



# Glendale Arizona Historical Society

*"preservation of the past"*

MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Volume 43, Issue 5

Welcome  
Happy Mothers' Day

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 23 7:00 PM

Pioneer History of  
Glendale

Oct. 8 9:30-10:30

Manistee Ranch  
clean up

Oct. 24 7:00 PM

"Glendale History  
as I saw it"

## PIONEER HISTORY OF GLENDALE

MAY 23, 2022, 7:00 PM

MANISTEE RANCH

5127 W. NORTHERN AVENUE

(USE ENTRANCE OFF OF 51<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE)



Few can say their great-great grandfather was one of the original settlers of Glendale, but Bart Turner, a Glendale native, *can* say this. Bart's great-great-grandfather, Peter Forney, who was an Elder of the Brethren Church, moved from Iowa in 1892 to establish a temperance colony in Glendale. Bart Turner attended Sine Elementary School (Unit 4), Apollo High School, Northern Arizona University and obtained a master's degree in Public Administration at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He was Executive Director of the Valley Citizens League, President/CEO of the Clean Elections Institute and has been a Glendale City Councilmember since 2014. Bart has served on several boards and commissions and even was President of the Glendale Arizona Historical Society in his twenties. He has been a champion for historic preservation. Bart will discuss his knowledge of the early pioneers and discuss a few of the major issues facing the future of Glendale. Bart is a great speaker and has considerable knowledge of local government activities. Bring a guest and enjoy learning more about the city's past and its future. Refreshments will be served.

WANTED

ORAL HISTORY

CHAIRPERSON

If interested, please call  
the office, 623.435.0072

## HISTORICAL TOURS

### MANISTEE RANCH 1897 HOUSE

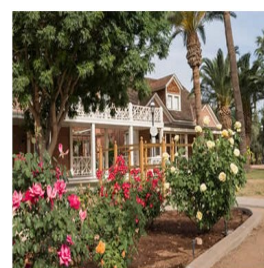
5127 W. NORTHERN AVENUE (enter from the parking lot on 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue)

Tours are conducted by the Glendale Arizona Historical Society docents from October through May: noon to 4 pm (last tour starts at 3 pm). Fees: Adults \$5, Seniors \$4, Veterans \$4, Ages 6-16 \$1, GAHS MEMBERS FREE. The 2022 tour dates are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of the month on May 7, October 1, 15, November 5, 19, December 3, 17.

### SAHUARO RANCH 1898 GUEST HOUSE

9802 N 59th Ave. Glendale AZ

FREE TOURS of the Guest House by appointment only: Donations accepted



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Edna Meyer

President Alvaro Obregon



## GLENDALDE MEMORIES: PEACOCKS IN MEXICO'S PALACE; LOCAL SWIMMING HOLES

Edna Meyer was born in Glendale and died there. Edna was in the Glendale High School Class of 1918. She was a teacher and experienced early Glendale. Edna tells the story that George Vensel got a pair of peafowl from a Mexican woman and raised them. Later he sold the birds to Edna's mother, Clara E. Wilky Meyer, but when unloading one of them, the bird's leg got broken. Edna's Dad, John J. Meyer, made a splint for the bird and eventually the leg healed except for a limp. That bird raised a flock of peafowl. Mr. Meyer, through a political contact in Phoenix, sent some of their Glendale-raised peafowl to President Álvaro Obregon, President of Mexico from 1920-1924, assassinated in 1928. Edna visited Mexico City in 1970 and went to the President's Palace, and all over the grounds were peacocks--with Glendale heritage.

Retha Bolding Beveridge (Class of 1926) mentioned that when she walked to Glendale Beach to swim, she walked past Sahuaro Ranch with the many peacocks that were offsprings of a peacock and two peahens that Mrs. Smith brought back from the Chicago World's Fair. Louis Sands also got peacocks for Manistee Ranch, but they failed to survive. Peacocks were popular and useful birds for the farms.

Both Edna and Retha recalled the swimming venues in Glendale. The main swimming place was Glendale Beach on the Arizona Canal. Men had made steps to allow women to more easily get in and out of the canal, and sand was placed along the canal. Ramadas were created with palm fronds used for shade. It was a major place for events. Second of importance for swimming were the swimming holes. On Lateral 19 (67<sup>th</sup> Avenue), water came over the headgate and created a very large hole. Another was the town swimming hole on Lateral 18 where Edna remembers muskrats touching her legs. Boys would catch and sell the muskrats. A third favorite spot were canals that were used for fishing, swimming, boating and surfing. One could put a boat in and go all the way to Lateral 23 and then to the Agua Fria River. Other times, kids would surf the canal being pulled by a vehicle driven beside the canal bank. The canal and swimming holes were a very important part of growing up in Glendale.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer weather is almost here and for a few summer months the weddings, newsletter, tours and educational meetings will be on hiatus. Board meetings will resume with an August retreat and regular monthly meetings from October through May. The office in the Guest House at Sahuaro Ranch will be open June, July and August from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Historical Society staff will be available to answer questions and make reservations for weddings in person during office hours, or by phone, or e-mail throughout the summer. The library will be open for research by appointment. Since the last quarter of 2021, the Society has returned to a regular activity schedule of educational meetings, newsletters, Manistee Ranch maintenance projects, tours and research. The Board is pleased with the accomplishments in maintaining Manistee Ranch. John Geurs, a volunteer, was able to arrange a significant donation by Accent Tree Service of material and time to cut down and remove a huge dead and hazardous pine tree. John Geurs and Bill Greb, with the help of **Accent Tree Service**, removed the downed tree sections and debris from Manistee Ranch. The major deterioration of the historic irrigation ditch and pedestrian bridge was repaired and replaced. John Geurs and his wife Paulette took on an impressive project of a Never Forget Manistee Ranch Rose Garden Memorial for the Unknown Soldier with the Daughters of the American Revolution, Anasazi Chapter, who donated \$900. Volunteers have provided important help in developing the research database. The work of the society is somewhat reduced during the summer months, but it does not stop.





## George Byrne 1942 Thunderbird Field

George Byrne: Man of Many Talents

By Jodi Decker

One of Glendale's distinguished military veterans was Lt. Col. George T. Byrne. Born in Iowa in 1918, George served in the U.S. Cavalry, then received flight training at Glendale's Thunderbird Field, serving in the Army Air Corps during WWII. During his subsequent service in the U.S. Air Force, he was among an elite squadron with atomic weapons capability. Additionally, he flew missions during the Korean War. His career spanned 27 years. He met and married his wife, Ruth Ellen Sparks, in Glendale in 1943, and they had 5 children: Michael, Tim, Tom, Anne, and Patrick. Upon retiring from the Air Force, he became a teacher.

George and Ruth were both Glendale Arizona Historical Society members; George served as a director, and Ruth was vice-president. Both were actively involved in the restoration and preservation of Sahuaro Ranch Park. Apparently George was handy with a sewing machine, because when the Society moved its offices into the guest house at Sahuaro Ranch Park in 1985, Ruth says he helped sew window treatments for the buildings, "because he can sew a straight line." In addition to the oversight of the historical buildings, it was also important that the historic nature of the park itself was preserved, as it was one of the city's first settlement places. Some of the important activities taking place at the new office location included cataloging photos, examining old city maps, researching obituaries, and collecting items such as yearbooks, phone books, and history books—activities that still carry on today. Establishing a wedding venue in the rose garden also provided for a source of revenue for the Glendale Arizona Historical Society, another tradition still currently available for couples.

In addition to his GAHS activities, George was an avid gardener and was involved in the Washington Garden Club and Garden Society. He also loved to work on projects and had a talent for inventing various gadgets.

When George passed away in May, 1998, one son spoke the following words in his eulogy, noting that his father was known as a, "quiet, unassuming man with the strength of his conviction that gets the job done....He leaves a legacy of accomplishment and affection, and everyone who knew him was enriched by the experience."

The Glendale Historical Society salutes those veterans who have served our country, leaving a legacy for all of us. If, like George, you have a passion for history, preservation, or research, consider volunteering in the ongoing collection activities related to recording and documenting information and items. There are also opportunities to serve as a volunteer for wedding events in support of the organization. For further information, contact the Glendale Arizona Historical Society.





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Bill Greb	Director
Lorraine Zomok	Director

**Glendale Arizona Historical  
Society is designated as a Cer-  
tified Historical Society**

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## WHEN THERE WAS NO WATER SYSTEM IN GLENDALE

Archie Bennett moved from a farm southeast of Peoria in 1902 and bought lots on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (58<sup>th</sup> Drive) where he built the town's livery stable. He also drilled a water well and built a water tank for storage. The Bennetts would sell water by the barrel. Underneath the storage tank was a valve and connection where customers could drive their wagons loaded with water barrels in the back. Lacey Bennett, who was about eight years old at the time, remembers jumping on the valve box and opening the valve, filling the customers' water barrels. A canvas was placed over the barrel and secured with a barrel ring to help ensure the water would not be lost going home. The Bennetts charged twenty-five cents a barrel for water. The Livery stable had saddle horses, horses with buggies and surreys, and work horses for rent. Archie sold the property with the livery stable and water system to F. H. Sine who added a storage tank and small water supply system for commercial use. Sine later sold the water system to the Town of Glendale in 1915. Today, Glendale residents enjoy an outstanding municipal water system and it all started in selling water by the barrel.



Livery stable later replaced



Bennett's Livery stable