

COUNCIL MINUTES

January 22, 2001

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 22, 2001 at 4:45 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Jim Davidson
Bill Jaffa
Dennis Kavanaugh
Pat Pomeroy
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Neal Beets
Barbara Jones

1. Review items on the agenda for the January 22, 2001 Regular Council Meeting.

All the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff with no formal action taken. There was discussion among the members of the Council relative to various agenda items.

2. Discuss and consider proceeding with the Heritage Wall.

Parks and Recreation Director Joe Holmwood and Museum Curator Keith Foster addressed the Council relative to this agenda item. Mr. Holmwood advised that the Heritage Wall was derived as a result of a Council directive to the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board to recognize Mesa's heritage through the placement of 63 plaques on the wall in front of the Mesa City Plaza Building. The Board established an Advisory Committee to identify significant historical events in Mesa's history, and as contained in the staff report (See Attachment), a list was compiled which consisted of selected events, their order of appearance on the wall, and an approximate 75-word narrative per plaque.

Councilmember Pomeroy spoke in appreciation of Karen and Ron Peters, who envisioned the concept of the Heritage Wall, and noted that the Advisory Committee consists of a divergent cross section of the community. Councilmember Pomeroy explained that it is the consensus of the Advisory Committee that no individual names appear on the plaques, despite the fact two names are mentioned in the historical narratives, and that the first plaque reflect Mesa's founding on February 14, 1878.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Mr. Foster clarified that the individual plaques will contain the date of the historical event and the title, but due to their limited space, it is anticipated that the text will be positioned below the plaques.

Mr. Holmwood stressed the fact that the Advisory Committee has not made a final determination regarding the materials which will be utilized for the text portion of the Heritage Wall, and that staff is seeking guidance from the Council only with regard to the proposed list of events and the order of appearance.

Mayor Hawker voiced concerns regarding the lack of space on the plaques to accommodate the text.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Davidson, Mr. Foster noted that Southwest Historical Services has conducted extensive research to verify the accuracy of the historical chronology as contained in the staff report.

Councilmember Kavanaugh thanked the Advisory Committee for their efforts in this regard and concurred with their selection of historical events and dates. Councilmember Kavanaugh also expressed concerns regarding specific verbiage contained in the proposed text and suggested that revisions may be appropriate.

Councilmember Jaffa stated that although he agrees with the proposed historical events and the accompanying dates, it is his opinion that the Council should offer input relative to the text portion of the Heritage Wall.

Councilmember Pomeroy voiced concern regarding the Council "micromanaging" this project and expressed the opinion that the Advisory Committee, not the Council, was charged with the responsibility of compiling historical events, the dates and the "wording" of the text.

It was moved by Councilmember Pomeroy, seconded by Councilmember Walters, that the recommendations of staff be approved.

Councilmember Walters spoke in appreciation of the Advisory Committee's efforts and also thanked Councilmember Pomeroy for his participation in this project. Councilmember Walters recommended that relative to the remaining 14 plaques, that a sufficient length of time elapse after an event has taken place before a determination is made as to whether the event is of historical significance and will be hung along with the other plaques on Heritage Wall. Councilmember Walters emphasized that her support of Councilmember Pomeroy's motion is contingent upon a presentation by staff to demonstrate a visual depiction of the Heritage Wall upon its completion.

Mayor Hawker concurred with the comments of Councilmember Walters and also voiced opposition to the total project cost of \$38,825.

In response to concerns expressed by Mayor Hawker, Mr. Holmwood clarified that the consulting fees (\$7,700) only relate to the research and creation of the text and that the consultant was not requested to participate in the materials selection process or to design the layout of the Heritage Wall.

Mayor Hawker stated that he will not support the motion and added that the consultant should have been instructed to condense the text to accommodate the individual plaques.

Councilmember Jaffa concurred with the comments of Mayor Hawker.

Councilmember Walters emphasized that although she is in support of the historical events, the dates and the text, Councilmember Pomeroy's motion does not include the manner in which the plaques will be displayed, nor does it address the total project cost.

Vice Mayor Davidson explained that despite the fact he has concerns relative to the language contained in the text, he will support the motion and added that the Council will be afforded an opportunity to view a presentation by staff prior to final approval.

Councilmember Whalen also voiced concerns regarding the proposed text.

Councilmember Jaffa stated that the text should address Mesa's diverse community.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Davidson-Kavanaugh-Pomeroy-Walters
NAYS - Hawker-Jaffa-Whalen

Mayor Hawker declared the motion carried by majority vote.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- a. Board of Adjustment meeting held January 9.
- b. Design Review Board meeting held January 3.
- c. General Development Committee meeting held January 8.
- d. Housing & Human Services Advisory Board meeting held December 19.
- e. Judicial Advisory Board meeting held January 3.
- f. Library Advisory Board meeting held January 9.
- g. Parks and Recreation Board meeting held January 11.
- h. Utility Committee meeting held January 9.

It was moved by Councilmember Jaffa, seconded by Councilmember Kavanaugh, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Carried unanimously.

4. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Councilmember Pomeroy reported on his recent attendance at the Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau meeting and detailed the Bureau's efforts to host the United States Olympics Swim Trials in Mesa in 2004 at the newly constructed Aquatic Center.

Vice Mayor Davidson advised that he and Councilmember Jaffa recently attended a Friends of the Tonto National Forest Committee meeting. Vice Mayor Davidson outlined the Committee's efforts to designate specific areas of the Tonto National Forest at Utery Park as national recreational areas along Mesa's boundary.

Vice Mayor Davidson also reported on his attendance at the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) meeting.

Mayor Hawker announced that he recently attended the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington D.C., the inauguration of President George W. Bush and also had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Jeff Flake.

Councilmember Walters detailed her recent attendance at the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Human Services Committee meeting and explained that the Committee is in the process of merging the Technical Committee and the Coordinating Committee. Councilmember Walters added that she is also Chair of the Elderly Mobility Workgroup.

Councilmember Whalen announced the schedule for the San Tan public hearings regarding the proposed construction of an Arizona Public Service 750-megawatt power plant in Gilbert.

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, January, 23, 2001, 7:30 a.m., Tourism and Sports Authority Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2001, 6:00 p.m., Vision 2025 Workshop, Mesa Junior High

Wednesday, January 24, 2001, 4:00 p.m., Transportation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 24, 2001, 6:00 p.m., Vision 2025 Workshop, Brimhall Junior High

Thursday, January 25, 2001, 7:30 a.m., Study Session

Thursday, January 25, 2001, TBA , Finance Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 25, 2001, 6:00 p.m., Carson Junior High

Tuesday, January 30, 2001, 6:00 p.m., Joint Dinner Meeting with the Salt River/Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Mesa Community Center

Thursday, February 1, 2001, 7:30 a.m., Study Session.

6. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 22nd day of January, 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2001

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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Attachment

Mesa Heritage Wall

Plaque Titles and Text

1878 Mesa's Founding

The town of Mesa was founded by Mormons who arrived in the Salt River Valley on February 14, 1878. They were the second group of Mormon colonists to relocate to the valley from Utah and Idaho (the first founded the community of Lehi). The Mesa Company, as the colonists called themselves, set up a townsite and moved into their simple brush and adobe homes in the fall of 1878. Within four years, about 300 persons were living in Mesa.

1878 Building a Town

The original Mesa townsite was one mile square and designed according to principles established by Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church. The streets were very wide, and lots were large (1.25 acres) to encourage residents to plant gardens. Each family was given land based on how much labor it had contributed to building the Mesa Canal. The dirt streets were lined with irrigation ditches that carried water to gardens, yards, and pastures.

1878 Mesa Canal

The Hohokam people lived in the Salt River Valley for hundreds of years, building a canal system to water their fields. They left the valley in the 1400s, but their canals remained. When Mormon colonists arrived in February 1878, they used an abandoned Hohokam canal for part of their first irrigation project, the Mesa Canal. Shareholders in the Mesa Canal Company were paid \$1.50 per day to work on the project, which was completed in October 1878.

1879 Salt River Reservation

Around 1870, a number of Pima and Maricopa Indians left their Gila River reservation and settled on the Salt River. In 1879, President Rutherford Hayes established a new reservation for them that covered much of the Salt River Valley, closing large tracts of land to settlement. After protests from non-Indian residents, Hayes changed his mind and created a smaller reservation, which became known as the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Prepared for the City of Mesa and the Mesa Southwest Museum by Mark E. Pry, Ph.D.; Southwest Historical Services; 315 E. Balboa Drive; Tempe, Arizona 85282; (480) 968-2339; swhistorical@earthlink.net

1882 Little Adobe School

The first permanent school in Mesa was an adobe building erected in 1882 at Center and 2nd Avenue. However, it was not the first school in Mesa. The Mesa colonists, who organized a school district soon after their arrival in 1878, first educated their children in a series of temporary buildings, one of which was a brush shed. The 1882 schoolhouse was demolished in 1890. It was replaced by the first Lincoln School, which was torn down in 1920.

1883 Incorporating the City

On July 15, 1883, the town of Mesa City was incorporated after residents asked the county for permission to establish a local government. At the first election, in which 29 of Mesa's residents voted, 10 city officials were elected. For many years Mesa's government remained small. On the eve of the Second World War, when Mesa's population was just over 7,000, the city had an annual budget of \$294,000 and owned one building at 1st Street and Macdonald.

1892 First Newspaper

Mesa's earliest newspaper, the *Mesa Free Press*, was first published in September 1892. A weekly paper, it consisted of four pages. In 1949, after several changes in title and publishing frequency, the paper became the *Daily Tribune*. By 2000, after more than a century of continuous publication, the paper was called the *East Valley Tribune*. It served not only Mesa but also other cities in the eastern part of the Salt River Valley.

1893 Early Churches

The earliest church buildings in Mesa were erected before statehood. By 1893, Methodists had a sanctuary on 1st Avenue near Center, and Baptists had a building at 1st Avenue and Macdonald. The first Mormon tabernacle was constructed in 1896, at 1st Avenue and Morris. Local Catholics founded the Sacred Heart mission in 1908, at 2nd Street near Crismon (later Country Club). Mesa's Episcopalians built St. Mark's mission on Pepper Place in 1911.

1895 Arrival of the Railroad

Rail service came to Mesa in December 1895, when the Maricopa & Phoenix & Salt River Valley Railroad began running trains between Mesa and Tempe. For years Mesa passengers changed trains in Tempe or Phoenix if they were leaving the Salt River Valley. In 1926, the Southern Pacific routed its main line through Mesa. Regular passenger service to Mesa ended in 1958. The Robson Street depot was closed in 1982 and destroyed by fire in 1989.

1898 Turning on the Lights

Mesa acquired electricity in 1898, when A. J. Chandler built a hydroelectric power plant on the new Crosscut Canal. At first the power was used only for streetlights. Later it was sold to businesses and residents, who suffered periodic blackouts when the canal ran low. Two years later, service was improved by a steam generating plant. In 1917, the private utility company was purchased by the city, which has supplied power to residents ever since.

1902 Telephones for Mesa

Telephone service came to Mesa in 1902, when Consolidated Telephone set up a switchboard in the rear of a local store. By 1924, when the company was called Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph, there were only 780 telephones in Mesa. Local switchboards were phased out after 1949, when direct-dial service became available. Mountain States later was acquired by Mountain Bell.

1908 Vance Auditorium

The Vance Auditorium opened on Valentine's Day in 1908. Advertised as the largest hall of its kind in Arizona, it was Mesa's most important gathering place for many years, the scene of dances, theater productions, and speeches by visiting politicians. In 1919, the building was purchased by the LDS Maricopa Stake, which later renamed it the Mezona—a contraction of Mesa and Arizona. In 1971, the hall was torn down and replaced by the Mezona Motel.

1909 Mesa High School

Mesa Union High School opened its first building at 2nd Avenue and Center in 1909, after holding classes in temporary facilities for ten years. The school's motto, "Carry On," was inspired by the last words spoken by student Zedo Ishikawa before his death from a shooting accident in 1932. The "Old Main" building was destroyed by fire in 1967. Five years later, in 1972, Mesa High was moved to a new location on Southern Avenue.

1910 Segregated Schools

For the first half of the twentieth century, Mesa's elementary schools were racially segregated. Daniel Webster School was built in 1910 for Mexican-American children, and Booker T. Washington School was erected in 1920 for African-American students. Webster was desegregated in the 1940s and remained in use until 1948, when it was destroyed by fire. Washington was integrated in 1954 and remained standing until 1976, when it was torn down.

1911 Roosevelt Dam

On March 18, 1911, former President Theodore Roosevelt pushed a button to release water from the reservoir behind Roosevelt Dam. It was the first large-scale irrigation project to be financed by the federal government, and it provided a stable water supply for both agricultural and urban uses. Roosevelt Dam and the Salt River Project paved the way for the phenomenal growth of Mesa and other Salt River Valley communities during the 20th century.

1912 Cotton Farming

One of Mesa's earliest cotton gins was built by the Egyptian Cotton Company in 1912. Soon thousands of acres of land were planted with cotton. Mesa celebrated this new industry in 1919 with the King Cotton Carnival and a meeting of the Arizona Cotton Congress. The cotton boom was followed by lean years after prices fell in 1920. Eventually the market stabilized and cotton joined citrus as an important crop for Mesa farmers.

1912 Cars Come to Town

In 1912, the first year of Arizona statehood, there were 109 automobiles and trucks in Mesa, one for every 15 residents. Within a few years, enough cars were on the road to raise concerns about traffic enforcement. A "speed cop" was stationed on the Mesa-Tempe highway in 1916, parking meters were installed on Main Street in 1946, and Mesa's first traffic light was erected in 1950. Six years later, in 1956, Arizona's first automobile show was held in Mesa.

1914 Farmer's Paradise

Agriculture in Mesa was more than just citrus and cotton. Mesa farmers also raised grain, melons, alfalfa, grapes, nuts, and vegetables. Livestock, dairy, and poultry farming were important as well. In 1914, the University of Arizona established a research station on Main Street, just west of Alma School Road. Until it was closed in 1983, the station tested new crops and helped local farmers improve their irrigation and farming methods.

1914 Apache Trail

The road connecting Roosevelt Dam with Mesa was completed in 1904, but it was not until 1914 that it was called the Apache Trail. The new name originated with the Southern Pacific Railroad, which carried tourists over the road in automobiles and wanted a colorful name to attract customers. Along with El Portal Hotel, which opened in 1928, the Apache Trail started Mesa's tourism industry. By 1952, tourism was the city's second-largest industry.

1916 Escobedo Neighborhood

In 1916, the Verde Vista subdivision was created, offering Mexican Americans their first real opportunity to buy homes in the Mesa area. Located north of University between Surrine and Pasadena, Verde Vista grew rapidly in the 1920s. The center of Mesa's Mexican-American community, it was home to a mixture of residences and small businesses. Later it was called the Escobedo neighborhood, after a local housing project of the same name built in the 1940s.

1917 Woman's Club

The Woman's Club of Mesa was founded in 1917 to sponsor civic, cultural, and philanthropic activities. Club members helped support Mesa's first library, led a safety campaign to cover open irrigation ditches, offered aid to needy families during the Depression, and raised money for local hospitals and other charitable organizations. The Woman's Club building on Macdonald Street was built in 1931 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1920 Washington Community

African Americans came to Mesa starting in the early 1900s, but discrimination kept them from owning homes in the original townsite. The first housing subdivision to welcome them as buyers and residents was the Mitchell Addition, created in 1920 on land north of University and east of Center. Together with another subdivision, Tuskegee Place, it soon became known as the Washington neighborhood, after the school of the same name.

1920 New City Buildings

In 1920, Mesa built its first modern fire station. Located on Macdonald Street, the station was part of a "civic center" that also included a city hall constructed in 1912. The hall was demolished in 1937 to make way for a new city hall, library, and police station built with funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The fire station remained in use until 1963. The 1937 city hall is now part of the Mesa Southwest Museum.

1920 Southside Hospital

Mesa's first community hospital was established in 1920, when a group of citizens purchased the LeSueur home at Main Street and Hibbert and converted it into a hospital. In 1923, it was incorporated as Southside District Hospital. It moved into a new building in 1935 and continued to grow steadily. In 1973, after merging with Phoenix's Good Samaritan Hospital, Southside was closed and replaced by Desert Samaritan Hospital near Southern and Dobson.

1927 Arizona Temple

On October 23, 1927, Salt River Valley Mormons dedicated the Arizona Temple, whose design was inspired by Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Planning and fund raising for the project had started in 1912. Upon its completion, local Mormons no longer had to follow the "Honeymoon Trail" to Utah to be married. The Easter service held on the temple grounds began in 1938. The building was rededicated in 1975 after a major renovation.

1927 Mesa Grande

Fearing the loss of an archeological treasure, the Mesa Chamber of Commerce campaigned in 1927 for the city to buy and preserve Mesa Grande, a Hohokam ruin located northeast of the original Mesa townsite. The city declined to purchase the ruin and it remained in private hands. Fortunately the site was voluntarily preserved by its owners, and archeologists were later able to conduct research at Mesa Grande. The city eventually acquired the ruin in 1987.

1930 Expanding City Limits

During its first fifty years, Mesa's incorporated area remained within the original one-mile-square townsite. This changed in 1930, when the city annexed six subdivisions and doubled in size. Since then Mesa has grown steadily, especially after the Second World War. In 1950, the city was just over 6 square miles in area and had a population of nearly 17,000. By 2000, it was 125 square miles in area and had [2000 POPULATION] residents.'

1931 Citrus Fair

By the early 1890s, several citrus orchards had been planted on the outskirts of Mesa. From those simple beginnings grew one of the city's most important industries. Thousands of acres were planted with oranges, lemons, and grapefruit, and packing sheds and warehouses were built. In 1931, the Salt River Valley Citrus Fair was started in Mesa. It was later combined with the Maricopa County Fair, which was held at the Mesa Civic Center until 1959.

1935 New Deal for Mesa

In December 1935, men hired by the federal Works Progress Administration began building a new library and city hall for Mesa. Over the next six years, many projects in the city were built by the WPA, which provided jobs to unemployed men. These included improvements to the Lehi and old Franklin schools, an addition to Southside Hospital, swimming facilities at Rendezvous Park, and several miles of new concrete sidewalks and paved streets.

1 When available in final form, 2000 census population for Mesa is to be inserted here.

1937 Public Library

Mesa's library found its first permanent home in 1937, when it moved into the new Mesa city hall at 1st Street and Macdonald. Opened in 1906 as a "free reading room," the library at first was run by volunteers and housed in a series of downtown commercial buildings. In 1926, the city of Mesa took over the library's management. The library moved to 1st Street and Sirrine in 1960, and a new building was constructed on 1st Street near Centennial Way in 1981.

1937 Air Conditioning

In January 1937, the *Mesa Journal-Tribune* invited residents to visit its demonstration home, which featured a refrigerated air conditioning system. Mesans had been experimenting with cooling systems since the early 1900s, and evaporative coolers became popular starting in the 1930s. Refrigeration was more expensive and not widely used until after the Second World War. Its eventual adoption paved the way for the postwar growth of the Salt River Valley.

1938 Rendezvous Park

In May 1938, Mesa residents dedicated their first city park, Rendezvous Park. It boasted a swimming pool, bathhouse, skating rink, tennis courts, and floodlit baseball field. Located at 2nd Street and Center, the park had been created with volunteer labor. The baseball field was built in 1920, a swimming pool was added in 1924, and the city's parks department was established in 1936. Later, the field was used for spring training games from 1952 until 1977.

1941 Military Air Bases

With war raging in Europe, two military airports were built near Mesa in 1941. Falcon Field was built to train British pilots, and Williams Field was set up for American pilots. After the war, Falcon Field was closed and turned over to the city of Mesa, which converted it into a municipal airport. Williams Field (later Air Force Base) continued to operate as a training base until 1993. It was acquired by the city in 1994 and reopened as Williams Gateway Airport.

1942 A Divided Town

In February 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered Japanese Americans living in parts of the West to leave their homes. At the time, Mesa was home to a thriving Japanese-American community. Those who lived in the security zone, whose boundary was Main Street, were forced to sell their businesses and leave. Several families were sent to internment camps. Those who lived outside the zone, mostly in Lehi, were prohibited from crossing Main Street.

1947 Radio and Television

Mesa's first radio station, KARV, went on the air in January 1947. It was followed by KTYL, another local station that operated under several names until the 1980s, when it was sold and renamed KZZP. Mesa's first and only television station was KTYL-TV, which began broadcasting in 1953 from studios on the Mesa-Tempe highway. After several name and ownership changes, the television station moved to Phoenix, where it became KPNX-TV.

1952 Chicago Cubs

At the invitation of businessman Dwight Patterson, Mesa became the spring training home of the Chicago Cubs in 1952. The Cubs played at Rendezvous Park through 1965, later moving to Scottsdale. The Oakland Athletics trained in Mesa from 1969 through 1978, first at Rendezvous and then at HoHoKam Park, which was built in 1977. In 1979, the Cubs returned to Mesa. In 1997, the original HoHoKam Park was torn down and replaced by a new stadium.

1952 Mesa Junior High

Mesa's first junior high school opened in 1952, bringing the number of schools in the Mesa district to seven. In the years that followed, the district continued to build schools to keep up with the city's rapid growth. Forty-two new grade schools opened between 1950 and 1990, along with nine junior high schools and five high schools. By 1990, Mesa Unified School District No. 4 was the largest school system in the state and the largest employer in the city.

1953 Civil Rights for All

In May 1953, a group of Mesa citizens organized the Better Community Council to fight racial discrimination. At the time, public facilities in Mesa were segregated. There were even separate black and white restrooms at the city hall. The Better Community Council lobbied Mesa restaurants and hotels to sign non-discrimination pledges. The group also led a successful effort to integrate the Rendezvous Park swimming pool.

1954 Shopping Centers

Mesa's first shopping center opened in 1954 at the northeast corner of 4th Avenue (now Broadway) and Mesa Drive. It had a Wright's grocery store, nine other stores, and an off-street parking lot. The city's first indoor shopping center was Tri-City Mall, which opened in 1968 and closed in 1998. The next was Fiesta Mall, which opened in 1979. A third, Superstition Springs Center, became Mesa's largest shopping mall when it opened in 1990.

1957 Space-Age City

In 1957, a rocket engine manufacturer, Talco, moved its research division to Falcon Field, starting Mesa's high-technology industry. It was joined in 1960 by Talley Defense Systems, which became Talley Industries, Mesa's first homegrown Fortune 500 company. In 1966, Motorola opened a plant at Broadway and Dobson. In 1982, Hughes Helicopter opened its Apache helicopter factory, which later became part of McDonnell Douglas and then Boeing.

1963 Mesa Community College

Mesa Community College opened in 1963 as a branch of Phoenix College. In that first year, 615 students and 20 instructors met at Main Street and Extension, in what later became the Landmark Restaurant. Three years later, in 1966, Mesa Community College opened its new campus at Southern and Dobson with 2,100 students. By the year 2000, the college had an enrollment of 24,000 and had established the Red Mountain branch campus in east Mesa.

1966 Saving Mesa's History

The Mesa Historical and Archaeological Society was founded in 1966. An earlier society had been started in 1955, but it soon disbanded. The Society's first project was the Park of the Canals, which became a city park in 1977. The Society also started the Mesa Museum, which opened in 1977 and later became the city-operated Mesa Southwest Museum. In 1984, the Society acquired the old Lehi School, which eventually became the Mesa Historical Museum.

1967 City Charter

After the Second World War, Mesa's city government changed to keep pace with the city's growth. A city manager was hired in 1952, and a manager-council form of government was formally adopted in 1955. Mesa voters approved the city's first charter in 1967. This gave the city home rule, freeing it from supervision by the Arizona legislature. It also provided for direct election of the mayor. In 1968, Mesa residents elected their mayor for the first time.

1973 Dobson Ranch

Model homes in Dobson Ranch opened for buyers in October 1973. The first master-planned community in Mesa, Dobson Ranch was sometimes called a "city within a city." It featured artificial lakes and a golf course, and it was governed by a homeowners' association that enforced rules on the appearance of individual houses. By the early 1990s, more than 10,000 residents lived there, making it one of the largest planned communities in Arizona.

1977 Superstition Freeway

The first freeway to reach Mesa's city limits opened in July 1977, when the Superstition was completed to Dobson Road. The Superstition had been planned since 1962, after Mesa was bypassed by Interstate 10. It was completed nearly thirty years later, in 1991, when it joined US Highway 60 near Apache Junction. Mesa's second freeway, the Price (Loop 101), opened in 1991. The Red Mountain Freeway (Loop 202) reached Mesa in 1997.

1979 All-America City

In May 1979, Mesa was named an All-America City by the National Municipal League. Mesa was honored for its efforts to address community problems through cooperation among citizens, schools, civic groups, and local governments, including the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Among the projects praised by the League were the founding of the Tri-Cities Community Service Center and a cleanup campaign along the Salt River.

1980 Arts in Mesa

Mesa Arts Center, the city's first arts center, opened in 1980. Located in the historic Irving School building, it offered arts classes, performances, and exhibits. Its opening continued a long tradition of local arts organizations that began in 1937 with the founding of the Mesa Little Theater. Others have included the Mesa Arts League (1955), Mesa Symphony Orchestra (1956), Mesa Musical Theater (1966), and Xicanindio Artes (1975).

1990 Fastest-Growing City

Between 1980 and 1990, Mesa was the fastest-growing city in the United States. During that decade, Mesa's population rose from 152,000 to 288,000-an increase of 89 percent. This was actually a slower growth rate than in the past. During the 1970s, Mesa's population jumped from 63,000 to 152,000-a growth rate of 141 percent. High growth rates have been a Mesa tradition. Every decade between 1930 and 1990, the city's population nearly doubled.

1996 Celebrating Diversity

The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the slain civil rights leader, was declared a city holiday by voters in 1996. The result of an initiative campaign, the holiday was the latest addition to a calendar of events reflecting Mesa's diversity. For many years the city has celebrated Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday. The Mesa Pow Wow, attended by Native Americans from across the nation, has been a regular fall event since it began in 1984.