



# Beaver Creek Preservation and Historical Society

*Working to gather, preserve and share the history of the  
Beaver Creek area*



P.O. Box 5402, Lake Montezuma, AZ 86342

[www.beavercreekhistory.com](http://www.beavercreekhistory.com)

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## Summer Fun

There will be no BCPHS Board Meeting until September but we're keeping busy with our projects. The Rock School is getting some much-needed attention each second Friday in July and August. It will be open during Beaver Creek School's Back-to-School BBQ so stop in and check it out! Also, we'll have a table at the July 4th festivities and share some info.

## Rimrock Airport

Many know that Rimrock has the oldest continuously operating landing field in Arizona. Many know that during the 1920's several dude ranches had sprung up to accommodate the more well-heeled seekers of western adventure. But some may not know that it was Russell Boardman, a business partner with Romaine and Virginia Finnie Lowdermilk, owners of Rimrock Ranch, who first pursued the idea of Rimrock Ranch being a fly-in destination. The year was 1928 and only one year after Charles Lindbergh's historic transatlantic flight. Most of the public considered flying a dare-devil stunt at best; foolhardy and suicidal at worst. Boardman found a suitable landing site on the Rimrock Ranch property, less than a mile away from the main ranch house. With minimal grading it became an airfield. Boardman built a hangar for his Travelaire biplane and put up a windsock. At that time there was only one other aircraft in the area, based at Cottonwood, 20 miles to the west. The airport he established at Rimrock continued to serve dude ranch guests until shortly after the end of WWII.

More permanent residents were arriving, like industrialist Justin Dart, who kept his plane at Rimrock. Charles English and other high-ranking organized crime figures from Chicago flew into the Rimrock Airport after English purchased the Rimrock Ranch holdings, including the airport, in 1963. In 1966 Forrest "Doggie" Kline, a former Navy pilot, moved to Rimrock and purchased about four acres on the airport to build his home and a hanger for his replica British WWI biplane fighter. Development in the area has brought changes. Today, the airport hosts a number of aircraft owned by non-airport residents. It is a private facility with a single 2,200 ft. paved runway plus a 300 ft. paved overrun area. "In a way it's a throwback airport...no tower, no approach control, uncrowded airspace and no airport management bureaucracy." Not unlike the way it was 90 years ago.

*Source: America's Flyways, April, 2002*

## Historical Society Roundup

There are 21 historical societies in Yavapai County and 16 of them were represented at the "Roundup" held in April and hosted by the Sedona Historical Society at their beautiful facilities on Jordan Rd.

It seems that BCPHS, formed in 2012, is the youngest historical society in the County. Each organization was given the opportunity to talk about goals, projects, and dreams and there was time for comments and questions. A great learning opportunity! The next "Roundup" will be hosted by Camp Verde Historical Society in 2021.

## Historical Signage

Signs will soon be placed in front of three local historical sites: In McGuireville, Eugene McGuire's home and Midge Pigman's General Store and in Lake Montezuma, the Ranch House Restaurant and Golf Course. Keep your eyes peeled for these coming attractions.

**REMEMBER WHEN**



This was the Eugene McGuire Homestead established c. 1910

In late summer, 1910, Eugene McGuire, Sr. walked from Dewey to Camp Verde looking to buy or homestead some land. After walking the area for a few days, he acquired this land which already had the house on it. Over time he had a small store, cabins to rent and gas station. He passed away in 1944 and is buried at the Middle Verde Cemetery.

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**REMEMBER WHEN**



This was the Ranch House Restaurant and Golf Course

This area was homesteaded by Luther S. Knowles and passed through various owners i.e William Schroeder and I.M. Jackson. It was a working cattle ranch from the early 1900's into the 50's. In the early 1930's it was purchased by Charles Bell, a wealthy easterner who built the home and many of the outbuildings. In 1938 it was purchased by Justin Dart Sr., another wealthy businessman who was also connected to the movie industry, which led to many Hollywood celebrities vacationing at this ranch. In the late 1950's it was sold to a group of investors, one of which was Lew King of Phoenix, who began the development of what is now the Lake Montezuma community. A golf course and restaurant were developed and operated under various owners with a couple of name changes until 2009. The community tried to revive the restaurant and golf course in 2012; it closed again in 2013.

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**REMEMBER WHEN**



This was Beaver Creek Store owned and operated by Midge Hall Pigman

With the onset of the Depression and folks barely making ends meet, Midge Hall-Pigman convinced Eugene McGuire to lease her two acres across from his place to build a full-fledged market to accommodate locals as well as travelers and sportsmen. She acquired lumber from the Humbolt hospital which was being torn down and financed the rest through loans from the bank and those willing to gamble on her paying them back. Through grit and determination the store opened in 1932.

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## Driving Tour Booklet

At long last our Driving Tour Booklet is printed and distributed in various locations throughout the Beaver Creek area where tourists and visitors are most likely to be. Locals might also be interested in learning something about places we see and pass everyday driving along Beaver Creek Road and Montezuma Avenue.

## Tile Wall Brochure

With the completion of the Tile Wall Timeline at Beaver Creek School, a brochure has been developed to explain how the project came to be and what each tile represents. If you haven't seen this project, it would be worth your while to stop by the school, pick up a brochure and view the wall.

In memory of Verna Shafer, who provided much of the art work, a bench has been dedicated in her honor. Feel free to sit and enjoy the wall and ponder its significance.



## Presentations

In March 2019 for our Annual Meeting, Jana Bommersbach gave a talk about Wild, Wicked and Weird Arizona. For our Sept. 20, 2019 meeting Kayo Parsons-Korn will talk about native gardens.

### **Beaver Creek Preservation and Historical Society Board of Directors**

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