

## Minding Our Own Business

1900 As the new century dawned, little change was reported locally except the creation of the WCTU chapter and coming of the automobile. Emma A. Cleveland continued to be the postmistress, Bertha Tomlinson sold real estate, Kate Ennis ran a restaurant, and Mrs. Harry Argall and her sister Nellie Weaver managed boarding houses at the booming new copper camp adjoining the Silver Reef properties.

1910 In 1913, Angela Hammer and Ted Healy started the first Casa Grande newspaper, the Bulletin. A year later, she split with Healy and founded the Casa Grande Valley Dispatch, which she sold and re-purchased several times in the next decade. Also in 1913 seven married women met in the home of Lillian Peart to organize a current events club. In 1914 they named their group The Woman's Club. The first public library was among its accomplishments. Sena Davis was elected president. Also in this decade Mrs. Clara Myers developed a 400-acre subdivision east of town, Mrs. T.J. Meehan purchased the Brownell Mine, Fanne Gaar won first prize in the 1919 Victory loan drive, and Angela Hammer ran for the state legislature.

1920 The Woman's Club dedicated its new building on Valentine's Day 1925. Mary Fisher's husband was killed by a freight train at the Florence Street crossing so she carried on his undertaking business, becoming an embalmer. Fanne Gaar won election to the city council and was selected mayor in 1927, the first woman to hold such office in Arizona. Gertie Hager stayed on to homestead after her husband's death and supported herself by killing rattlesnakes and using their vertebrae to make necklaces and their rattles to decorate hats.

1930 Mrs. Niles Robson operated an emergency hospital in the Lincoln Hotel that included three wards, three private rooms, and a nursery. N. Bess Prather, a woman of enduring talents, was nominated to the presidency of the Arizona Federation of Woman's clubs, leading a delegation of 13 to the national convention in Detroit in 1934. She was invited to the White House by Eleanor Roosevelt twice during the years as National Director of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1938 she was appointed postmistress and in 1939 she and her staff sold \$19,388 of U.S. savings bonds, a 600% increase from the previous year. Gladys Hamilton Albrecht, following her marriage in 1932, returned to teach at the high school from which she'd graduated and continued to teach in various schools for the next thirty years. Ethel Billie Powell, valedictorian of the CGUHS class of 1932, as a senior at Cornell Medical College in 1939, scored in the top 5% in the National Medical Board Examination.

1940 The National Youth Conservation Administration provided The Woman's Club library with a paid librarian. By 1942, club members had plunged into activities supporting the war effort. The club building was rented out as a Soldiers' Recreation Center with Gertrude Hager (who was also a published poet) serving as hostess and mother image. Geraldine Nyman was just one CG woman who joined the armed services. A Junior Woman's Club was spun off during the midst of the War. Blodie Thode, president of the CG Valley Cooperative Hospital Board, led the push to start building a 42-bed hospital on a five-acre site on Florence Street. Rebecca Dallas and Helen Nolan were distinguished teachers in town. Marie Patch led the effort to build a new Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

1950 At the first city council meeting in 1950, Flossie Wills Barmes led local leaders in presenting a petition demanding tighter restrictions on prostitution, gambling, illegal liquor sales and other criminal activities in town. Donna Kerr was head of nursing at Hoemako Hospital. Mrs. Albert Cruz chaired The Woman's Club cookies-for-children campaign, delivering the cookies to the Arizona Children's Home in Tucson by train or bus. In 1954, voters refused by a one-vote margin a bond to finance a library building. The Woman's Club continued to provide service. In 1958, the city offered a building it had received from the Boy Scouts in Peart Park as a library and librarian Jane Peters happily moved the books and magazines there. The Oasis Garden Club spun off from The Woman's Club in 1959.

1960 State Legislator Blodie Thode went to Washington to participate in the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Mrs. Jewelle McNatt became administrator of Hoemako Hospital. Gretchen Averill was co-publisher of the local newspaper. Nancy Dickey was elected 1960 Casa Grande Cotton Queen and Arizona Junior Maid of Cotton.

VISTA data indicated that the local Hispanic population no longer occupied a position of power in our community, so Volunteer Becky Boyum came to Casa Grande with no Spanish language skills to work with both the Neighborhood and the Youth Councils. Barbara Schoen became president of The Woman's Club in 1962 and was a prime mover in establishing the Historical Society. Flossie Barmes was Arizona's Mother of the Year in 1963. Bess Prather, after forty-four years in Casa Grande, moved to Mesa in 1969. Gretchen Averill was co-publisher of the local newspaper.

1970 Kay Benedict served as curator of the Historical Society and she, Joann Kelly, Mickey Carlton and Dorothy Powell were prime movers in the planning of the city's Centennial celebration in 1979. Kate Kenyon was elected to City Council and served into the next decade. Polly Getzwiller continued to serve in the state legislature, but Blodie Thode, after eighteen years of service, lost her seat in 1972. President-elect Carter appointed Louise Hennes to a national advisory committee. In 1978, Mickey Carlton, after ten years on the elementary school board, won a seat on the CAC board.

1980 Dorothy Powell became a state leader in the causes of the elderly. Pat Griffen was hired as Executive Director of Against Abuse. The Kramer girls grew into positions of authority at The Dispatch. In the late 80's Janet Russell, Fonda Anderson and Janet Skelley fostered the literacy program out of the public library. Joan Fleming and Claire Davis were outstanding school principals and outspoken community leaders. Mary Coxon led in the volunteer work at the Parks & Recreation Senior Center. Phyllis Wagoner was instrumental in establishing an Art Museum in the historic Gus Kratzka house.

1990 The CG Chamber of Commerce established a Hall of Fame Award. Among the twenty-three citizens so honored in the first ten years were Dorothy Powell, Virginia Carter-Padgett, Kate Kenyon, Mary Rugg, Barbara Schoen, Hope Wallace, and Pat Griffen. Hope Wallace and Cindi Sutton served as presidents of Rotary. Rita Nader moved into her seat on the Central Arizona College Board. After her husband's death, Mary Ann Yandell shouldered on alone as owner and operator of The Cook-E-Jar.

### Minding Our Own Business-Topics For Discussion

Some typical stages of a woman's life: Childhood, friendship, work, education, spiritual involvement, courtship, marriage, pregnancy, motherhood, caregiving, illness, old age, death.

REMEMBER: The Historical Society's primary purpose is to make women aware of the importance of the archive and to solicit their help in gathering new photos and documents that chronicle the history of the Casa Grande Valley. The bookmarks are given to each participant toward the close of the program along with a few words about the importance of contributing to the Casa Grande Valley Historical Society archives.

Depending upon the length of time, and the size of the group, these questions may be used in a number of ways to stimulate discussion. Arrange the matted photos where they may be viewed prior to the program and put a program on each chair. Here are some examples or ways to work with your group:

- ½ to one hour with group of 20 or fewer women Arrange the chairs in a circle (or double circle) so photo folders can be passed from hand to hand easily. Use three or four questions with the entire group, focusing on 1-4.
- An hour or more with group of 20 or more women After introducing the topic of women's participation in community and sharing the photo folders (approximately 15 minutes) divide the audience into smaller groups of 3-6 women and have each group select a recorder and a speaker. Each group is given a question to discuss for 15 minutes. Each speaker then has a maximum of 3 minutes to report to the whole for her group. Leave 15 minutes for group comment. You may set rules for speaking if you think one or two people will monopolize the conversation. For example, one may only speak a second time after others have had an opportunity to share their views, or put a time limit—perhaps 2 minutes—on each speaker. Avoid favoritism by naming someone timer for the group.

These questions have been prioritized but you may decide which questions to use with your audience.

1. How has women's answer to the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" changed during the 20th century?

2. Are women still “the keepers of the culture”?
3. Do women in this community mentor one another? What impact does mentoring have of their choice of activities?
4. Who are the remarkable women in the CG Valley today whose impact will be remembered?
5. How do the qualities that women bring to their community differ from men’s?
6. Marriage has traditionally been viewed as the bedrock of family and society. How has marriage affected and influenced women in Casa Grande?

### Minding Our Own Business Photo List

1. Rebecca Dallis ca. 1940
  2. Unknown n.d. 1997\_007\_003  
(Young Woman in a White Dress)
  3. Madie Freeman ca. 1913 1983\_020\_001b
  4. Paternal Grandmother of George Serrano, Sr. ca. 1870 1977\_020\_000
  5. Forbach Family 1912 1978\_123\_003
  6. Don Family 1920 1980\_089\_002
  7. Marguerite Keith and Kay Benedict n.d. 1984\_002\_007
  8. Unknown n.d. 1987\_067\_001d  
(Portrait of Girl with Dark Hair in Bangs)
  9. Unknown n.d. 1978\_009\_005  
(Couple in front of lattice, man in cowboy hat)
  10. Unknown n.d. (Four women in white dresses in front of cactus)
  11. Unknown n.d. 1966\_004\_006  
(Dark haired married couple – faces only)
  12. Mrs. Don Lai Shee 1980\_090\_008
  13. Valley National Bank Employees ca. 1955 2001\_111\_001f
  14. Woman from Maricopa n.d. 1996\_011\_024
  15. Dutch-Irish-Show Picnic 1913 1967\_001\_004
  16. McDowell Family Scrapbook ca. 1922 1994\_060\_003f
  17. McDowell Family Scrapbook ca. 1922 1994\_060\_003c
  18. Sara Andrade Bartlett 1990 1990\_102\_001
  19. Mattie and Gene Vallette ca. 1940 1994\_026\_005
  20. Mabel Day and her sister Tessie Phillips ca. 1890 1994\_035\_003
  21. Pat Griffen 2000
  22. Bill Hamilton, Ruby McNatt Weaver, Gladys Albrecht Hamilton and Vivian Rowland at CG Ruin 1920
  23. Kate Kenyon 2005
  24. Fay Hamilton Wilson, Mary Bennett Wahl, Alice Peart Westmoreland, ?, 1971\_084\_007  
and Harriet Goodrich Valentine at Old Swimming Hole 1920
  25. The Sherrills n.d. 1972\_024\_009
  26. Catherine Cates Standine ca. 1920 1971\_042\_021
  27. Judee Jackson 2004
  28. CG Hotel Lobby with Eastman Family 1919
  29. Eva Dugan ca. 1925 1967\_032\_005
  30. Dorothy Powell 2002
  31. Reuel Brewer with baby and Grandmother Hancock 1923 1967\_024\_038
  32. Otto, Jessie and William Williams ca. 1920 1967\_024\_032
  33. Rae and Ralph Arbogast 2001
  34. Ella McGuire, Mrs. Wesley Cates, Catherine Cates Standine, Mrs. M.M., 1971\_042\_015  
and Goldie Forbach ca. 1927
  35. Edith de Clerq n.d. 1967\_019\_004
  36. Gabrilla Gilbert 1927-1925 1967\_019\_003
  37. Barbara Schoen 1935 1966\_010\_021
  38. Matinee Musical Club ca. 1930
  39. Picnic at the Little Homestead, ca. 1913 1983\_020\_001yy
- Matted Photos
- A. Unknown 1929  
(Black couple)
  - B. Arizona Drug Store ca. 1945

- C. Rebeccas ca. 1970
  - D. Van Hazel Family 1959
  - E. Students in Vernon Hancock's Car at CGUHS ca. 1943
  - F. Unknown ca. 1929  
(Woman and Evergreen Addition sign)
  - G. Don Oi-Shan Chin ca. 1919
  - H. Gertrude Hager n.d.
  - I. Sunshine Garrett 1965
1. It has been said, "One of the most responsible jobs in the world—if not the most—is motherhood." How do women extend their activity in support of their children beyond their own homes?
  2. Has improved health care made a difference in the lives of Casa Grande women?
  3. At the turn of the 20th century, women's work was never done. Is that still true today?