

Seasonal Newsletter



South Phoenix
Oral History Project

Spring & Summer 2021

Southphoenixoralhistory.com Gets a New Look!

Take a look at our news website at Southphoenixoralhistory.com! You may recognize our new banner – it's the mural that once hung in the SMCC Student Union. It was painted in 1993 by students Barbara Burton, Blaine Mathison, and Steve Tatral under the guidance of Art Instructor Lani L. Benton. It was taken down during renovations last year, but thanks to the photography of Dr. Travis May, the images were preserved, printed on canvas, and displayed in the new union, as well as on our website.



[Check out our new look! Southphoenixoralhistory.com](http://Southphoenixoralhistory.com)

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We've Had a Busy Summer!

By Summer Cherland, PhD, History Faculty

Dear friends and community partners,

Greetings! I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the waning days of summertime. We've been very busy! Spring 2021 saw a return to student-led interviews, and even though we had to conduct a majority of them remotely, it was so rewarding to see college students learning in conversation with you, hearing your stories, and beginning to understand how "real" people are historical actors.

Over the summer, we spent most of our energy organizing and publishing the fantastic work that came from student-led research. We also overhauled our website to make it more dynamic, user-friendly, and engaging. I invite you to check it out when you get a chance and let me know what you think!

Of course, any time we edit, revise, and publish, we end up with more questions than answers. Over the summer, our post-graduate intern, Ele Anedde, and I began to ponder, "Where **IS** South Phoenix?" This may seem like a silly question, but truly... perhaps we are taking for granted that we all agree on the boundaries and makeup of this community? Together, Ele and I are designing and launching a survey asking community members, professionals, academics, students, and others, "Where is South Phoenix?" We can't wait to hear your answers.

"The changes to this corridor in only two months were breathtaking. I was reminded, once again, of the urgent need to collect and preserve our community's history."

We picked up another initiative this summer that was put on the back burner during the reign of COVID19. You might remember that SPOH inherited about 40 years of documents, images, and newspaper clippings in 2019. We spent that summer processing and indexing these materials, and now we hope to find a permanent storage solution for this archive. We are prioritizing preservation and access. We want to preserve these materials for future generations and invite neighbors and researchers to reference and access these materials to promote the history of our community. So, in July, we gathered a team of archivists, librarians, historians, storytellers, architects, and designers to brainstorm a plan for development. We will be sharing our progress with you in these seasonal newsletters.

Finally, you'll notice that we talk a lot in this newsletter about changes coming to South Phoenix. In June, I took a driving tour of Central Avenue to observe the light rail construction. I stopped along the way, recording audio and taking photos. Just last week, I took the same drive. The changes to this corridor in only two months were breathtaking. I was reminded, once again, of the urgent need to collect and preserve our community's history. I hope you know your stories are part of this history.

~SC



1993. Student artists in front of Student Union mural

Announcing our Fall 2021 Event:
By invitation only: Do you know someone we should invite?



Intersections: Remembering Central Avenue

*Presented by the South Phoenix Oral History Project and
the Storytelling Institute at South Mountain Community
College*

**September 11th, 2021, 9am-Noon
History Room, South Mountain Community Library**

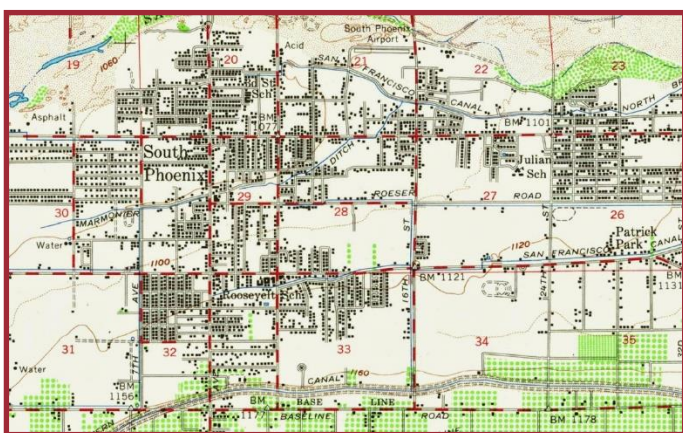
South Phoenix is changing. We want to hear your stories.

Join us to share memories about Central Avenue. We'll help you digitize and donate photographs, documents, and other materials about Central Avenue. We'll teach you to tell and record a short story about South Phoenix.

Coffee, pastries, and all materials provided.

This event is by invitation only. If you know someone who lived, worked, or played on Central Ave, please let us know so we may invite them!

Email Summer.Cherland@southmountaincc.edu



Map of South Phoenix, 1952

Where is South Phoenix?

Over the course of the last few years, we've come to realize that we don't all necessarily agree on the boundaries of South Phoenix! Where does South Phoenix begin and end? What are the major landmarks and barriers? When we ask our neighbors and narrators questions about South Phoenix, we often hear about major locations like:

- Central Avenue
- Baseline Road
- 40th Street
- Broadway

What about you? What major intersections come to mind when you think about South Phoenix?

And when we say "intersections," we don't just mean cross streets. We mean, what kinds of historical, social, and cultural realities crossed paths during your time in South Phoenix? If you didn't live in our community, what memories do you have that stand out as quintessentially South Phoenix?

In the coming months, we will be developing a survey for anyone and everyone who wants to answer. The simple question will be, **"Where is South Phoenix?"** We hope you'll take the time to answer.

A Student-Led Initiative to Capture and Preserve the History of South Phoenix: How You Can Help

You may know that South Mountain Community College recently celebrated a milestone. We turned 40! SMCC's big birthday represented a major accomplishment for a community that fought to gain access to higher education for years. We're proud of our college, its mission to serve the surrounding areas, and its dedication to our students – who are also our community members.

You may also know that the South Phoenix Oral History Project started when a group of college students recognized that there was no academic or public history available to them about their own community. They laid the groundwork of our project, which seeks to collect the memories and historical records of the neighborhoods around SMCC. And the call is more urgent than ever. The area is constantly changing, longtime community members are moving out, and businesses are impacted by the light rail expansion. **We need your help.** Please consider **donating** to the oral history project so we may continue our efforts to store and preserve historical records. Or **perhaps you know someone who we should interview?** Put them in touch with us! **Send us digital copies of your photos, newspaper articles, and more** documenting your time in South Phoenix. The time is now! **YOUR STORIES MATTER.**

COMING SOON

Fall Fundraising Drive

**NOVEMBER 7TH-13TH, 2021
PHONE & EMAIL CAMPAIGN**

YOUR DONATIONS WILL SUPPORT
STUDENT INTERNS + ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS +
ARCHIVAL PRACTICES + PROMOTION FOR SOUTH
PHOENIX HISTORY

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING!



SPRING and SUMMER 2021 Metrics

9 New Oral Histories
Conducted (80 Total)

61 new episodes in
the "More and More
Every Day" Podcast
(Season 2)

**125 Total Student
Researchers
Contributed to the
SPHX/SMCC
Memories Collection**

**6 New Oral Histories
Conducted (74 Total)**

**6 Faculty Contributors
from 5 Different
Fields**

**Student-Written
Narrator Profiles
Published**

**4 Independent
Researchers
Contributing to
Website**

**1 International
Webinar on Archiving
Oral Histories Taught**

**See it all at
southphoenixoralhistory.com**

80 Oral History Interviews Completed or Planned *Bold denotes conducted in Spring or Summer 2021*

Aguirre, Dolly	Garrison, Jerome K. Sr.	Pastor, Laura
Ambrose, Rod	Godinez, Cristina	Patterson, Wilma
Altamirano, Tisha	Gray, Anthony	Pope-Duarte, Stella
Atwater, Ken	Gronseth, Dan	Proctor, Sian
Avalos, Francisco	Guerrero, Amanda	Roberts, Ken
Back, Carlie	Gutierrez, Alfredo	Rose, Henry
Bracamonte, Tony	Haines, Christina	Ruiz, Teresa Leyba
Bribiescas, Sonia	"Chris"	Sandoval, Raul
Brooks, George Jr.	Harrison, Leah	Shelton, Lorrie
Brooks, Susan Morris	Hawkins, Kathleen	Smith, Helen
Calbow, Lorraine	"Kathie"	Smith, Matt
Cardenas, Raul	Holston, Julie	Smith, Shelly
Castro, Brittany	Howard, Spencer	Smith, Jim
Cheeks, Landres	Hustedde, Stephen	Stahl, Fred*
"Buddy"	Jaap, Jackie	Story, Naomi
Collins, Lara	Jensen-Bobadilla, Don	Sweet, Shalmeka
Cordova, John	Jimenez Gutierrez, Michelle	Torres, Stella
Cota, Rosalinda	Johnson, Lydia	Triphahn, Tita
"Rosa"	Burrue	Navarro
Counts, Wil	Jones, Isola	Turman, Rose
Cruz, Steve	Logan, Vanessa	Urbiet, Dolores
de los Santos, Alfredo	Mata, Sheena	Villaverde, Sylvia
Denson, Janet	Montiel, Yvonne	Villegas, Amalia
Elsner, Joyce*	Morales, Richard Sr.	Villicana, Lupe
Elsner, Paul	Murphy, Brian "Doc"	Warren, Elizabeth "Liz"
Espinoza, Yvette	Nakagawa, Kathy	Washington, Cordelia "Cori"*
Fender, Terry	Nakagawa, Nick	Wright, Grace*
Ferguson, Doug	Navarro, Susan	Zepeda, Guillermo
Fontaine, Steven	Solano	"Bill"
Garcia, Dan	Olson, Shari	
Garcia, Robert		
Gaither, Irene		

CHECK OUT THESE NEW PROFILES AT SOUTHPHOENIXORALHISTORY.COM!

Tisha Altamirano (community member) ☯ Brittany Castro (SMCC/ACE) ☯ Rod Ambrose (community member) ☯ Yvette Espinoza (SMCC Faculty) ☯ Terry Fender (SMCC Faculty) ☯ Robert Garcia (community member) ☯ Amanda Guerrero (local educator) ☯ Michelle Gutierrez Jimenez (local educator) ☯ Stella Pope Duarte (author) ☯ Teresa Leyba-Ruiz (community member/GCC president) ☯ Naomi Story (SMCC/ACE) ☯ Stella Torres (MCCCD/ACE) ☯ Spencer Howard (community member, artist) ☯ Sian Proctor (SMCC faculty, astronaut)



THERE'S A CHAIR WAITING FOR YOU

SPOH DINNER PARTIES

Returning September 2021

\$100 donation per couple

TO RESERVE A DATE, EMAIL
HISTORYSOUTHMOUNTAIN@GMAIL.COM

SPOH Profile: Nick Nakagawa, 1923-2021

Nick Nakagawa was born in Idaho then moved to Utah. When his dad was near death, Nick's aunt recommended moving to Phoenix, Arizona due to the climate. The Nakagawas moved to the Valley of the Sun before World War II in 1940. During the war, they lost everything when they were relocated to the Poston relocation camp. Poston was a temporary home where many other Japanese Americans were wrongly relocated to due to fear of the Japanese following the attacks on Pearl Harbor. He spent nine months in the camp then he was released. He was then drafted into the military by the United States government. The same government that relocated him and his people into camps. However, his time in the military did not last long. He was able to get released due to his father being severely ill back home.

Before the camp, Nick and his family farmed vegetables on 24th St. and Baseline Rd. where the Fry's grocery store is currently located. Nick started growing flowers in the years of 1946 to 1947 across the street from where his current shop is now located. During the peak of the flower season it was a national attraction, and many snowbirds would visit. They had a concentration of over three hundred acres of flowers. Nick used to grow over a hundred acres of flowers plus another seventy-five acres behind the shop. Over time, the flower industry changed when South American countries began to ship flowers and killed the business.



Click to watch Nick Nakagawa recalls the motivations for growing and selling flowers in South Phoenix.

Mr. Nakagawa discusses when Baseline Rd. was two lanes. He remembers frequent traffic jams every weekend with police officers directing traffic. When Baseline expansion started, the City of Phoenix needed to take the land. They negotiated with the Nakagawas, to claim the eastbound lanes of Baseline, which were originally the parking lot for the shop. After fighting with the city, the Nakagawas got a parking lot in the back of the shop. Mr. Nakagawa always wanted his kids to work and be closer to the business, but his children didn't follow in his footsteps. One of his daughters helped him run the shop until

she and her husband moved to a different part of the country. Mr. Nakagawa doesn't really know what to do with the shop at his age but he still continues to show up everyday and run his shop.

Update: Since Nakagawa passed away, his daughter Kathy has taken over the shop.

Profile written by student researchers: Mario Cervantes & Guadalupe Romero in Fall 2018.

“I’m prouder now to be from this wonderful community.”

Q&A with David, SPOH’s Summer 2021 Student Intern

This summer, we were delighted to welcome David Zavala to SPOH as a student intern. David was charged with all sorts of tasks, from researching, writing, and archiving. Perhaps the most important responsibility David took on was creating and developing an internal database for all interview and oral history materials. Thanks to his hard work, researchers and students may now request materials directly from SPOH, and we will be able to find those items quickly within our digital archives. Take a look at the conversation we had as David’s time with us came to an end.

Summer Cherland: David, you joined SPOH this summer to research, write, and archive many of our interview materials. I’d love to introduce you to our narrators, advisors, and sponsors. Let’s get to know you!

David: Okay, Dr. C.

SC: What is your major?

David Zavala: My major is in political science.

SC: How many semesters do you have left at SMCC?

DZ: This upcoming fall semester will be my last semester here at SMCC.

SC: What do you plan to do after you leave SMCC?

DZ: After SMCC I plan to transfer to ASU to continue my education in political science, after that I plan on going into law school. My ultimate goal is to help and inspire people.

SC: How did you learn about the South Phoenix Oral History Project?

DZ: I learned about the SPOH through my History class last semester as a summer job opportunity.

SC: What kinds of projects did you work on this summer?

DZ: The main projects were dealing with organization. I was in charge of revising older documents and organizing materials for a cleaner and easier-to-access look.

SC: What did you learn about South Phoenix through your work with us this summer?

DZ: I learned a lot about South Phoenix. I am prouder now to be from this wonderful community, thanks to the many valuable information available from a wide range of narrators.

Thank you to our climate level donors, who sponsored David’s internship!

[Click here to donate to support future student historians!](#)

Student Reflections, Spring 2021

Students who participated in the South Phoenix Oral History Project thought back on their contributions last semester. Here's what some had to say:

The purpose of oral history is to take people's stories and memories and put them all together to understand history from their point of view; this information is then shared out for the public to see and perhaps use for their own research or more.

It shook me how people could think that way about a place I grew up in, and motivated me more to become something big.

The interview made me understand how hard life can be and the struggles one goes through to be at the place they are at.

I believe it's a way of learning more about someone and giving that person the opportunity to finally be able to tell their story and what they think, feel, and to just express their feelings.

**Thank you for supporting the students and programs of
The South Phoenix Oral History Project!**



Please consider donating to the South Phoenix Oral History Project. Because of your support, we are able to train future historians and history teachers while also reclaiming the history of SMCC and South Phoenix.

Our donation tiers are inspired by the 5Cs of Arizona. Please select from the tiers below:

Cotton Level: \$25.00

We will send you a thank you email with a student profile.

Cattle Level: \$50.00

We will mail you a thank you card with a student profile.

Citrus Level: \$75.00

We will mail you a thank you card with a student profile and SPOH gift.

Climate Level: \$100.00

We will mail you a thank you card with a student profile and SPOH gift! You will be recognized on our website for your contributions.

Copper Level: \$200.00

We will mail you a thank you card with a student profile and SPOH gift! You will be recognized on our website and seasonal newsletter for your contributions!

Donating is easy! Click here to make your donation:

<https://smcc-maricopa.nbsstore.net/spoh-donations>

Thanks to some of our Spring 2021 donors (in no particular order):

Jean Watermolen * Stevie Stanford * Matt Tantau * Beth & Carlton Applebee
* Rob Price * Kathy Hawkins * Teresa Leyba-Ruiz * Kathie Hawkins * Maria
Benita Garcia * Bruce McHenry * John & Shelly Burke * Kathy McAvoy *
Stephanie Allen * Bernice Portervint * Stephanie Burke-Liggett * Liz Warren