swisher, who also volunteered to help neighbors. The Swishers were so helpful that neighbors often contacted Mrs. Swisher for help before they called the doctor.



# Farewell

*Marlene Loucks Versluis*