

Three Versions of History:
The Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale History Museums

by

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ABSTRACT

Since the initial impetus to collect, preserve, and interpret history with the intent of safeguarding American heritage for posterity, historical societies have made substantial contributions to the preservation of historical records. Historical societies have tended to originate in socially exclusive groups and found history museums, celebratory in nature. In contemporary society, this exclusivity raises issues and concerns for contemporary institutions seeking to “serve the public.” Tempe History Museum, Chandler Museum, and Scottsdale Historical Museum are examples of local history museums, initially formed by historical societies, which are currently at different stages of developing exhibits and collections more representative of their diverse communities. The three museums have different approaches to not only defining their local community but also to what it means to serve and represent their city by being the local history museum. In recent years, the Tempe History Museum has undergone a renovation of its facility and exhibits, the Chandler Museum is in the midst of transferring its collection to the City of Chandler and planning for a new facility, and the Scottsdale Historical Museum has remained largely the same since the early 1990s. The decisions made by the historical societies that found these museums have shaped and directed the museums’ paths to becoming, or failing to become, relevant to their local communities. The Tempe, Chandler, and

Scottsdale historical societies came from the Anglo-community within each city, so did the collections they acquired and the objects they displayed. At a time of rising social history, the historical societies presented socially exclusive museums. Becoming incorporated within the city government, would prove to be the point of change, the tipping point when the history museums moved from particularism to pluralism. The change, however, did not come overnight. It was change over time. The city governments had an obligation to equally represent its taxpayers and constituency, meaning that the newly incorporated museums had to eventually follow the same mission. In the case of Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale museums, incorporation within city governments has led to a stable funding source, professional staff, and a move towards representation of diverse communities within museum exhibits and programming.

DEDICATION

To my parents – for their life-long encouragement. Vi ste omogućili moj uspjeh u školi, vas dvoje ste nešto posebno, volim vas.

To my sister – for being my best friend and always being there for me.

To my fiancée – for encouraging me to write and your constant support.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical societies have made substantial contributions to the preservation of historical records and sites, since the initial impetus to collect, preserve, and interpret history with the intent of safeguarding American heritage for posterity. Traditionally, historical societies have collected and preserved the written records of their community, making these research materials available to writers, historians, genealogists, and the general public. Some historical societies went beyond their traditional functions and began to develop history museums and participate in the historic preservation movement. In the United States, the first history museums were founded by historical societies starting in the nineteenth century, and mainly concentrated in the East coast.

The early history museums were celebratory in nature, tending to focus on city or regional founding families. Those who principally supported these museums were often the descendants of the first families. The stories that the museums told were success stories.¹ This was largely because the historical societies originated in socially exclusive groups and societies. This exclusivity, however, raises issues and concerns for present-day institutions seeking to “serve the public.” The trend of historical societies as socially exclusive entities was not solely secluded to

¹ Stephen Weil, “The Museum and the Public,” in *Museums and their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.

the nineteenth century or the eastern coast. This trend spread throughout the country and continued well beyond the mid-twentieth century.

The vast majority of studies looking at historical societies have focused on privately funded institutions founded in the nineteenth century and the management issues they have faced in the twentieth century.

The historical society museums established in the nineteenth century are also the more nationally prominent institutions. Authors such as Catherine M. Lewis, Kevin M. Guthrie, and Sally F. Griffith studied Chicago, New-York, and Pennsylvania Historical Societies, respectively.

In *Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum*, Catherine Lewis provides an inside look at the transformation of the Chicago Historical Society (CHS) by presenting its history from its origins in 1856 to the present day. When looking at CHS's history, Lewis analyzes that the museum followed the pattern many historical institutions follow to transform into a community resource. Chicago Historical Society changed its management structure to include a more involved education department, which came to advocate for visitor experience. The historical society revised its mission statement and established a new focus on urban rather than state history to clarify its preservation goals. The society's exhibitions and collection became more diversified as CHS commenced to represent the city's racial and ethnic diversity. With these

changes, Chicago Historical Society was able to modernize its infrastructure and become a greater asset to its community.²

A main theme throughout Lewis' book is the issue of multiculturalism and museums' goal to relinquish exclusive control over the interpretive process. Lewis points out that museum professionals must understand and appreciate their constituencies' assumptions and expectations about museums. She argues that the prevalent view of museums as authoritative presenters of the truth continues to exist and could undermine efforts to redistribute power and share interpretive authority.³

In *The New-York Historical Society: Lessons from one Nonprofit's Struggle for Survival*, Kevin M. Guthrie tracks the society's budget and board decisions over a fifty-year period, documenting the negative impact of long-term deficit spending. From its beginnings in 1804, the society was a private organization receiving no public funding. In 1979, the society's board hired a new director and began an ambitious campaign to raise the institution's visibility. By the late 1980s, the cost of these initiatives exceeded the society's investment income, forcing a series of severe cutbacks culminating in the closing of the society's museum and severe reduction in access to its library. Since then, the museum has reopened

² Catherine M. Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum* (Chicago: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), 8.

³ Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 128.

and the society's board has undergone significant changes with an eye toward expanding the organization's audience and funding base. Guthrie reviews the society's efforts to sell part of its collections, to secure major loans from an auction house, to sell "air rights" over its prestigious property, and to merge with other organizations.⁴

In *Serving History in a Changing World: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in the Twentieth Century*, Sally Griffith presents the society's history since 1924. According to Griffith, the society struggled throughout the twentieth century to transform what was originally a private gentlemen's club into a more public and democratic institution, while not alienating its base of support among old Philadelphia families. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) also attempted to adopt professional curatorial and archival standards, while increasing the society's accessibility. Griffith points out the society's struggles with its new vision; members-only meetings continued through to the 1960s alongside efforts to deepen relationships with both scholars and the public.⁵ *Serving History in a Changing World* is an object lesson in the difficulties cultural institutions face in defining their missions with clarity

⁴ Kevin M. Guthrie, *The New-York Historical Society: Lessons from one Nonprofit's Struggle for Survival* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), introduction.

⁵ Sally F. Griffith, *Serving History in a Changing World: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania: Distributed by the University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), introduction.

and vigor, finding the funds to support those missions, and serving the public in meaningful ways.

This thesis presents three history museums in Arizona – Tempe History Museum (THM), Chandler Museum, and Scottsdale Historical Museum (SHM) – that underwent similar transitions throughout their histories. Like the Chicago Historical Society, the Tempe History Museum changed its mission and renovated its exhibits to better represent the city’s racial and ethnic diversity. The Chandler Museum staff, reminiscent of the New-York Historical Society, has attempted to increase the institution's visibility and funding base. Similar to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Scottsdale Historical Museum has struggled to transform from a private organizations into a more public and democratic institution. Unlike the three nationally prominent societies and museums, Tempe History Museum, Chandler Museum, and Scottsdale Historical Museum are examples of local museums, initially formed by historical societies – Tempe Historical Society (THS), Chandler Historical Society (CHS), and Scottsdale Historical Society (SHS) respectively – which are currently at different stages of developing exhibits and collections more representative of their diverse communities. The fact that two of the three founding historical societies transferred the museum operation to their local city government further distinguishes them from their nineteenth century counterparts.

This thesis is a multiple-case study, comparing and contrasting the museums' vision and mission to serve their local community. The three museums have different approaches to not only defining their local community but what it means to serve and represent their city by being the local history museum. In recent years, the Tempe History Museum has undergone a renovation of its facility and exhibits, the Chandler Museum is in the midst of transferring its collection to the City of Chandler and planning for a new facility, and the Scottsdale Historical Museum has remained largely the same since the early 1990s. The decisions made by the historical societies that found these museums have shaped and directed the museums' paths to becoming, or failing to become, relevant to their local communities.

Texts dealing with the ideas of "new museology" comprise the theoretical and methodological approach behind this study. New museology calls for more inclusive and diverse museum exhibitions and collections that represent the museum's community. Relationship between museums and the communities they aim to represent is central to new museology. To evaluate the relationship between museums and communities, I looked to Sheila Watson's *Museums and Their Communities* and Elizabeth Crooke's *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges*. These two works have shaped my ideas regarding museums and communities they seek to represent. *Museums and Their Communities*, edited by Sheila Watson, brings forth a collection of essays

dealing with issues surrounding museums and their attempt to connect with the community. According to Watson, there has been a shift in attitude towards museums as museums are no longer only measured by their internal possessions (collections, staff, etc.) but by an external consideration of the benefits they provide to individuals and communities they seek to serve.⁶ Watson argues that museums define their communities by location. Museums see themselves as working within and for a geographical place whether it is a region, city, town, or rural district.⁷

In *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges*, Elizabeth Crooke investigates the relationship between communities and museums and how museums work with communities. The relationship between museums and communities is a symbiotic one – communities need the histories and identities preserved and interpreted in museums while the museum sector needs the people, in the many communities, to recognize the value of museums and justify their presence. According to Crooke, museums are not only about the collections they house, they are also about the sense of the past they represent – museums symbolize culture, identity and heritage.⁸

⁶ Sheila Watson, ed., *Museums and Their Communities* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.

⁷ Watson, *Museums and Their Communities*, 7.

⁸ Elizabeth Crooke, ed., *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues, and Challenges* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 13.

Crooke identifies a threefold approach to understanding community: community as a form of identity creation; the use of community in public life; and the political community, as demonstrated by community in social action.⁹ She considers community as a product of the people themselves, who have used museums and heritage to symbolize belonging and as a means to communicate to other members and those on the outside. Crooke questions why museums have been chosen as the forum for community relations, she looks at the answer from the museum sector and community perspectives. From the museum sector perspective, museums have the potential to be the network to initiate, facilitate, mediate and communicate people's stories in pursuit of cohesion, identity and citizenship. Crooke looks at the emerging progressive communitarian approach focused on empowerment and concerned with the idea that the museum is used to address social needs, democracy and social justice.¹⁰

According to Crooke, community groups assign a range of roles to the museum, which vary depending on their needs. From a community perspective, the museum is a forum in which a community communicates a group identity to other members and to those on the outside. Once the community reaches its goal the museum becomes irrelevant; therefore, if

⁹ Crooke, *Museums and Community*, 39.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 132 – 133.

a community museum wishes to maintain its relevance, it needs regularly to refocus and recapture significance within its community.¹¹

The Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale museums started out with Anglo-centric collections and exhibitions, excluding the Hispanic, Native American, African American, etc., stories in the process. The idea that ethnic stories are omitted from history museums and factors responsible for the eventual inclusion of some of those stories is central to this thesis. Eric Gable's "How We Study History Museums: Or Cultural Studies at Monticello," part of the *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, looks at history museums and asserts that the visitors ask for the contested histories to be told. According to Gable, history museums are places where versions of the past are produced through words, pictures, and artifacts, and where the messages they contain are consumed by visitors with a variety of motives for coming to the site. Gable asserts the history museums produce a cacophonous outcome of contest and compromise; the shape public history takes in a museum is a product of negotiations among the professional historians and the public at large.¹²

It is generally assumed among the professionals who manage museums as well as visitors that museums display or convey what is true

¹¹ Crooke, *Museums and Community*, 134.

¹² Eric Gable, "How We Study History Museums: Or Cultural Studies at Monticello," in *New Museum Theory and Practice, An Introduction*, ed. Janet Marstine (Oxford : Blackwell, 2006), 110.

and factual. Nevertheless, the story portrayed may cater to one audience and not another, causing some members of the public to feel excluded. This was the case with the Tempe History Museum, following the museum opening in 1991, when the staff was approached by members from the Hispanic community asking why their story was excluded. Gable asks if museum will ever be able to produce a past that makes for a more inclusive community of memory and argues for a more radical form of honesty.¹³ The author argues that historical sites and those involved in history-making should present history in an objective manner. At the core of new museology theory is the idea of audience participation and intervention in the exhibit making process as museums are at times apt to display the popular history and avoid contested histories.

The story of the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale Historical Societies and their museums starts with their founding in 1969. The first chapter “A Tale of Three Historical Societies” presents the motivations behind forming a historical society. The chapter goes on to explore how the societies became nonprofit organizations and the advantages of a nonprofit status. Next, I present national trends in history, providing a context within which the societies were found, and how the historical societies participated within the national movement by seeking affiliation with local and national museum associations. The first chapter concludes

¹³ Gable, “How We Study History Museums,” in Marstine, 125.

with the historical societies opening history museums – Tempe and Chandler in 1972 and Scottsdale in 1983.

The second chapter “Search for Permanence” deals with the first transitions the historical societies encountered. The Tempe and Chandler historical societies were able to hire curators and/or directors mainly due to city funding. This new financial relationship between the societies and their city governments proved to be extremely advantageous. After resolving that obtaining a permanent museum was out of their reach, the Tempe Historical Society transferred the operation of its museum to the City of Tempe. This marked the transition of the Tempe Historical Society taking on the role of a supportive organization to the Tempe History Museum. Meanwhile, the Chandler Historical Society continued to be partially funded by the City of Chandler and planned to turn over museum operation to the city once a new museum was built. Unlike the Tempe and Chandler historical societies, the Scottsdale Historical Society did not seek financial aid from the City of Scottsdale and continued to struggle to find a permanent space for its museum. The chapter concludes with the Scottsdale Historical Society obtaining a permanent museum in 1991 and continuing to operate it without City of Scottsdale funding or intervention.

The third chapter “Community Museum” marks the turning point for the three historical societies. By 2000, the Tempe History Museum staff had recognized the shortcomings of their main exhibit. Through a National Endowment for Humanities grant, the THM staff brought in experts from

various fields to help them create an interpretive framework for new exhibits. Meanwhile, the Chandler Historical Society continued with strategic planning and obtained two bonds for a new museum. Due to financial reasons, CHS transferred museum operation to the City of Chandler and continues to await the promised new facility. The fourth chapter “Renovation = Diversity?” reflects on recent activities and the current status of the three museums. Following the NEH consultation project, Tempe History Museum began to incorporate Tempe’s diverse history within its interpretation. This culminated in a renovated museum and exhibit space, attempting to present the story of diverse communities within Tempe. While Tempe is renovating its museum, the City of Chandler continues postpone the new facility. The Chandler Museum staff, however, did survey Chandler residents to create a “visioning” document of the new facility. The continued delay of planning and construction of a new museum facility has led to a fractured, mistrusting relationship between the Chandler Historical Society and the Chandler Museum staff.

I aim to bring forth an institutional history of each historical society and their museums. This is not a community history study; I do not attempt to present the history of Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale. Rather, city histories serve as a backdrop to the story of and motivation behind founding the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale historical societies. Central

to the thesis is the idea of community representation – how each museum defines its constituency and how this definition has changed over time.

Whether due to a lack of funding or interest in attaining a professional standing, the historical societies were not able to professionalize their institutions. In a museum setting, professionalism is an important factor – this connotation points to an academically trained staff, proper collection management and preservation, research, interpretive exhibits, etc. – signifying whether or not an institution is able to support its mission and serve its public. In the case of Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale museums, incorporation within city governments has led to a stable funding source, professional staff, and a move towards representation of diverse communities within museum exhibitions and programming. Transferring museum operation and collections under the tutelage of city government, permitted for a transition from particularism to pluralism. The transformation from an exclusive, Anglo-community oriented to an inclusive, diverse community representative institution brings relevancy and an expanded audience to the cultural institutions.

CHAPTER 1

A TALE OF THREE HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

At the start of World War II, Phoenix was able to attract military installations and defense industries. This led to a population increase as military personnel and those seeking jobs within the war industry moved to Phoenix. By the 1950s, Phoenix had attained the largest population and became the industrial center between Los Angeles and Dallas. By 1960, Phoenix was the largest city in the southwest with a population of 439,170 up from 106,618 in 1950 and from 65,414 in 1940.¹⁴ Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, each of the satellite communities surrounding Phoenix continued to retain an identity of their own – Tempe was dubbed as the “college town” because it was the location of Arizona State University, Chandler continued as a farming community, and Scottsdale billed itself as “The West’s Most Western Town.”

After World War II, Tempe began growing at a rapid rate as veterans and others moved to the city. Within a decade Tempe’s population went from 7,684 to 24,897 by 1960.¹⁵ Tempe was growing into a modern city. While agriculture remained as the basic economy of the

¹⁴ Patricia Gober, *Metropolitan Phoenix: Place Making and Community Building in the Desert* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 35.

¹⁵ Tempe Chamber of Commerce, *A community service of the Area Development Department*, Tempe Chamber of Commerce Ephemera, Arizona Historical Foundation.

area, Tempe was developing into a prosperous city largely due to the expanding industrial development. As the home of the Arizona State University, officially established in 1958, Tempe was turning into a culturally diverse city, a definite shift from the previously close-knit community. Prompted by Tempe's centennial, the downtown area was buzzing with life during the late 1960s and early 1970s as the entertainment and shopping districts sprang up along Mill Avenue.

During World War II, Chandler's population doubled and reached 3,800 by 1950 and by 1954 the status of Chandler was upgraded from town to city. By 1960, city boundaries were pushed further to the north, incorporating hundreds of new homes and businesses, and Chandler's population swelled to 10,000. The burgeoning population had begun to create issues of sprawl and the city's identity was coming into question.¹⁶

Scottsdale's initial postwar promotion used the historically inaccurate theme of "The West's Most Western Town," with wooden storefronts built for a section of downtown buildings.¹⁷ By 1960, Scottsdale was Arizona's wealthiest community largely due to Motorola's construction of manufacturing plants that encouraged an influx of skilled workers and professionals. By the mid-1960s, Scottsdale developers brought forth a new development strategy focused on residential and commercial

¹⁶ Philip VanderMeer, *Phoenix rising: The Making of a Desert Metropolis* (Carlsbad, Calif.: Heritage Media Corp., 2002), 41.

¹⁷ Philip VanderMeer, *Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860 – 2009* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 222.

developments. City leaders decided to build on Scottsdale's tradition of catering to tourism, producing numerous resorts and high-end retail areas.¹⁸

By the 1970s, however, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the towns to maintain their individual identities as they were undergoing population explosions and building booms.¹⁹ Due to high mobility and growing diversity, many Phoenicians retreated into communities with those who shared their values, lifestyles, cultural traditions, and worldviews.²⁰ Attempting to preserve their way of life, several Phoenix valley communities organized historical societies; the Tempe, Scottsdale, and Chandler Historical Societies were among the local historical societies founded by preservation minded community members.

Tempe's centennial, celebrated in 1971, was the driving force behind the formation of the Tempe Historical Society in 1969. The City of Tempe Mayor, Rudy Campbell, called to attention Tempe's need for a museum in which to preserve treasures in existence since its founding, not only for the centennial celebration but for preservation of Tempe's early

¹⁸ VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 223.

¹⁹ Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), 195.

²⁰ Gober, *Metropolitan Phoenix*, 87.

history.²¹ Campbell began his civic career as a member of Tempe's Chamber of Commerce, served as Tempe City Councilman 1956 through 1960, and then as Mayor of Tempe, 1966 through 1968. During his term as mayor, the city adopted its first General Plan (1967) to set goals for managing the city's long-term growth.²² Part of the long-term plan was the creation of the Tempe Beautiful Committee, charged with protecting and preserving Tempe's natural landscape. Mayor Campbell gave the Tempe Beautiful Committee the responsibility of forming a historical sub-committee charged with compiling a history of the city and establishing a museum displaying artifacts related to Tempe's early history.

The Tempe Beautiful Committee accepted the mayor's challenge and formed a subcommittee in charge of creating a historical society. The subcommittee presented a resolution to the City Council seeking the support and endorsement of the mayor, council, and the citizens of Tempe in their effort to preserve Tempe's history. On May 3rd, 1967, the Tempe City Council passed a resolution of endorsement supporting and encouraging the foundation of a historical society and museum in their

²¹ Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting, March 9, 1967, City Council Chamber, Tempe, Arizona.

²² Rudy Campbell, interview by Lisa K. Miller, April 6, 2001, Interview OH-167, transcript, Tempe Oral History Project, Tempe History Museum.

effort to preserve artifacts, including but not limited to documents and memorabilia relating to the development of the City of Tempe.²³

Following the City of Tempe's official endorsement, the Tempe Beautiful Committee called for the support of Tempe service clubs, patriotic organizations, and women's clubs in the formation of a Tempe Historical Society. The historic subcommittee saw the Tempe centennial as a short-term objective of the proposed society and the establishment of a Tempe history museum as a long-term goal.²⁴ According to Mrs. Edith Getz, head of the historical subcommittee, the purpose of the new organization was to accumulate and preserve a permanent collection of historical artifacts. She further asserted that the preservation would specifically focus on pioneer families as "we [Tempe community] have some interesting pioneers in our community and they have these things on an individual basis and few others have the opportunity to see or learn of them."²⁵ The first attempt at organizing the Tempe Historical Society was in the fall of 1967. The members of the Tempe Beautiful Committee and City of Tempe Council, along with those individuals interested in

²³ Resolution of Endorsement No. 932, City Council of the City of Tempe May 3, 1967, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum.

²⁴ Frank Connolly, "Tempe Historical Society to Form," *Tempe Daily News*, October 23, 1967.

²⁵ Frank Connolly, "Meeting Called to Form City Historical Society," *Tempe Daily News*, October 19, 1967.

preserving Tempe's history, held a preliminary organizational meeting at Arizona State University's Hayden Library.

Key speakers at the preliminary meeting, endorsing the formation of the Tempe Historical Society and providing counsel concerning its proposed functions, were Mayor Campbell, Richard Poynter, president of Tempe Chamber of Commerce, and Bert Fireman, one of the founders of the Arizona Historical Foundation and a member of the Tempe Beautiful Committee. Mayor Campbell asserted that the Tempe Historical Society would be a vital part of the centennial celebration and pledged the full cooperation of the City of Tempe. Mr. Poynter pledged the support of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, noting that the "Tempeans of today have an obligation to those who were here before us and those whom we precede to preserve the history of our culture to the best of our ability."²⁶ As a historian seeking to preserve Arizona's historical documents and the State Chairman for Arizona within the American Association for State and Local History, Bert Fireman gave his professional advice concerning the steps towards preserving historical documents, creating a museum and a research collection.²⁷

²⁶ Proceedings of the Tempe Historical Society Preliminary Organizational Meeting, October 25, 1967, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum.

²⁷ W.E. Marshall to Bert Fireman, letter, April 27, 1966, Bert Fireman Papers, Arizona Historical Foundation.

Fireman advised that a historical society has four major areas of undertaking: historical research establishing the home town facts based on documents and historical evidence; a museum with exhibits and displays; a program for restoring historic buildings, tours and education; and publishing scholarly works.²⁸ He suggested that the society must consider the main elements in Tempe's development as the basis for the museum displays. Fireman advised the society to include Tempe's Native American history, the development of agriculture, history of irrigation in the valley, and the Hayden family, founders of Tempe. Fireman emphasized the importance of research prior to starting a museum collection; he urged the attendees to take advantage of the county courthouse and the State Archives in order to obtain historical documents and warned against solely relying upon some elderly person's fading memory.²⁹ The outcome of the preliminary organizational meeting was the formation of a temporary Tempe Historical Society and selection of interim officers charged with creating a format for the society.

Pioneer families were identified among the temporary officers: Kemper Goodwin, chairman; Helen Harter, vice chairman; Dorothy Robinson, secretary; and Harvey McKemy, treasurer.³⁰ The temporary

²⁸ Proceedings, October 25, 1967, Tempe History Museum.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Minutes of Temporary Committee, December 7, 1967, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum.

committee met sporadically during the first year, mainly focusing on drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws for a permanent Tempe Historical Society. As advised by Bert Fireman, the committee studied charters from various organizations with similar purposes, selecting desirable features for their permanent organization.³¹ The Tempe Historical Society's articles of incorporation were officially certified by the Arizona Corporation Commission in May of 1969.

After becoming an incorporated organization, the society members elected officers and board members would be elected. Robert Enright, a native Tempean and a Tempe Police Officer, was elected as the society's first president. Enright was dedicated to the preservation of Tempe's past for future generations and hoped the historical society became an asset to the community.³² After coming into contact with the City of Tempe Centennial Committee, the Tempe Historical Society started collecting photographs and artifacts for display during the centennial celebration events. For the centennial events, the society decided to restore a historic house, the Farmer Goodwin House, and furnish it with articles used in homes in the early days of Tempe.³³ Following the society's successful

³¹ Minutes, December 7, 1967, Tempe History Museum.

³² Robert Enright, interview by Marie Rush, September 7, 1990, Interview OH-97, transcript, Tempe Oral History Project, Tempe History Museum.

³³ Tempe Historical Society Meeting Minutes, March 17, 1970, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum.

participation in the centennial events, the Tempe Historical Society shifted focus to its long-term goal of establishing a history museum.

The society's Chandler counterpart, the Chandler Historical Society, would take a completely different approach in creating a local historical society, immediately focusing on founding a history museum. Motivated by his vision of establishing a history museum in Chandler, City of Chandler Councilman Billy C. Speights single-handedly initiated the formation of the Chandler Historical Society. Speights, a Chandler businessman, was interested in the preservation of historic landmarks and artifacts, specifically artifacts of the pioneer families in the area. Prior to creating a temporary organization or rallying community members to bring forth items of historic importance, Speights wrote to Sidney Brinkerhoff, Arizona Historical Society Director. Speights sought the director's advice concerning the logistics of starting a local history museum, funding resources, and possible buildings to house a museum.

Brinkerhoff suggested starting a charter membership fund – a group of members who are actively interested in working with and fundraising for the museum. The next step, according to Brinkerhoff, was to begin collecting important artifacts for display in a museum. He further offered the assistance of his colleagues to get the museum on track, especially regarding the proper museum displays and cataloging

procedures.³⁴ Pierce A. Chamberlain, Arizona Historical Society's Curator for Museums, attended the first organizational meeting for the Chandler museum on April 23, 1969. According to Chamberlain, becoming a non-profit corporation and drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws are the first steps to creating a museum.³⁵ Chamberlain proposed the historic Chandler Firehouse as the most acceptable building for the museum. Concerning the collecting practices, he outlined the legal procedures regarding donations – each donor should sign a legal form rendering donated items museum property to be displayed or disposed at the society's discretion.³⁶

Chamberlain encouraged potential society members to join the American Association of State and Local History in order to receive quarterly journals, books, and pamphlets advising how to set up a museum. The initial members of the Chandler Historical Society were long-time Chandler residents and members of pioneer families. The society's first president, Bert Cummings, engaged in the construction business and was an avid collector of items relating to Chandler's

³⁴ Billy C. Speights to Sidney Brinkerhoff, letter, March 10, 1969, Chandler Historical Society; Sidney Brinkerhoff to Billy C. Speights, letter, March 13, 1969, Chandler Historical Society Collection, Chandler Museum.

³⁵ Chandler Historical Society Meeting Minutes, April 23 1969, Chandler Historical Society Collection, Chandler Museum.

³⁶ Minutes April 23, 1969, Chandler Museum.

history.³⁷ Cummings was one of the first people Speights approached regarding starting the historical museum and the two were integral members during the society's founding period.

Unlike the Tempe Historical Society which formed due to a centennial celebration or the Chandler Historical Society whose primary mission was the formation of a history museum, the Scottsdale Historical Society was created to save the 'Little Red Schoolhouse' from destruction after it was deemed beyond repair by city officials. The Scottsdale Historical Society was unofficially formed on July 11, 1968 and its members pledged to save the "Red Brick Schoolhouse."³⁸ The school house was constructed in 1909 and served as the Scottsdale Grammar School. By 1928, the town's population had outgrown the small red brick building and the school was converted to the Coronado School. Coronado School held first to third grade classes for Mexican-American students who had not yet mastered English. From the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, the building housed a number of municipal functions serving as the town hall, justice of peace court, and city library.³⁹ Following the library's move to the Civic Center Library, in 1968, the building was threatened with

³⁷ Walter Zipf, "Chandler's History Buffs Open Museum," *Sun Valley Spur-Shopper*, November 16, 1972.

³⁸ Jack Karie, "Red Schoolhouse Historical Panel to Fight for Building," *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, July 12, 1968.

³⁹ Historic Significance and Integrity Assessment Report for Listing Scottsdale Grammar School on the Scottsdale Historic Register, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

demolition as plans moved forward on the downtown redevelopment efforts. Long time Scottsdale residents led the community-wide support to save the building.

The preservation efforts were spearheaded by Mort Kimsey, Leldon Windes, and Clara Beauchamp; Kimsey and Windes were selected as society's co-chairmen at the formation meeting. Some of the founders had personal ties to the Red Brick Schoolhouse. Kimsey served on the first town council after Scottsdale incorporated in 1951, and became the town's second mayor, serving 1958 to 1962, while the schoolhouse served as the first town hall. Clara Beauchamp initiated the first lunch program for the Scottsdale schools in the 1920s when most children attended school at the Red Brick Schoolhouse. Beauchamp was named special coordinator of a petition drive to get additional signatures from individuals opposed to tearing down the schoolhouse.

The society saw the school house as one of the last buildings in Scottsdale which retained the heritage of the old West. Society members agreed to start a collection of old pictures and documents to be presented to the city council during opening ceremonies of the new city hall.⁴⁰ The Scottsdale Historical Society members collected over 1,500 signatures for their petition to save the school house. Society members presented the petition to the City Council, asserting that the school house was one of the

⁴⁰ Jack Karie, "Red Schoolhouse Historical Panel to Fight for Building," Scottsdale Daily Progress, July 12, 1968.

oldest buildings with a historical background left in the city.⁴¹ In their presentation to the City Council, the members further acknowledged their wish to use the brick school house as a repository for a collection of old pictures and artifacts that had been accumulated.

The Scottsdale Historical Society's petition drive to preserve the Little Red Schoolhouse was successful and the society initiated fundraisers to pay for the \$40,000 repairs to the school house. Society members were very innovative with their fundraising, employing various approaches to gaining donations: selling of 1,000 school slates to businessmen and residents; asking merchants to set aside a percentage of week's profits for the fund; and continually urging residents through various advertisements to support the fund.⁴² In the meantime, SHS had teamed up with the Chamber of Commerce to assist with the fundraising. Subsequently, the Chamber of Commerce secured a 25 year lease of the building from the City Council, further making sure that the building would not be torn down.

Mayor and the City Council approved Resolution No. 779 declaring the Scottsdale Historical Society, Inc. the official historical society of the City of Scottsdale on April 21, 1970. The City Council had determined that there was a need to record the city's historical events and decided to back

⁴¹ Bob Driscoll, "1,500 petition city council to save Old Schoolhouse," Scottsdale Daily Progress, November 16, 1969.

⁴² Associated Press, "School Saved Because Many Cared, Worked," Scottsdale Daily Progress, December 29, 1972.

the formation of the historical society.⁴³ While the initial organizational process reveals to what extent the historical societies had professional mentorship, the articles of incorporation and bylaws are an insight into the overall workings of a historical society.

Becoming Non-Profit Organizations

In 1969, Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale Historical Societies were formed as non-profit corporations under the laws of the State of Arizona. According to legal primers published by AASLH, a corporation is a separate legal entity created by and under the laws of the state. If a museum is incorporated, the corporation itself is liable for its actions and not the individuals involved.⁴⁴ Once incorporated, a nonprofit organization would have the power to purchase, hold, lease, improve, and sell property, to make contracts, to incur liabilities and to sue and be sued.⁴⁵ Bylaws of the corporation would determine the administration and regulations of its affairs. An incorporated museum would be managed by a board of directors; restrictions and liabilities would be imposed upon the board of directors by state corporate statutes and by common law relating to corporations.

⁴³ Minutes of Scottsdale City Council Meeting, April 21, 1970, City Council Chamber, Scottsdale, Arizona.

⁴⁴ Marilyn Phelan, *Museums and the law* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 5.

⁴⁵ Phelan, *Museums and the Law*, 5.

Nonprofit organizations in the United States are defined and regulated primarily under the federal tax code. They are self-governing organizations that do not distribute profits to their governing officers and are exempt from federal income taxes by virtue of being organized for public purposes. The non-profit status, however, does not prevent organizations from carrying on business profit that is necessary for their primary purpose. Regulation of nonprofits is fragmented – there is no central United States government agency that focuses solely on the oversight of nonprofits. At the national level, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the primary regulator of nonprofits and is charged with determining their legitimacy as tax-exempt entities and overseeing their activities. State governments oversee and regulate nonprofits that operate in their jurisdiction.⁴⁶

Nonprofit organizations that serve broad public purposes and are organized for educational, religious, scientific, literary, poverty relief, and other activities for the public benefit are eligible to apply for charitable status under section 501 (c)(3) of tax code.⁴⁷ All three societies asserted themselves as ‘educational’ organizations, thus were eligible to apply for exempt tax status under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code

⁴⁶ Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle, ed., *Nonprofits & Government: Collaboration & Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 2006), 3.

⁴⁷ Boris and Steuerle, *Nonprofits & Government*, 4.

of 1954. Charitable status permits organizations to receive tax-deductible contributions, an important incentive to encourage donations. Within the articles of incorporation, the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale Historical Societies assert their privileges and rights to carry out their daily business as outlined in the purpose for which the corporations were formed.⁴⁸

According to the 1969 Articles of Incorporation, the purpose of the Tempe Historical Society was to bring together people interested in history, especially Tempe community history, and to help citizens better appreciate their American heritage. The society's main function would be collecting any material which establishes or illustrates the history of the community, its development, and progress throughout the decades, etc.⁴⁹ Similarly, the purpose of Chandler Historical Society was to bring together those people interested in history, especially in the history of Chandler and its surrounding community, and promote an understanding and appreciation of American heritage. The society's main function would be to discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area, its development and activities in peace and in war,

⁴⁸ Articles of Incorporation of Tempe Historical Society, May 13, 1969, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum; Articles of Incorporation of Chandler Historical Society, March 5, 1970, Chandler Historical Society Collection, Chandler Museum; Articles of Incorporation of Scottsdale Historical Society, Inc., December 4, 1969, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

⁴⁹ Articles of Incorporation of Tempe Historical Society, May 13, 1969, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

etc.⁵⁰ Scottsdale Historical Society, Inc. was incorporated on December 4, 1969. "The object and purposes of the corporation are to establish and promote interest in the history of Scottsdale, and of Arizona and the Southwest part of the United States, and those areas and cultures which are part of the heritage of the Southwestern part of the United States."⁵¹

With the formalities of incorporation completed, the historical societies turned their attention to collecting artifacts and establishing museums. To accomplish this feat, however, the societies looked to museum associations and the state historical society for guidance. By the 1960s, there were several associations, including the American Association for State and Local History, offering mentorship to non-professional institutions through their "how-to" booklets and leaflets. Similarly, the Arizona Historical Society was working with newly formed historical societies to realize their vision of starting a local history museum.

National Trends in History

At the close of the nineteenth century, many states and communities, especially in the South and Midwest, gave evidence of their

⁵⁰ Articles of Incorporation of Chandler Historical Society, March 5, 1970, Chandler Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

⁵¹ Articles of Incorporation of Scottsdale Historical Society, Inc., December 4, 1969, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

concern for history by creating historical societies.⁵² To establish cohesive collecting and operating standards, the newly formed state and local historical societies merged their professional aspirations to initiate the formation of nationwide historical associations. In 1884, professional historians founded the American Historical Association (AHA) to establish professional standards for history training and research.

By 1904, the American Historical Association recognized the growing importance of the historical society movement by creating a Conference of State and Local Historical Societies, seeking to connect academic scholars to state and local history. Due to the continued growth of the historical society movement, the conference pushed for the development of an independent organization which could work exclusively for the benefit of historical societies. Professional historians, operating within state and local historical societies, forged a new alliance of popular and professional objectives and established the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).⁵³

Since its formation in 1940, the main objective of the American Association for State and Local History was to provide support to historical organizations throughout the United States. The association compiled lists

⁵² William T. Alderson, Jr., "The American Association for State and Local History," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 1, No. 2 (April 1970): 175 – 182.

⁵³ Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890–1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 209.

of local historians, encouraged the writing of state and local histories, and promoted workshops on these subjects. Most importantly, however, the association provided information on how to organize a historical society, mark historic spots, conduct historical tours, stage historical celebrations, and preserve historic buildings.⁵⁴ During the 1950s and 1960s, AASLH's focus shifted to bringing history to the lay public and professionalizing state and local historical societies.

The shift in focus was largely due to the fact that museums were criticized for their elitism and museum professionals responded by initiating programs that would bring in a more diverse constituency. Museum professionals began asking for community input in programs and exhibitions; the emphasis shifted from past to the present, from national to local history.⁵⁵ Through its technical publications, annual awards programs, seminars, and information services, the association attempted to stimulate individual and institutional efforts to promote public interest in local history.⁵⁶ To better understand what it took to establish a museum, the Tempe and Chandler Historical Societies joined AASLH, the state historical society, and other museum associations. The societies first became affiliated with Arizona Historical Society, followed by becoming

⁵⁴ Alderson, *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 176.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 8.

⁵⁶ Donna McDonald to Tempe Historical Society, letter, October 12, 1973, Tempe Historical Society Collection, Tempe History Museum.

members of the American Association for State and Local History, and finally sought membership with the American Association of Museums.

Partaking in National Standards

Prior to starting a museum, Tempe Historical Society members sought assistance from the Arizona Historical Society. The second society president Dr. Ross Rice, former City Councilman and Mayor, spearheaded the affiliation initiative by having Sidney Brinkerhoff, Arizona Historical Society Director, come to Tempe and view the society's collection. At Brinckerhoff's request, Rice attended the Arizona Historical Society Annual Meeting, November 13, 1971. At the meeting, Rice spoke about the programs and activities of the Tempe Historical Society and gave a formal verbal request that the society obtain affiliate status.⁵⁷ The Tempe Historical Society became a new affiliate of the Arizona Historical Society on November 16, 1971; the membership included subscription to the Journal of Arizona History, society newsletter, and copies of the state historical society's bylaws, constitution, and annual report.⁵⁸

The Arizona Historical Society and its curators played a vital role throughout the formation of the Chandler. The Chandler Historical Society took advantage of the various programs and workshops AHS offered.

⁵⁷ Sidney B. Brinckerhoff to Ross R. Rice, letter, October 27, 1971, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

⁵⁸ Minutes, September 21, 1971, Tempe Historical Society; Arizona Historical Society to Tempe Historical Society, letter, November 16, 1971, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museums.

Several society members attended AHS workshop on cataloging and museum procedures. Chamberlain supplied CHS with a copy of the state historical society's donor release form and copies of bylaws of other historical societies in the region. The society members would later implement the procedures as they initiated the cataloging of artifacts.⁵⁹

Chamberlain encouraged the Chandler Historical Society to join the American Association of State and Local History in order to receive quarterly journals, books, and pamphlets providing advice on exhibit displays and collection management. While the Chandler Historical Society did not immediately seek AASLH membership, Speights did take Chamberlain's advice and contacted the association asking them to send "The Management of Small Historical Museums" booklet.⁶⁰

The Chandler Historical Society members voted to make the society president an individual member of the American Association for State and Local History.⁶¹ The Tempe Historical Society followed a similar model, making the society's president, at the time Ross Rice, an individual

⁵⁹ Chandler Historical Society Annual Report, January 1976, Chandler Historical Society collection, Chandler Museum.

⁶⁰ Billy C. Speights to American Association of State and Local History, letter, April 30, 1969, Chandler Historical Society collection, Chandler Museum.

⁶¹ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Chandler Historical Society, September 10, 1973, Chandler Historical Society collection, Chandler Museum.

member of the American Association for State and Local History.⁶²

Institutional memberships were expensive and not something the societies could afford; individual membership was more affordable and came with similar benefits. Individual members were eligible to receive the various publications and technical leaflets, have opportunity to attend regional and national workshops and seminars, and have access to an expansive network of history professionals.

One of the benefits of being a professional or institutional member of AASLH was receiving free copies of its various publications. AASLH provided its members with technical leaflets dealing with subjects affecting museums such as: historical research; problems of caring for and exhibiting museum objects; restoration and maintenance of historic buildings; techniques of public relations and publicity; and the collection and use of museum objects.⁶³ Both the Tempe and Chandler organizations took advantage of this initiative and used AASLH's publications to create their exhibit displays.

Creating Museums

The Tempe Historical Museum opened to the public on May 17, 1972 in the east portion of the Tempe Public Library. The society sought

⁶² Ross Rice to Peggy Burton, letter, October 14, 1972, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

⁶³ Alderson, *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 180 – 181.

to show how people lived in Tempe, from the 1870s to 1920s. Similar to the displays in a house museum, it exhibited its collection in a series of recreated rooms, including a kitchen, dining room, and living room/parlor. The society obtained furnishings that had been used in the home of Charles Trumbull Hayden as well as the Old Settler's Society photograph collection – these collections were greatly used within the reconstructed period rooms. Aside from the room displays, the museum had a series of vignettes on such topics as Dr. Moeur's medical instruments.⁶⁴ The exhibit labels largely focused on who had owned the objects and did not provide a historical context or an overview of Tempe history.

In 1972, the Tempe Historical Society was able to hire its first director, Peggy Burton, on a part-time basis with a salary grant from the City of Tempe. According to Burton, the displays were a "little more than open storage...it tells you very little except that it's being preserved." Burton saw the need for collection improvement and better collection storage. Burton specifically noted the need for better storage for oral history tape collection as well as the slide collection. She asserted that the society needed a collection management policy, drafted by the executive board or the museum committee, setting forth the society's policy on what to accept and which items were pertinent to its purpose.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, it

⁶⁴ Mary Ann Kwilosz, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, October 15, 2011.

⁶⁵ Peggy Burton to Tom Paty, letter, February 20, 1974, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

would take another ten years for the Tempe Historical Museum to have a collection policy and its creation was spurred by the impending transfer of museum operation to the City of Tempe.

The Chandler Museum opened its doors on November 19, 1972 at the old Fire Station building. The Chandler Historical Society moved in under an arrangement with the City of Chandler to lease the space for \$1.00 a year for five years.⁶⁶ Prior to the opening, the building required various repairs and renovations to make the space suitable to exhibit displays. President Speights once again brought in Pierce Chamberlain, as a consultant to advise how best to utilize the space in the Fire Station. Chamberlain suggested removing all interior partitions in the large room and leaving the two smaller rooms for storage.⁶⁷ The City of Chandler allowed CHS to salvage items from an old courthouse for use in the new space. This alleviated some expenses since they recovered a steel door, lumber, display cases, and other items that could be used to refurbish the fire station. Simultaneously, society members sought out historical photographs and artifacts from Chandler area residents for their displays.

Due to a lack of storage space, the vast majority of the Chandler Historical Society's collection was on display, including newly donated items. According to board minutes from January 14, 1974, the society

⁶⁶ Walter Zipf, "Chandler's History Buffs Open Museum," *Sun Valley Spur-Shopper*, November 16, 1972.

⁶⁷ Board Meeting Minutes, October 7, 1970, Chandler Historical Society collection, Chandler Museum.

received club year books and needlework which they immediately sought to exhibit.⁶⁸ If the society had its entire collection on view, then there was not much room for a cohesive storyline or interpretation. This means that each case display told its own anecdote and the cases as a whole were disjointed.

Unlike the Tempe and Chandler Historical Societies who were able to procure a museum in 1972, the Scottsdale Historical Society did not have a museum until 1983. In 1982, the United Cable Company went to the City Council with a proposal to convert the Loloma School site into their office space. Prior to the hearing, the company had arranged for the Scottsdale Historical Society to obtain space within their new building. The Scottsdale Historical Society received between 500 and 600 sq. ft. of office space and would be able to have display cases in the lobby. The Scottsdale City Council placed a condition on the lease that the development of the Loloma School site should be in conformance with all provisions of the historical society.⁶⁹

Due to space and storage constrictions, the society mainly displayed photographs at the Loloma School site. Similar to Tempe and Chandler museums, the Scottsdale Historical Society displays focused on what it was like living in Scottsdale. The displays presented early

⁶⁸ Board Meeting Minutes, January 14, 1974, Chandler Historical Society collection, Chandler Museum.

⁶⁹ Minutes of Scottsdale City Council Meeting, May 4, 1982, City Council Chamber, Tempe, Arizona.

pioneers of Scottsdale, specifically Winfield Scott, and topics such as citrus and cotton growing in Scottsdale. The society's main focus was to educate museum visitors about the history of Scottsdale, Arizona, and the southwest.⁷⁰

Motivation behind founding a local historical society comes in many different forms: at times it is the work of a single individual who fires the imaginations of his colleagues, such is the case of the Chandler Historical Society; on the other hand, the enthusiasm and historical fervor surrounding centennial celebrations has prompted the formation of many historical societies, like the Tempe Historical Society; and fighting to preserve historical buildings has spurred many individuals into action, like those who formed the Scottsdale Historical Society. While the reasons behind forming a historical society initially differed, the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale historical societies were similar due to their goal to open city history museums. Once the three organizations reached their goal, they were plagued by the lack of exhibit and storage space for their quickly accumulating collection. Their search for permanence – a permanent museum, collection, and status in their community – would once again take them on different paths.

⁷⁰ JoAnn Handley, interview by author, Scottsdale, AZ, September 12, 2011.

CHAPTER 2

SEARCH FOR PERMANENCE

The nationwide influx of historians into museums, curatorial and interpretive positions in particular, did not occur until the 1970s. The reason behind this is three fold. Primarily, government aid created more opportunities in the museum field, leading to history and American studies graduates to apply for museum positions. Simultaneously, the rise of social history narrowed the distance separating historians of the academy from historians who practiced their craft in museums. In addition, the new museum historians brought with them a strong commitment to public education, creating an influx of educators into the museum field.

These trends were reinforced by the policies of the National Endowment for the Humanities. During the 1960s and 1970s, the endowment became a major force in the financing of museum exhibitions and other public programs. Grant receiving institutions were required to seek the advice of academic consultants; this forced museums and historical societies to use the best and most recent humanities scholarship.⁷¹ The Tempe and Chandler Historical Societies followed the

⁷¹ Gary Kulik, "Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present," in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, ed., Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 27 -28.

national trends and hired historians, who in turn attempted to professionalize the two museums.

By the 1980s, both the Tempe and Chandler Historical Societies, began to receive funding from the local city governments. Starting in 1979, the City of Chandler began to provide funds for the Chandler Museum. The City contributed about 40 percent of the budget with a \$13,325 commitment by 1982.⁷² With a more stable source of funding, even if at this point the funding was partial, the Chandler Historical Society was able to hire a curator. Aside from hiring a professional staff member, the financial aid the City of Chandler provided was further used for new projects and programs.

In 1986, the Chandler Historical Society hired its first curator, Scott Solliday, to oversee day to day workings of the museum. Solliday was a graduate from Arizona State University's history program and starting his Master of Arts degree in Public History when he joined CHS staff. Solliday was the first to attempt to professionalize the museum. According to Solliday's assessment of the museum collection and exhibits, "the Chandler Historical Society had a large, comprehensive collection which was unorganized, poorly displayed, and had little or no documentation."⁷³

⁷² Associated Press, "Chandler Museum to Open After 4 Month Remodeling," *The Phoenix Gazette*, October 2 1987.

⁷³ Curator's Report, March 1987, Chandler Historical Society paper, Chandler Museum.

Solliday assessed the exhibition displays as overcrowded and having little topical or chronological arrangement.

Solliday further assessed the Chandler Museum as having a passive existence for many years, largely due to an inexperienced Board of Directors unprepared to plan and implement policies regarding the future growth of the museum. Solliday identified several changes as remedy to the lack of planning: revising the by-laws; establishing a statement of purpose and collection policy; regularly scheduling board meetings; recruiting new members willing to help with the operation of the museum; and identifying tasks that could be done by volunteers. He further established a need for a more focused mission and accessions policy that more accurately portrayed the history of Chandler.⁷⁴ Aside from improving the organizational structure, Solliday also set his sight on revitalizing the museum exhibits.

For its 1987 season, the Chandler Museum had an array of new exhibits. Due to Chandler's 75th anniversary, a section of the museum was devoted to photographs, documents, and memorabilia regarding the city's founding by Dr. Alexander J. Chandler. The museum featured galleries designed to replicate historic Chandler buildings. There were period rooms, such as: the interior of a barn at the turn of the century, including ranching and farming tools; Morrison Grocery Store, regarded as the first store in Chandler; and San Marcos guest room, focusing on tourism in

⁷⁴ Curator's Report, March 1987, Chandler Museum.

Chandler.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the fire station was not a suitable location for a museum due to a lack of exhibit and storage space as well as maintenance issues such as a leaky roof. The society, therefore, continued searching for a new space for its museum.

The City of Chandler and the Chandler Historical Society signed a lease agreement for the old library building, across the courtyard from the Chandler Public Library, in 1989. The society boasted that the story of Chandler and Arizona came to life at the Chandler Museum. Even though the society changed buildings, the majority of exhibit displays remained the same. There was a replica of a tent house used by early settlers, a case display of artifacts of prehistoric southwestern Native Americans, and a scale model of Chandler's downtown plaza as it appeared in 1920. A display of various farm equipment presented farming and ranching in the Chandler district; while a series of period rooms portraying the San Marcos Hotel, the Bank of Chandler, and the Morrison Grocery Store offered a peek into Chandler as it was in 1913.⁷⁶

Similar to the Chandler Historical Society, the Tempe Historical Society hired professional staff members who attempted to bring more programming to the museum. By the 1980s, the Tempe Historical Society had hired two staff members, a museum assistant and docent coordinator,

⁷⁵ Dee Anne Thomas, "Museum Opens With New Look," *Chandler Independent*, October 6, 1987.

⁷⁶ Chandler Museum: A Journey into the Past Brochure, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

to work alongside the museum director. THS was able to hire three staff members because the City of Tempe was paying for the personnel budget; this included salary, payroll taxes, and health insurance for each employee. While exhibit displays within the museum remained largely the same, still focusing on period rooms and vignettes, the staff did increase the museum's outreach and programming endeavors. With a docent coordinator on staff, the museum saw an increase in guided tours as well as outreach programs to local schools, such as Tempe and Corona del Sol high schools. Aside from outreach programs, the museum was able to expand beyond its walls. The staff installed exhibits within outside locations, such as the Pyle Adult Recreation Center, ASU Memorial Union, and Mill Avenue Merchants' Association Fair.⁷⁷

The director Susan Wilcox was able to obtain grants from state and federal agencies for society projects, including the Arizona Folk Fair and the Tempe Community Survey. The Arizona Folk Fair was held at the Petersen House grounds, featuring living folk traditions in Arizona. The endeavor was a joint venture between the historical society and the Department of English at Arizona State University, and funded by the Arizona Humanities Council. The Tempe Community Survey was a collaborative project between Janus Associates, Inc., and the Tempe Historical Society, and funded by a grant from the Arizona State Historic

⁷⁷ Tempe Historical Museum Summary of Annual Report 1980-81, April 20, 1981, Tempe Historical Society papers, Tempe History Museum.

Preservation Office. Phase I of the survey (1980-1981) involved identifying more than 350 buildings and structures in Tempe that exhibited potential historical and/or architectural significance.⁷⁸ Phase II (1982-1983) involved research and documentation of the 150 most significant resources. More than a dozen volunteers completed most of the research under the direction of Museum Director Susan Wilcox. The research collection that was compiled as a result of this project includes individual files on 158 historic properties. The project signified the museum's interest in not only preserving Tempe's artifacts and documents but the city's historic buildings and architecture as well. Wilcox further spearheaded the planning and designing of a new museum facility.

Road to City Incorporation

In 1983, plans for a new museum were finally being discussed as the Tempe Historical Society formed a Planning Committee and started meeting with Council members. According to the initial meetings, City Council was interested in a city-operated museum with the society's assistance. Society members were unsure what their role would be if the City took over the operation of the museum – some members pointed out that THS role would be only an advisory one if the museum was a city

⁷⁸ Tempe Historical Museum Annual Report 1980-81, April 20, 1981, Tempe History Museum.

facility.⁷⁹ Even though arguments sprang up regarding the society's future role, the members did unanimously decide to hire a consultant and do a museum planning study. The goal of the study was to give the City of Tempe a better idea of space and facility requirements the society's collection mandated.

With the guidance of the Janus Associates and Gerald A. Doyle & Associates, the Tempe Historical Society prepared a Planning Study Report outlining the society's opinion about the future direction and commitment required in moving toward the reality of a new historical museum. The report deemed the 4,000 sq. ft. space in the Tempe Public Library, where the museum was located, as inadequate for exhibits and object storage. The report further made several recommendations regarding the exhibits, education, research, publications, and media productions that could be available to the visitors of the new museum.

The consultants envisioned the exhibits being split into three sections: an orientation exhibit presenting an overview of Tempe's history; a rotating exhibit space that would be switched out every two years and focus on community themes such as "Hayden's Mills: The Story of Flour in Arizona"; and a short-term exhibit serving as a traveling exhibit space.⁸⁰

The report further called for the operation of the museum to be overseen

⁷⁹ Tempe Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, March 3, 1981, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

⁸⁰ Tempe Historical Society, "Tempe Historical Museum Planning Study Report, 1983," Tempe Historical Society papers, Tempe History Museum.

by a nine member 'Museum Advisory Board' with representation from the historical society. The report, however, did not directly expand the museum's definition of community and did not recommend that the society incorporate the experiences of minority groups in Tempe. This omission is surprising as the 1983 report refers to social history – social history encourages the study of various groups previously overlooked by historians. Following the society's presentation of the planning study to the City Council, there was no immediate work towards obtaining a new museum. The council, however, did take steps to transfer the existing museum under city operation and create an advisory board.

The Tempe Historical Society realized early on that funding a new museum facility would be nearly impossible without a stable income. The fact that the City of Tempe funded the museum's employees further pointed to its inability to solely finance the endeavor. The society sought out a more substantial funding source and approached the City of Tempe to take over the museum operation. The Tempe Historical Society and the City of Tempe signed a Memorandum of Understanding on June 1, 1984 transferring the ownership of the Tempe Historical Museum to the City. The museum was integrated into the Community Services Department.⁸¹ Per recommendation outlined in the society's planning study, the contract created a nine member Museum Advisory Board with representation from

⁸¹ Memorandum of Understanding, June 1, 1984, Tempe Historical Society papers, Tempe History Museum.

THS. The legal ownership of the collection was not part of the contract, this would happen at a later date. The title to the collection of historical objects, documents, and photographs remained with the historical society; while the care, control, and exhibition of the collection, however, were entrusted to the city.

The parties envisioned the creation of an expanded and enhanced Tempe Historical Museum facility adequate and sufficient to service the present and prospective community needs.⁸² The museum facility would be included within the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program, per City of Tempe agreement included within the contract. According to the agreement, the society's existing employees would be hired on a 120-day contract after which the city would decide whether or not to hire them as city employees. The City of Tempe opted not to hire the museum director, Susan Wilcox, or the two part-time employees. This move signaled the fact that the Tempe Historical Society was no longer in charge of its museum.

In 1985, the City of Tempe purchased a building in downtown Tempe for the new historical museum. The members of the historical society publicly protested the use of the building for the new museum, arguing that it offered inadequate space. The fact that the Museum Advisory Board was not consulted about the purchase further insulted the

⁸² Memorandum of Understanding, June 1, 1984, Tempe History Museum.

historical society. The City of Tempe had chosen the downtown location because its central location would increase museum visitation. The Tempe Historical Society held its ground asserting that the building interior was not designed for a museum and the lack of available parking would stifle museum visitation.⁸³ The following year plans for a new museum were finally underway due to the passage of a bond that approved the construction of a new library and the conversion of the existing library building into a museum.

In 1985, the City of Tempe passed a \$12 million bond to pay for the construction of a new public library and to convert the old 36,000 square foot library into the new history museum building. In the meantime, the City hired Mary Ellen Conaway as the Tempe Historical Museum's new full-time director. Conaway had a doctorate degree in anthropology, and taught and published on museum studies. After accepting the position, Conaway immediately started making changes to the museum, referring to its exhibits as an "antique shop" that lacked interpretation. The first of Conaway's efforts was a display on Arizona State University titled "Reading, Writing, and Restrictions"; the exhibit examined rules that students had to follow. As a museum professional, she sought to improve the institution, creating new displays, documenting artifacts, and reorganizing the collection storage. When Conaway attempted to revitalize

⁸³ Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, June 4, 1989, Tempe Historical Society papers, Tempe History Museum.

the gift shop, which was still under the society's domain per the museum transfer agreement, she perhaps overstepped her boundaries. Her relationship with the historical society and the Museum Advisory Board was strained, leading her to resign in 1987.⁸⁴

The construction of the new library building was completed in 1989, making way for the renovation of the old library building to commence. During the building phase, lasting approximately a year and a half, there was a temporary space in the new library for the staff and gift shop.⁸⁵ In preparation for construction and exhibit planning, the city hired Dr. Amy Douglass as the Museum Administrator. Dr. Douglass, like Conaway, was a professional and had a doctorate degree in anthropology. Dr. Douglass, along with volunteers and some staff, had to pack up the collection and get ready for the move. At that point, there were three part time staff (curatorial aides) and she had to hire two full time staff members. The collection was moved to the Rural School; most of the objects were already stored at this site.

Dr. Douglass came on board at the tail end of the architectural design for the reconstruction and did not have much influence on particular architectural plans for the building. Exhibit planning was a

⁸⁴ Danielle Mariano, *The Changing Face of Museums: An Exploration of the American Museum's Fascination with its Audience*, (Arizona State University 2006), 108.

⁸⁵ Tempe Historical Society Board Meeting Minutes, January 10, 1989, Tempe Historical Society collection, Tempe History Museum.

separate project from the renovation, due to two separate bonds, and was largely planned by Vincent Ciulla Designs. The storyline of the permanent exhibit and concept development was largely guided by Vincent Ciulla Design who came up with a people, places, and events framework, using a traditional chronological approach.⁸⁶ The designers wanted to create a comprehensive picture of Tempe, from its early settlement to its sudden twentieth century growth.

The transfer of the title to the collection from the Tempe Historical Society to the City of Tempe occurred during a grand opening reception on June 24th, 1991. The newly opened Tempe Historical Museum featured a permanent gallery, flanked by two temporary gallery spaces. The permanent exhibit displayed Tempe's history starting with an archaeological dig featuring the story of the Hohokam. The story next picked up with Charles Trumbull Hayden and the Anglo settlement. The rest of the displays chronologically assessed Tempe's history, focusing on important figures and events. The exhibit finished its story in the 1970s with a contemporary kitchen display.

The display cases were inserted within the temporary wall structure and circled a large river model. The focal point of the river model was the Salt River with building models lining the river banks. The various buildings, such as Hohokam huts and the Hayden Flour Mill, alluded to central events to Tempe's history. The permanent exhibit omitted much of

⁸⁶ Amy Douglass, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, August 8, 2011.

Tempe's history as it spotlighted the Anglo story and excluded the stories of minority groups that lived in Tempe since its founding.

Strategic Planning for a Chandler Museum

The Chandler Historical Societies search for a permanent museum would prove to be more contentious than that of its Tempe counterpart. The need for a new museum in downtown Chandler was studied for almost thirty years. The Chandler Museum was the fifth of five priorities established in 1982 by the Civic Center Citizens Task Force's report "Master Plan for Chandler's Civic Center – Mix of Functions and Space Needs."⁸⁷ The planning process, however, was not initiated until 1987 when the Mayor and City Council of Chandler established the Mayor's Museum Advisory Task Force. The task force was charged with making recommendations to the City Council regarding the effort to expand and relocate the museum from its present site. The task force advised that the operation and management of the museum should be a joint effort between the City of Chandler and the Chandler Historical Society.

The Museum Advisory Board saw the Chandler Museum as having the purpose of preserving the history of the Chandler area pre- and post-1912 with memorabilia and artifacts from all facets of life. The advisory board further advised that the museum building should be owned by the

⁸⁷ Final Report Chandler Museum Mayor's Museum Advisory Task Force, October 22, 1987, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

City of Chandler and located in downtown Chandler on city-owned property, while the finances for the maintenance and operation of the museum were a blend of public and private funding.⁸⁸ The board saw the relocation of the museum as two-fold: short term interim and long term permanent locations. At that point, the move to the former public library building was seen as the temporary location; however, the Chandler Museum was still at its 'short term' location ten years later.

In 1998, Chandler Museum Curator Al Wiatr and the Chandler Historical Society Board of Directors prepared a plan for a future museum aimed to serve as a promotional tool for the construction of a new museum building. The plan set out to clarify the relationship between the Chandler Museum and the City of Chandler. The society envisioned the new museum as a 25,000 square foot facility; the increased space would allocate for more exhibit space as well as more storage and workspace. Their suggestion was to rename the museum the Chandler Heritage Museum with a focus on Chandler's history, pre-history, cultural events and a section on the impact and history of electronics industry. The public space would be separated into three sections: permanent, changing, and electronics exhibits.

Aside from the society's vision for a new, larger space the business plan did not seem to bring many new ideas exhibit-wise. The proposed

⁸⁸ Chandler Museum Mayor's Museum Advisory Task Force, October 22, 1987, Chandler Museum.

permanent exhibit would consist of expanded existing exhibits such as the tent house, Morrison Grocery, agriculture, and Hohokam displays. The plan did outline two new exhibits. The first exhibit would present “the complete history of Chandler” – nonetheless, this complete history would mainly focus on Dr. A.J. Chandler’s story. The second exhibit would concentrate on the people of the area, exploring “how Anglos, Mexican-Americans, the Pima and Maricopa, blacks, and the Yaquis of Hightown interacted with one another and how they contributed to the community.”⁸⁹ The permanent exhibit, in short, was planned to be a series of displays rather than a cohesive unit presenting Chandler history in a chronological or thematic manner. A year later, the Chandler Museum Advisory Board hired Nancy Dallett, a Public Historian from the Arizona State University, to do a comprehensive study of the Chandler Museum and make suggestions regarding a new facility and exhibit content.

The Chandler Public History Master Plan, prepared by Dallett, made three major recommendations: for the City to hire a Public Historian; to commit to create museums and attractions, including Chandler Museum in the downtown area; the City commit to projects to increase civic identity, historic preservation, and cultural and heritage tourism. The Chandler Museum Advisory Board was unanimous in its support for hiring a Public Historian, establishing prominent space for the Chandler Museum in

⁸⁹ Plan for a Permanent Chandler Museum, April 21, 1998, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

downtown, providing a secondary small Chandler Museum operation at Tumbleweed Park, creating a small, high quality exhibit on the first floor of the new city hall, and relocating the Arizona Railway Museum to Tumbleweed Park.⁹⁰

In her plan, Dallett suggested that the City should continue traditional venues for history like museums, but should also create new ways of communicating the lessons of the past. These different venues included community partnering projects, websites, oral history projects, television shows, and a historic marker program. The public history plan argued for more than a series of “friendly bronzes” that commemorate or commercialize the past. It hinged on revealing the historical significance of its rural western past and its evolving contemporary high tech identity. The plan refrained from presenting the past as completed, isolated, or obscured from the present; rather, it offered a way to understand Chandler’s history as a process of change through time.⁹¹

The Public History Master Plan was the first real step towards a new Chandler Museum. The plan put forward the idea that the Chandler Historical Society sought to build a 25,000 square foot museum. The Mayor and City Council unanimously approved the Chandler Public History Master Plan on October 14, 1999. Nonetheless, in a bond issue election in 2000 the voters did not approve a request for \$5 million to build

⁹⁰ Chandler Public History Master Plan, 1999, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

⁹¹ Public History Master Plan, 1999, Chandler Museum.

a Chandler Museum. Parts of the plan did come into fruition as the City of Chandler hired a Public Historian in 2003. The process to realize the vision of a museum would start again in 2004, when the Chandler Museum Advisory Board initiated Phase I Strategic Planning in time for a 2004 bond election.

Continued Search for a Permanent Site

While the Tempe Historical Museum was incorporated into the City of Tempe and Chandler Historical Society was working towards a new museum, the Scottsdale Historical Society was struggling to obtain a space to display its collection. By the end of 1984, the United Cable Company had asked the Scottsdale Historical Society to move out of the Loloma School. Once again the society was searching for a permanent location. On April 15, 1985 the City Council authorized the staff of Scottsdale Public Library to enter an agreement with the SHS for interim, joint use of the Southwest Room in the Civic Center Library.⁹² The library agreed to provide, free of charge, office and display spaces for the society in the Southwest Room. The City Council authorized expenditure of \$6,200 from the capital improvement bond fund to cover the cost for a

⁹² Mayor and City Council from Community Services/Library, memorandum, March 16, 1987, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

partial wall, a door, and carpeting in the mezzanine that secured an area to be used as an interim site for the Scottsdale Historical Society.⁹³

While at the library, the Scottsdale Historical Society had a variety of exhibits on the life in Scottsdale, including displays on Winfield Scott, a timeline of Scottsdale history, and display cases focused on Scottsdale resorts. Space constrictions prevented the society from displaying artifacts and they continued to rely on photographs to tell the story of early Scottsdale. Meanwhile, the society continued to expand its collection; a donation of photographs, newspaper clippings, and documents from the Chamber of Commerce further improved their holdings. The society members were attempting to promote archival filing procedures and sought out the expertise from Arizona Historical Society's professional staff. With the Chamber of Commerce leaving the Little Red Schoolhouse building, the society members decided to send in a proposal to the City of Scottsdale.

On March 18, 1991, the City Council approved a resolution allowing for the use of City-owned property by non-City groups that are non-profit organizations. The Scottsdale Historical Society submitted an application and obtained a lease to utilize the Little Red Schoolhouse. According to the lease provisions, SHS would rent the Little Red Schoolhouse for \$1 per year. The lease required the Scottsdale Historical Museum to open its

⁹³ Mayor to Community Services, memorandum, March 16, 1987, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

doors to the public by November 1, 1991 and continue to be available to the public a minimum of five days a week. The City requested the historical society to provide annual financial and performance reports. The City agreed to reimburse SHS up to \$10,000 for utilities the first year, with the reimbursement being reduced by 10% each year.⁹⁴

Prior to moving into the Little Red Schoolhouse, the Scottsdale Historical Society consulted Mike Carman, director of Arizona Capitol Museum, regarding museum organization. Carman gave SHS's museum committee many ideas on how to approach putting together museum exhibits. He further advised the society to purchase literature on the preservation of historical items. The lease agreement was amended in 1997 to include free admission to the Scottsdale Historical Museum.⁹⁵ This also led to the City agreeing to pay for the museum's water and utilities in order to alleviate some of the financial burden. The society's expenses barely kept up with their expenditures and the increasing utility expenses made it difficult to maintain a positive cash flow.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Agreement No. 900122 with Scottsdale Historical Society to Lease the Little Red Schoolhouse, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

⁹⁵ Lease Agreement No. 900122A with the Scottsdale Historical Society, May 19, 1997, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

⁹⁶ Lease Agreement No. 900122A, May 19, 1997, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

Once the Scottsdale Historical Society moved into the Little Red Schoolhouse, they improved and enhanced their displays, including the introduction of an audio system. According to an annual report given to the City Council, SHS added eight monthly educational programs and initiated the Scottsdale Oral History project. All of this was done with volunteers, with the exception of a consultant who managed the volunteer docent program. The City Council noted that the society had become a positive force in the community due to its efforts to educate visitors on Scottsdale's history. Examples of the society's community outreach include: off-site presentations to schools; walking tour of old town and Scottsdale mall; three educational programs for City Cable 7; host for bi-monthly Scottsdale Historic Resources Preservation Task Force; and storing original documents related to the City's Scottsdale History Project.⁹⁷

In their search for a permanent museum, the Tempe and Chandler Historical Societies recognized their inability to fund a new facility without outside aid. Both of the historical societies turned to their local city governments for help. The Tempe Historical Society transferred its museum and collection to the City of Tempe; in turn, the society finally realized its goal of having an adequate facility for the Tempe Historical Museum. In the meantime, the Chandler Historical Society created a stronger relationship with the City of Chandler and began planning for a

⁹⁷ Lease Agreement No. 900122A, May 19, 1997, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

new Chandler Museum facility. The road to obtaining a new facility proved to be troublesome for the Chandler Historical Society. By the start of the strategic planning in 1999, ten years after moving into its temporary location within the former Chandler Library building, the Chandler Historical Society seemed to be on its way to finally obtaining a new facility. After moving from building to building, the Scottsdale Historical Society finally reached its goal of having a museum in the Little Red Schoolhouse. The Scottsdale Historical Society continued to operate the historical museum without City of Scottsdale funding; the city did, however, continue to lease the building to the society for \$1 per year and pay for the exterior maintenance. The upcoming transformations would perhaps have most effect on the founding historical societies. The renovation of the Tempe Historical Museum forced the Tempe Historical Society to revitalize its mission. The Chandler Historical Society transferred museum operation to the City of Chandler and a struggle ensued over an upcoming collection transfer.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY MUSEUM

The mission of the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale history museums is to portray the history of their local community. How did the three museums define community? A community is essentially self-determined, depending on a variety of criteria and is usually dependant on individual perceptions. Most often museums define their communities by location, seeing themselves as working within and for a geographical place whether it is a region, city, town, or rural district.⁹⁸ In reality, however, the notion of community is much more complex because not everyone sees themselves as belonging to the place in which they currently live. This means that even locally-oriented, community museums must simultaneously introduce universal themes such as diversity or ethnic cultures to attain a wider audience. To properly represent their community in its entirety, museums must move away from source communities.

“Source communities” refers to the original communities from which artifacts were collected as well as their descendants today. The relationship between source communities and museums has shifted to a two-way process. Museums are returning information about historic artifacts to source communities and in turn source communities are

⁹⁸ Watson, *Museums and Their Communities*, 7.

recording their perspectives on the continuing meanings of those artifacts.⁹⁹ The existence of a single source community is evident when looking at beginning of the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale Historical Societies. When the Tempe Historical Museum opened in 1991 with main hall focused on the Anglo-settler story, it became apparent that the museum was still continuing to serve its source community.

Following the opening of the Tempe Historical Museum in 1991, members of Tempe's Mexican-American community, who lived in the San Pablo barrio, approached the museum staff and pointed out that the exhibits omitted the fact that there was a Hispanic community alongside the Hayden settlement. The museum failed to represent the Tempe community in its entirety. The fact that the Tempe Historical Museum was part of the city government and funded by taxpayer contributions further escalated the issue of non-representation. To address the issue, the curators organized an advisory group, known as the Tempeanos Historicos, to serve as the authority for a new exhibit on the Hispanic community in Tempe.¹⁰⁰ Many of the individuals who initially approached the museum regarding the exclusion of Mexican-American history became members of the Tempeanos Historicos. The Tempeanos Historicos and Tempe Historical Museum staff formed an advisory board for the first

⁹⁹ Alison Brown and Laura Peers, "Museums and Source Communities," in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2007), 519.

¹⁰⁰ John Akers, interview by author, Glendale, AZ, June 13, 2011.

temporary exhibit on Hispanic history titled *Barrios*. The *Barrios* exhibit opened in 1994 under the curation of Curator of History, Scott Solliday. The exhibit featured artifacts dealing with the migration of Hispanic families to Tempe as well as the story behind the fate of the San Pablo neighborhood.¹⁰¹ Solliday, who previously worked for the Chandler Museum, had written about Hispanic migration to Tempe for his Master's thesis and was able to bring forth his expertise to the museum. The exhibit was the first step towards the Tempe Historical Museum becoming a community history museum. According to Dr. Amy Douglass

“That really opened our eyes. It was pretty incredible when that exhibit opened, just the number of people that came to see that exhibit and whole families came. He [Solliday] had laid out the genealogies along one wall of some of the major families. You would see grandmothers with their grandkids talking about people and telling stories. It was at that point that we realized that, number one, we were not representing the community very well with the permanent exhibit and, secondly, just the power behind community history and what can happen when you start involving people within their own history.”¹⁰²

The museum followed the *Barrios* exhibit with several other Hispanic themed displays. The museum continued to do a project with the Hispanic community each year. For example, *La Familia* exhibit led to the Family History Album project. As part of the project, descendants of the earliest Hispanic families created the family history albums to provide a glimpse into the experiences of many of the Mexican-American families

¹⁰¹ Mariano, *The Changing Face of Museums*, 116.

¹⁰² Amy Douglass, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, August 8, 2011.

that have settled in Tempe since 1870. Each album contained copies of historic photographs and documents, family trees, and information on each family's history. Nevertheless these temporary exhibits were small fixes and the museum was continuously criticized that these communities were an afterthought.¹⁰³

The Tempe Historical Museum modified its vision and mission statement to incorporate a focus on a wider community history. According to the revised mission statement, the museum was guided by a “general philosophy of community history and a mission to preserve and interpret Tempe’s history,” striving to be an integral part of the community of Tempe.¹⁰⁴ The statement further acknowledged that a community museum should provide a variety of services and opportunities for involvement to a diverse community-based constituency. The mission statement cited the following as the functions of a community museum: education; disseminating public information; providing a public forum where groups and institutions may explain their historic relationship with the community; collecting and preserving materials of importance to Tempe’s history, drawn from a broad range of sources that reflects all of

¹⁰³ John Akers, interview by author, Glendale, AZ, June 13, 2011. Akers sites that the criticism regarding minority groups being an ‘afterthought’ was noted in one of his museum studies classes.

¹⁰⁴ Scott Solliday to Staff, memorandum, May 20, 1994, Tempe History Museum.

major components of the community; and preserving and interpreting Tempe's history.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the most important shift in the history of the Tempe Historical Museum occurred in 2000 with the beginning of the interpretative framework project. The project started as a reflection that the museum spent nearly ten years trying to address the perceived shortcomings of the 1991 permanent exhibit. The museum staff had relied to a great extent on the research the Tempe Historical Society had done – this research was a “white-mans history,” the traditional type of history that is often found in historical society museums. The omission of the minority communities in Tempe was the most obvious drawback of the museum. The temporal approach, although traditional, left out much of Tempe's history. The exhibits were not interactive – there were no computers or interactive, hands-on components in the exhibit.¹⁰⁶

The interpretative framework process began to take shape after the Curator of Education Anna Johnson invited Christopher Clarke, a museum consultant and former Strong Museum curator, to meet with staff regarding how to reinvigorate the exhibit hall. Clarke recommended that the museum develop a new interpretive approach for the exhibit, advocating that the staff meet with a variety of humanities scholars to

¹⁰⁵ Scott Solliday to Staff, memorandum, May 20, 1994, Tempe History Museum.

¹⁰⁶ Amy Douglass, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, August 8, 2011.

develop relevant themes rooted in recent scholarship. The staff decided to follow through with Clark's ideas and the Curator of History, John Akers, applied for a National Endowment for Humanities Consultation Grant. The museum received the grant and used it towards developing an interpretive framework that would serve as the intellectual foundation for its programs and a new exhibit about Tempe history.

The grant was used for a series of one-day seminars during which nine scholars explored Tempe history from a different perspective. In advance of the project, the museum staff developed a tentative interpretive focus: "Tempe as a case study for growth and change in a desert southwestern community."¹⁰⁷ The proposed focus was meant to identify a distinctive regional type of city found in the American West. The museum also identified four potential themes that would illustrate the focus: desert environment, diversity, growth, and opportunity. The selected consultants were asked to examine Tempe as a place, its urban form, the local regional identity of which Tempe is part, and its relationship to the environment. Aside from the consultants, the seminars were comprised of museum and city staff, Museum Advisory Board members, Tempe Historical Society members, Arizona State University faculty, and Tempe residents.

¹⁰⁷ John Akers, NEH Consultation Grant Understanding Growth and Change in a Desert Southwestern Community Final Performance Report, 2000. Tempe History Museum.

Charles S. Sargent, Professor Emeritus of Geography at Arizona State University, agreed with the focus statement but cautioned against providing an environmentally deterministic view. He urged the museum to present Tempe in a broader regional context. Carl Abbott, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University, suggested how to fit Tempe into a broader urban context of the American West and of the Phoenix metropolitan area. David Wrobel, Associate Professor of History at the University of Nevada, made suggestions for how to present the New Western History, different ways for expanding the interpretation, how to deal with Tempe's founding pioneers, how to avoid generalizations in the exhibit, and how to present minority groups in a meaningful way.¹⁰⁸

Thomas Sheridan, Curator of Ethnohistory at the Arizona State Museum, emphasized the concept of political ecology, how people shaped the environment – he suggested Tempe's changing relationship to the Salt River and to water as an overarching theme. Albert Broussard, Professor of History at Texas A&M University, reaffirmed the focus statement and themes, pointing out how each could be used to illustrate the experience of Tempe's small African American community. Arturo Rosales, History Professor at Arizona State University, provided an overview of Mexican American history, reaffirming the role of Hispanics in every stage of Tempe's development. Gayle Gullett, Associate Professor of History at

¹⁰⁸ NEH Consultant Grant Final Performance, 2000, Tempe History Museum.

Arizona State University, provided an overview of the role of women in the settlement and development of western communities like Tempe. Dr. Gullett suggested that the staff change the name of diversity theme to something more inclusive; she further challenged the growth theme asserting that it suggests progress. Martin V. Melosi, Professor of History and Public History at University of Houston, helped the team consider the urban environment, also warning against using the title of 'growth.' Edward Escobar, Professor of History at Arizona State University, challenged the thematic approach. He encouraged the staff to incorporate the concept of pluralism, the ability of different people to live together, into the diversity theme.¹⁰⁹

The seminars allowed the staff to refine the interpretive focus, select themes, and identify areas for additional research. The main objectives of the project were to develop a guiding statement, investigate alternative ways of presenting Tempe history, and point out problems with or alternatives to the proposed interpretation. Using the scholars' suggestions and seminar discussions, the team came up with the following as a guiding statement: "The stories of Tempe as a desert southwestern urban community."¹¹⁰ The focus statement more directly related to people and used Tempe to talk about the broader issues of

¹⁰⁹ NEH Consultant Grant Final Performance, 2000, Tempe History Museum.

¹¹⁰ NEH Consultant Grant Final Performance, 2000, Tempe History Museum.

urbanization in the American West. The team selected and revised three themes: desert environment, pluralism, and city building. Desert environment recounts how people adapted to and shaped the desert environment of central Arizona's Salt River Valley and Tempe. Pluralism focuses on the presence and interaction of different ethnic, economic, social, religious, and political groups shaped as they have other desert southwestern urban communities. City building describes the physical shape and form of Tempe, its chronology of development, and the challenges posed by growth; including commonalities with desert southwestern urban communities and other cities in the American West.¹¹¹

Following the grant project, the museum began an evaluation phase. The museum conducted an assessment of visitors and of potential audiences who did visit the museum. The evaluation phase consisted of two parts: first a market awareness survey of visitors and non-visitors to the museum; the second phase focused on the proposed interpretive themes and topics.¹¹² The goal was to find ways to effectively combine scholarship, museum interpretive methods, and community input to determine how to best communicate the content to the public. During the focus groups, the museum staff realized that Arizona State University should be added as the fourth theme; originally ASU was subsumed under

¹¹¹ NEH Consultant Grant Final Performance, 2000, Tempe History Museum.

¹¹² John Akers, interview by author, Glendale, AZ, June 13, 2011.

the city building section. One of the questions the survey asked was to identify what was unique about Tempe – ASU kept coming up as an answer.¹¹³

Even though the museum staff finally had a vision for its new exhibits and an interpretive framework in hand, the renovated Tempe History Museum would not come to fruition until 2007. In the meantime, THM staff began to develop a research strategy and form relationships with various communities and institutions. Simultaneously, the museum sought to develop its collection of two and three dimensional artifacts that would be used in the renovated exhibits.

History Center, Museum, or ?

While the Tempe Historical Museum staff was working on an interpretive framework, the Chandler Historical Society was preparing for a bond election that would signify whether or not they would obtain a new museum facility. Prior to the 2004 bond election, the Museum Advisory Board held four strategic planning meetings to plan for a new city-run history facility, which they named the Chandler History Center. The strategic planning process was conducted in advance of the May 18th bond election so that the Museum Advisory Board would be in a position to advise City Council on the preliminary vision, values, users, and content of the new facility and its programs. The strategic planning process was

¹¹³ Amy Douglass, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, August, 8, 2011.

also an opportunity to evaluate the resources of the Chandler Historical Society and its relationship to the new History Center. The consensus was that CHS would change its role from running a museum to becoming a support organization for the city-run History Center.¹¹⁴

The Chandler Historical Society and Museum Advisory Board once again brought in ASU's Public Historian Nancy Dallett to facilitate the meetings. According to the vision statement approved by the advisory board:

"The History Center will engage people of all ages in revealing Chandler's past and exploring their role in Chandler's evolving history and identity. The center will be a common ground to connect people with whom and what makes Chandler, Chandler. In line with Chandler's tradition of innovation, it will reinterpret the traditional role of a museum as an artifact and instead will use the products of its high-tech industry, to tell the stories of the community, valuing history, memory, identity, dialogue, education, celebration, conservation, and investigation. The History center and its programs will be perceived as the central and indisputable resources to understand the city and symbolize the city's commitment to its cultural life and values."¹¹⁵

According to the advisory board, the purpose of the history center was "to help natives, newcomers, and visitors alike identify the community in some concrete way and to understand themselves as part of the historical process of the community."¹¹⁶ Similar to the Tempe History Museum's

¹¹⁴ Results of Phase I Strategic Planning for the Chandler History Center Report of the Chandler Museum Advisory Board, June 9, 2004, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

¹¹⁵ Results of Phase One Strategic Planning, June 9, 2004, Chandler Museum.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

mission, the history center's exhibits and programming would create a space where an understanding of the past and sensitivity to the future of the region could be cultivated. In short, the advisory board wanted the Chandler History Center to resonate with Chandler's past, present, and future.

As part of the strategic planning process, an informal assessment of the Chandler Historical Society collection was conducted. The director of the Arizona Historical Society conducted the assessment and characterized the collection as consistent with those of historical societies throughout the country, in terms of objects and materials. The collection was assessed as being from good to problematic and fragile in terms of condition – the society had done the best job it could, considering the building constraints. The Strategic Plan further evaluated that the Chandler Historical Society was not in a position to undertake the necessary development and fund raising required for a new facility. Nevertheless, the advisory board did assert that the Chandler Historical Society would function as a “friends” group continuing to raise funds, provide volunteers, etc. once the Chandler History Center was in operation.¹¹⁷

In January 2004, the Chandler City Council unanimously approved the recommendation that the construction of an \$8.5 million history facility

¹¹⁷ Results of Phase One Strategic Planning, June 9, 2004, Chandler Museum.

be included in the bond election of May 18, 2004. The Chandler citizens approved the bond and it appeared as though the new Chandler Museum would be built. Due to construction costs, however, the project was once again stalled. In 2007, the Chandler Historical Society hired Steve Germann of Germann and Associates to create the Strategic Planning Phase II for the new Chandler Museum. The new Chandler Museum was once again on the bond ballot for the May 2007 election.

Germann worked with Chandler Historical Society board members, various elected officials, and City of Chandler employees to move through the second phase of planning, which mainly focused on a creation of a comprehensive business plan. The plan reiterated that the new museum would be city owned and administered, while the society remained as the principal support and membership group. The strategic plan further recognized that being incorporated within the City of Chandler would bring steadiness, a dependable funding stream, and a professional support system to the museum, which the Chandler Historical Society could not provide on its own.¹¹⁸

Germann expressed his concern about the depth and breadth of the Chandler Historical Society's collection, pointing out considerable gaps. As remedy, he suggested going out and actively collecting artifacts related to Chandler's early history. For example, while the society had

¹¹⁸ Strategic Planning Phase II: Comprehensive Business Plan, 2007, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

collected some items related to Chandler's founder A.J. Chandler, the objects retold the traditional story and did not bring anything new to the table regarding his life. Germann further advised the society to gather historic newspaper and documents as the Chandler Public Library did not have such material.¹¹⁹ The strategic planning document for the new Chandler Museum suggested that the current institution become a museum of history and art.

During the strategic planning research project, the Chandler Historical Society discovered that the \$8.5 million would not be sufficient to build a new facility. Thus the Chandler Museum was once again included within the capital improvement bond ballot for an additional 4.5 million. Germann recommended that the Board of Directors of the Chandler Historical society undertake a campaign to raise funds necessary for completion of the museum building and exhibits, regardless of the outcome of the bond issue election. He further advised that the society set its fundraising goal between \$1.5 and \$2.5 million. Germann advised that the museum should be seen as a concept rather than just a building for exhibition and storage.¹²⁰ In May of 2007, the voters of Chandler approved an additional \$4.5 million for the construction of the museum. Unfortunately the City of Chandler did not move fast enough to

¹¹⁹ Strategic Planning Phase II, Chandler Museum.

¹²⁰ Strategic Planning Phase II, Comprehensive Business Plan Submitted by Germann & Associates, Museum Consultants February 28, 2007

sell the bonds before the economic crisis began in early 2008, further stalling the project.

According to Jim Patterson, current President of the Chandler Historical Society, there was not enough leadership on the City Council to move the project forward. He further asserted that bonds for other projects within the 2007 bond election were sold in time; therefore, the City could have made progress on the Chandler Museum project. Patterson approached the City Council regarding a transfer of the existing museum operation to the City of Chandler. Since the city was already providing \$130,000 per year in funds to cover various museum expenses, the society saw it as natural for the City to assume employee supervision and museum operation. The historical society further hoped that the museum transfer would encourage the City to proceed with the plans to build a new Chandler Museum facility.¹²¹

Chandler Museum Transfer

The City of Chandler and the Chandler Historical Society entered into a one-year agreement on August 21, 2008 whereby the City of Chandler would assume responsibility for the daily operation of the existing Chandler Museum. In accordance with the agreement CHS became a community support/fundraising group, providing \$44,000 of annual funds. The existing museum staff was hired through a temporary

¹²¹ Jim Patterson, interview by author, Chandler, AZ, September 13, 2011.

agency on contract with the City. The museum would be operated as part of the City's Community Services department. The City's Museum Administrator was charged with directing and allocating staff time for the operations of the museum and providing reasonable staff support for the CHS fundraisers, newsletters, etc. and CHS business. The agreement required CHS to provide written notice to the Museum Administrator in advance of CHS Board of Directors' and Executive Committee meetings; and also required CHS to provide copies of complete minutes. The society would retain ownership of its collection. The document outlined that the City was not under obligation to accept 100% of the CHS collection as part of the city's museum collection and reserved the right to deaccession any item transferred from the CHS collection.¹²²

A sour point of the agreement was a section requiring the society to open access to its books, financial records, staff and officers so the city auditor could perform a review of CHS operations during the previous three years. The purpose of the audit was to determine the actual revenue of the CHS and cost to operate the museum. Among other financial invoices and statements, the audit required access to donor records and contributions. Nonetheless the agreement stated that specific names, addresses, bank account numbers, or any other personal donor information was not critical to the performance of the audit and that no

¹²² Agreement between the City of Chandler, Arizona and the Chandler Historical Society, Inc. Regarding the Existing Chandler Museum, August 21, 2008, Chandler Historical Society papers, Chandler Museum.

personal information would be copied, transcribed in any fashion. The Chandler Historical Society had refused to sign the agreement and have the city auditor look through their financial records until the section indicating the discretion of their donors was included within the agreement. By the time of the official transfer, the contention between the city and historical society had moved from behind closed doors into the public arena. The controversy played out in the media. In 2009, a new museum agreement was negotiated and was set to automatically renew each year until the new museum was built. The revised agreement required the city to provide a copy of its annual report and financial statements at the end of each fiscal year.¹²³

Following the museum transfer, one of the first tasks assigned to Museum Administrator, Jody Crago, by the City of Chandler was to formulate a mission statement and goals for the new museum. In devising the mission of the new museum, Crago envisioned a community museum, visualizing the Chandler Museum as “an innovative learning environment where our community comes together to learn from each other and share in the discovery of our ever-changing rich and diverse history and culture.”¹²⁴ Crago pictured the museum as more than a group of buildings, rather as a dynamic cultural amenity that serves as a venue to share

¹²³ Jody Crago to Community Services Department, memorandum, November 25, 2009, Chandler Museum.

¹²⁴ Jody Crago Museum Administrator to Museum Advisory Board, memorandum, May 9, 2008, Chandler Museum.

stories, store cultural heritage, and experience Chandler as a people and a place. He saw history, public learning, inclusivity, collaboration, and interactivity as some of the museum's core values. Crago envisioned the museum as "facilitating experiences that encourage people to consider the world from the perspective of others."¹²⁵

Crago brought forth ideas supported by new museology and understood that common stories and shared meanings cannot evolve from exclusive practices and programs. Per teachings of new museology theory, Crago asserted that museums are places to make connections between groups, regions, ethnicities, and generations. According to Crago, "inclusive means accepting multiple kinds of authenticity and affirming and acknowledging the community's sense of self and expertise; our museum and its programs can present multiple perspectives and thereby encourage people to develop their own opinions and make their own meanings."¹²⁶ Once Crago, along with the Chandler Museum Advisory Board, coined the mission of the new museum, the City of Chandler asked the museum staff to consult the public regarding their take on what the new museum should be.

While the Tempe and Chandler museums' staff was amidst planning for a renovation and the later a new facility, the Scottsdale Historical Society's operation of its museum continued as per usual. Since

¹²⁵ Memorandum, May 9, 2008, Chandler Museum.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

its move to the Little Red Schoolhouse, the Scottsdale Historical Museum continued to have the same mission: to present, preserve and interpret through research, exhibits and educational programming, the prehistory, history and cultural heritage of Scottsdale and the Southwest. Unlike the Tempe Historical Museum and the Chandler Museum, whose statements asserted their mission to be a community resource and focus to represent the city's diversity, the Scottsdale museum did not have such an inclusion within its mission. The changes to Tempe and Chandler museums' mission and vision statements occurred alongside the transfer of operation to the city government. As the Scottsdale Historical Museum was still operated by the historical society, there was not an external push to modify the institution's mission to represent the wider community.

CHAPTER 4

RENOVATION = DIVERSITY?

When we stand before an exhibit display we have the tendency to see the objects as relics plucked directly from history, unsoiled by contemporary thought and ideas. This label of authenticity and trust placed into the hands of cultural institutions is problematic as museums, and other cultural organizations, are meaning-producing institutions. Decisions that museum workers make – about mission statement, architecture, financial matters, acquisitions, cataloguing, exhibition display, labels, programming, community relations, conservation – all impact the way we understand objects.¹²⁷ Museums are not neutral spaces; museums are about individuals making subjective choices.

New museum theory calls for the transformation of the museum from a site of worship to one of discourse and critical reflection that is committed to examining unsettling histories. Museums should be transparent in their decision-making processes and willing to share their authority over exhibit making and interpretation. New museum theory is about decolonizing, giving those represented control of their own cultural heritage and embracing multiple viewpoints.¹²⁸ Sharing authority,

¹²⁷ Janet Marstine, ed., *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 2.

¹²⁸ Marstine, *New Museum Theory*, 5.

however, is an extreme challenge for institutions accustomed to treating its exhibitions as shrines. Through an exhibit renovation and plans for a new facility, the Tempe and Chandler museum are on their way to sharing authority with the communities they serve.

The City of Tempe Community Services Department submitted a request for \$3.5 million in capital improvement funds to completely overhaul the museum exhibit gallery, expand classroom space and make other improvements to the museum facility. The Tempe voters approved the sale of municipal bonds and the funds became available in July 2006. To start working on a preliminary planning and design, a committee composed of museum staff, Community Services Department managers, Development Services Department staff, and representatives from the Museum Advisory Board and Tempe Historical Society was formed.¹²⁹

The mission of the renovation project was to “create a destination attraction as the Best Community History Museum in the West.” The goal was to create a gathering place with flexible, interactive, appealing spaces that attract a larger, more diverse and involved audience that can celebrate Tempe's past and ponder its future. According to the revitalized mission statement:

“the Tempe Historical Museum is a community history museum that explores Tempe’s identity and builds connections between residents and their community. We recognize the power of history to provide insights for making decisions relevant to contemporary

¹²⁹ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., “Capitol Funds to Transform Museum,” *Time Lines*, July 2006.

and future life in an ever-changing society. Our museum is a stimulating public forum acting as a catalyst for lively dialogue. We work together with Tempe's diverse residents to preserve and tell their stories. The museum comprehensively explores Tempe history through exhibits, activities, speakers, collections, research services, and programs that captivate, connect with and delight audiences throughout the community and beyond. We embrace the important responsibility of collecting and caring for the artifacts and the written, spoken, and pictorial records of Tempe. The museum, as a municipal institution, follows the City of Tempe's values. We adhere to a policy of inclusiveness that provides open access to all of our facilities, operations, and services."¹³⁰

With the renovation, the Tempe Historical Museum staff hoped to achieve several objectives, including: flexible exhibit areas; integration of new technology; increase in programming space by creating a multi-use area; more visible museum entrance; and a children's area. The interpretive framework determined that the exhibit gallery would have a thematic layout. The staff planned to make the museum more user-friendly for all ages, this meant that interactive technology would be included within the exhibit design. The new space had to be flexible and open. The old permanent exhibit was inflexible and did not allow for easy access to the display cases. Even though the museum was in the same complex as the Tempe Public Library, the museum obtained a marginal percentage of the library visitors. To be a more family-friendly space, the staff planned

¹³⁰ Tempe Historical Museum Renovation Planning Guide, April 2007, Tempe History Museum.

a children's gallery that caters to the needs of pre-school and elementary school-aged children.¹³¹

The interpretive focus looked at Tempe through a 'southwestern urban community' lens. The staff wanted to present Tempe as having a lot in common with other cities in Phoenix metropolitan and other cities of the western United States, yet simultaneously being a distinct place primarily because of the presence of Arizona State University and the diverse population it attracts to Tempe.¹³² The story of Tempe as a southwestern urban community would be told in four thematic sections: desert environment, pluralism, city building, and Arizona State University.

According to the initial planning guide, the desert environment section would exhibit how people adapted to and shaped the desert environment of central Arizona's Salt River Valley and Tempe. Some of the main themes of the section would be water, environmental adaptation, and sustainability. The pluralism section would interpret the presence and interaction of different ethnic, economic, social, religious, and political groups shaped Tempe, as they have in other desert southwestern urban communities. The museum staff defined pluralism as "the ability of people from different races, religions, cultures, ethnic groups, etc. to live together

¹³¹ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., "Renovation Designs Underway," *Time Lines*, January 2008.

¹³² Project Planning Guide, April 2007, Tempe History Museum.

in harmony and respect of each other's differences."¹³³ The section would deal with issues of social conflict, such as discrimination and segregation of Tempe's Hispanic community and exclusion of African Americans.

The city building theme would deal with the physical shape and form of Tempe, its chronology of development, and the challenges posed by growth. Tempe's history, however, would not be told in a vacuum as its history would be tied to regional development, dealing with Tempe's identity as a quasi-independent satellite of Phoenix rather than a suburb. The section would present important events and themes in Tempe history, dealing with such issues as: Mill Avenue as the economic and social center of Tempe; development after World War II; periods of conflict in 1960s and 1990s as a result of periods of growth and change; and how its landlocked location shaped and influenced Tempe. Arizona State University was introduced as a topic due to its key role in shaping Tempe and its indispensable part of Tempe's identity. The section would focus on how Tempe residents played a role in ASU's history and in turn how the school provided a social and cultural outlet for Tempe. The section would further deal with ASU's impact on Tempe's economic development and its role in bringing pluralism and diversity to the city.¹³⁴

¹³³ Project Planning Guide, April 2007, Tempe History Museum.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

The City of Tempe and Tempe Historical Museum staff selected Weddle Gilmore Architects as the architectural consultant for the renovation project. The company was signed on as the principal consultant during the programming and design phases of the project, also providing construction administration. Gyroscope, Inc. was hired as the consultant focusing specifically on the design of the new exhibit gallery. The design process began in September 2008 after the contract had been approved by the Tempe City Council. Weddle Gilmore was chosen due to their focus on providing design created from cultural, climate and site-specific conditions. They specialize in creating a sense of place that is a combination of environment and community. Gyroscope, Inc., a museum planning and exhibition design company, was chosen due to their specialization in building deeper connections within each community through the power of experiential exhibitions for all learning styles and ages.¹³⁵

Along with the renovation planning and design, the Tempe Historical Museum went through yet another change when the Tempe Historical Society decided to close the gift shop in July 2008. During the design process, the society members were told that the gift shop area would be demolished to make way for a community room. Over the years, the all-volunteer run shop had raised thousands of dollars to the benefit of

¹³⁵ Bastine and Douglass, "Renovation Designs Underway," January 2008.

the museum. The Tempe Historical Society had run a gift shop since its first exhibit in the old library building in 1972. When the Tempe Historical Museum opened in the renovated library building in 1991, the society continued manning the gift shop. The gift shop served as the society's main and most reliable source of income; with the monies coming in from the sales the society was able to fund various museum activities, such as the oral history project.¹³⁶ With the closing of the gift shop, the Tempe Historical Society lost a piece of its identity as the shop brought the volunteers together and gave society members a reason to come to the museum on a daily basis. While Tempe Historical Society board members were involved within the planning and design process, they nevertheless had to decide what THS' role would be within the renovated museum.

The Tempe Historical Museum closed fall of 2008 and the construction officially began in April 2009. Since the exhibit hall, lobby, research library, and archives were being renovated; the construction area was sealed off from the parts of the building that were not being renovated. During the construction phase, museum staff continued researching city history and writing labels for the four thematic areas. The staff relied heavily on oral histories and advisory board input to tell the story of Tempe communities, especially for the pluralism section.

¹³⁶ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., "One Chapter Ends as Another Begins," *Time Lines*, July 2008.

To obtain an understanding of the African-American experience in Tempe, an African-American Advisory Board was created. Another community the museum reached out to for the renovation purposes was the Japanese-American community to tell the story of Japanese internment camps, during World War II, through oral history interviews. The museum staff was able to call upon the communities it had previously worked with – such as the Southeast Asian, Muslim, Hispanic, Jewish, and Danish communities – to loan objects for the new exhibitions.

A Proud Journey Home: Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Communities in Arizona opened in October of 2005 and explored Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese refugee experiences in Tempe 30 years after the Vietnam War. The Tempe Historical Museum and the Program for Southeast Asian Studies (PSEAS) at Arizona State University joined in a cooperative venture to assist Southeast Asian communities to celebrate their past and ponder their future. The exhibit featured oral histories, photographs and objects from these communities. The exhibit was funded in part through an Arizona Humanities Council “We the People” grant.¹³⁷

In order to promote cultural appreciation and interfaith respect of Muslim citizens, the Tempe Historical Museum, in collaboration with Arizona State University, the City of Tempe Diversity Office and the

¹³⁷ Mary Anna Bastin and Amy Douglass, ed., “A Proud Journey Home: Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Communities in Arizona,” *Time Lines*, July 2005.

Tempe Muslim community, will present *Jewel in the Desert*. This project collected life stories, oral histories and artifacts reflecting the history and experiences of Arizona Muslims. An exhibit, public lecture and community festival provided the sights, sounds, tastes and touches that brought history alive. The exhibit component entitled, *Jewel in the Desert: Getting Acquainted with our Muslim Neighbors*, opened in October of 2008 and featured the history of Muslims in Arizona, the diversity of local Muslims, and tenants of Islam.¹³⁸

Approximately 2,000 visitors enjoyed the festivities and their first look at the newly-renovated Tempe History Museum during the grand reopening on February 27, 2010.¹³⁹ Prior to the opening, the museum changed its name from Tempe Historical Museum to the Tempe History Museum. The museum wanted a distinct identity from the Tempe Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Society. The museum also has adopted a new tag line to more closely reflect the vision and interpretive framework – visitors are now invited to “Explore the Past. Discover Community.”¹⁴⁰

The main exhibition, *Tempe: Distinct, Diverse, Dynamic*, presents the story of Tempe through a variety of media. The exhibition explores the

¹³⁸ Mary Anna Bastin and Amy Douglass, ed., “Jewel in the Desert,” *Time Lines*, April 2008.

¹³⁹ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., “Museum Opens with Community Festival,” *Time Lines*, April 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., “A New Name, Tag Line and Logo,” *Time Lines*, July 2009.

history of Tempe through four thematic areas— *College Town*, *Building Our Community*, *Living Together* and *Surviving in the Desert*. Iconic objects and portions of the museum’s oral history collection are used to help bring the city’s past alive and illuminate present day Tempe. New technology and hands-on activities in the *Kids’ Place* gallery provide opportunities for families to learn together.¹⁴¹

While the new exhibits presented a large portion of Tempe’s diverse communities, there are communities that are left out or could use more information within the exhibit text. According to Dr. Douglass, the Jewish and LGBT communities are two that could use more developed storylines.¹⁴² The “Living Together” section mainly recycled research and information from previous temporary exhibits. The section has an area of ‘flipping booklets’ that expand upon the histories presented in the label text of each community. The booklets reuse text panels from several previously exhibited temporary displays, including: Southeast Asian *Proud Journey Home*; Muslim community *Jewel in the Desert*; and several Hispanic community exhibits such as *La Familia* and *Barrios*. Even though the thematic sections could further expand upon and include more communities within Tempe, the renovation exhibits are a definite step in the right direction.

¹⁴¹ Bastine and Douglass, “A New Name, Tag Line, and Logo,” July 2009.

¹⁴² Amy Douglass, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, August 8, 2011.

More Planning, But No Museum

The Chandler Museum was conducting visitor surveys to assess what Chandler residents want to see in the new facility. In 2009, the Chandler City Council suggested that the Chandler Museum staff proceed with museum planning by initiating the Visioning and Conceptual Design Project. The City hired SmithGroup to assist the museum staff with creating a participatory meeting process that asked people to share their ideas about the new museum. Through 20 staff-led meetings and presentations, hundreds of citizens submitted thousands of ideas and concepts on what the new museum should be and how it could best serve as their community museum. The public's response was overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the museum's mission and goal of creating an innovative learning environment where the community comes together to share stories and experience Chandler as a people and a place.¹⁴³

From the participatory meetings the staff compiled ideas into four themes: the building, the exhibits, the museum's role in the community, and the museum's role in K-12 education. The participants assessed that the building should be modern and technologically advanced while containing flexible spaces that allow for multiple and regular use by both the museum and outside groups. The museum's exhibits and programs

¹⁴³ The Community Speaks: Visioning and Conceptual Design Project for the Chandler Museum, January 29, 2010, Chandler Museum.

should bring the art, culture, and history of the people of Chandler to life. Using storytelling in a multidisciplinary approach, the exhibits and programs need to be relevant for people of all ages. The exhibits should be interactive, featuring the newest technological advances. The museum should act as a community gathering spot for the city, a comfortable and safe place to hang out and learn.¹⁴⁴ However, the museum should also function as a forum where the community can debate, discuss, disagree, and dialog about the issues that are important to the community. The community should see itself reflected in the museum. Education-wise, the Chandler Museum should create interactive, hands-on learning environments that engage students through multidisciplinary experiences. The Chandler Museum should provide opportunities for students to gain a new understanding of the way in which people experience a socially, culturally diverse world that is rapidly changing.¹⁴⁵

According to the visioning and conceptual design project, one of the Chandler Museum's guiding directives is to be a "Museum Without Walls." The museum uses this phrase to refer to its multidisciplinary approach to integrate art, history, and culture into the community beyond the physical museum building and in places where few people expect to find museums. The term "Museum Without Walls" was used by the late Dr. Noel J. Stowe, a City of Chandler Museum Advisory Board member and principal faculty

¹⁴⁴ The Community Speaks, January 29, 2010, Chandler Museum.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

member in Arizona State University's Public History Program. Dr. Stowe reminded staff that the building should not be seen as a monolithic structure that acts as the sole proprietor of Chandler's art, history, and culture. Instead, in Dr. Stowe's vision, art, history, and culture should freely flow from the museum throughout the community. In essence, the museum's programmatic walls should be so transparent and porous that it appears that the museum interpretations, programs, and events are everywhere in Chandler.¹⁴⁶

Current Status

Following the renovation, the Tempe History Museum took advantage of its expanded community space with a variety of new programs. The space has been used for various lectures, music performances, and exhibits. The Theodore Roosevelt traveling exhibit, on loan from Arizona State University, was recently housed in the community room. The exhibit commemorated the 100th anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt's speech on the steps of Old Main at the Tempe Normal School.

Since the opening, there have been two exhibits in Tempe History Museum's changing gallery space. *Tom Harter: Picturing Change in Tempe* featured paintings by Arizona State University art professor and

¹⁴⁶ The Community Speaks, January 29, 2010, Chandler Museum.

former Petersen House resident Tom Harter. The display was an art exhibition primarily; the art works portrayed rural Tempe during the 1950s and 60s, a time of transformation brought on by record population growth and urban development. On display in 2011, was *The Finley Boys: Arizona's Royal Family of Rodeo* exhibit. The exhibit tells the story of three brothers from a local ranching family who grew up to be national rodeo stars in the 1930s through 1950s.¹⁴⁷ The changing exhibits thus far seem too safe, too along the lines of the pre-renovation displays. It would have been refreshing to see topics introduced within the thematic sections expanded upon in a temporary exhibit. An exhibit tackling issues of segregation in Tempe bringing to the forefront African-American and Hispanic experience, for example, would be more 'envelope pushing', audience challenging, and signify the museum as a safe space where discourse on difficult subjects can take place.

Since the renovation, the Tempe History Museum staff members have worked toward revitalizing the education programs offered at the museum and the satellite Petersen House Museum. Currently, the Tempe History Museum provides two curriculum-based programs for elementary students. The "Territorial Days" program is targeted at fourth graders who are learning about Arizona statehood. Even though the Petersen House Museum is closed for daily tours, it is opened for the fourth grade classes

¹⁴⁷ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., "Exhibits," *Time Lines*, January 2011.

participating in this program. The second program is targeted at fifth graders. The Fifth Grade Program had to be revised completely when the exhibit hall was renovated. A committee of museum staff and Tempe elementary school teachers designed the new program to meet current state standards for fifth grade social studies, science, language arts and workplace skills. The Fifth Grade Program is based on the inquiry method of teaching. Instead of passively listening to information being given to them by an interpreter, the students formulate questions and then seek out the answers to their questions by studying the exhibits.¹⁴⁸

While the Tempe History Museum has had a successful transformation, the Tempe Historical Society is in the process of redefining its mission. The historical society will continue to be a supportive organization to the museum; however, the society is in the process of refocusing its approach to achieving its goal. Following the closing of the gift shop in 2008, THS lost its steady funding source and had to come up with new means of supporting the museum. The Tempe Historical Society continues to assist the museum by bringing together people interested in history through programs and with financial contributions. The society continues its Lunch Talks speaker and presentation program at the museum, hosts openings of new museums, and has several fundraisers such as the Tree of Lights reception. Most recently, the Tempe Historical

¹⁴⁸ Mary Anna Bastine and Amy Douglass, ed., "School Programs Bring Students to Museum," *Time Lines*, July 2011.

Society Board of Directors have attempted to invigorate its membership by recruiting board members with good community connections.¹⁴⁹

Currently, the Chandler Historical Society and the City of Chandler, as well as Chandler Museum staff, continue to be at an impasse regarding the transfer of the society's collection to the city. The City of Chandler has perhaps indefinitely postponed the construction of a new Chandler Museum; largely due to a lack of funding for maintenance the building would require. The Chandler Historical Society attributes the postponement to a lack of interest on the city's part. According to CHS president emeritus, Michel Larson, "the City Council does not place a high value on the museum and does not see it as an asset to the community." She asserts that the current Mayor Jay Tibshraeny has always been very supportive of the museum and has been a CHS member, but that does not extend to the whole city council.¹⁵⁰

According to Chandler Historical Society's president, Jim Patterson, board members do not seem to have much faith in the city – "why should we turn over the collection when the city does not act like they want to do anything for the historical society or have the historical society involved in the museum or the city."¹⁵¹ Patterson, nevertheless, asserts that the collection transfer will take place; it is a matter of nailing down the

¹⁴⁹ Mary Ann Kwilosz, interview by author, Tempe, AZ, October 15, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Michel Larson, interview by author, Chandler, AZ, September 5, 2011.

¹⁵¹ Jim Patterson, interview by author, Chandler, AZ, September 13, 2011.

memorandum of understanding. He asserts that the society is ready to provide an endowment, volunteer services, etc. to the new museum.

Patterson acknowledges that the “historical society has not been embraced by the City” and is unsure of the society’s future if something does not move forward with plans for a new Chandler museum.¹⁵²

Meanwhile, the Chandler Museum staff members have moved their offices out of the downtown museum and into the McCullough-Price House, creating more exhibit space within the downtown building. The McCullough-Price House reopened in the fall of 2011 as an archive research center and satellite exhibition site. The current exhibit at the house features photographs and information on historic hotels and resorts of Arizona, including a glimpse of the early years of Chandler's San Marcos Hotel, which opened in 1913. No additional city funds or staff members were needed to reopen the McCullough-Price House. Efficiencies from staff cuts and the city's takeover of the downtown museum's operations from the Chandler Historical Society made it possible. According to museum administrator Jody Crago, the house will contain a collection of local photographs, letters, diaries, family records, newspapers and business documents.¹⁵³

The Chandler Museum staff’s most recent project has been an online archive titled “ChandlerpediA.” The website is a collection of

¹⁵² Jim Patterson, interview by author, Chandler, AZ, September 13, 2011.

¹⁵³ Edythe Jensen, “Chandler’s McCullough-Price House to be Archive Center,” *The Arizona Republic*, June 9, 2011.

photographs, documents, newspapers, oral histories, and publications dating from before the city and state's beginnings in 1912. The site gives public free access to the museum's entire collection and a continuous stream of new contributions. The site further contains online exhibits on various subjects such as the Centennial, A.J. Chandler, Frank Lloyd Wright, etc. According to Crago, the website is a museum without walls, a great way for people to know more about and connect to their community. Additions are made almost daily and contributions are coming in from descendents of the city's pioneers, area businesses, and historians across the country.¹⁵⁴

Currently, the Scottsdale Historical Society has a pretty static membership, between 165 and 175 members. The society continues to be operated by volunteers, relying on around 70 volunteers to run the museum on a daily basis. The volunteers are charged with various tasks ranging from accessioning and cataloging the collection to giving school guided tours. The museum receives 25,000 to 26,000 visitors during the ten months that it is open. The society relies on membership dues, donations, fundraisers, and gift shop sales as financial resources.¹⁵⁵ The society does not receive funding from the City of Scottsdale; the city does, however, continue to pay for the exterior maintenance, etc. as per the

¹⁵⁴ Edythe Jensen, "Chandler History Goes Digital," *The Arizona Republic*, January 18, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ JoAnn Handley, interview by author, date, Scottsdale, AZ, September 12, 2011.

original agreement. While the Scottsdale Historical Society is still privately managed, SHS does team up with some City of Scottsdale departments for fundraisers and other events. For example, the Scottsdale Historical Society works with the Chamber of Commerce during the Hall of Fame dinner; in 2005, the Chamber of Commerce allocated \$3,000 raised during the event to the society account.¹⁵⁶

The Scottsdale Historical Society collaborated with the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau on an informational brochure to take along on self-guided walking tours of 15 sites, beginning at the Little Red Schoolhouse on Scottsdale Mall and ending at the Scottsdale Public Library's Civic Center branch. The society continues to work with the Scottsdale Library on a digitization project; SHS has provided approximately 2,000 photographs for scanning, which the library has been adding to its online database.¹⁵⁷ The historical society itself continues to use a ledger for accessioning and cataloguing documents, meaning it does not have a computerized database. This makes using the society's documents, photographs, etc. extremely difficult to research. According to Scottsdale Historical Museum Manager, JoAnn Handley, the museum has "sort of an acquisition and collection policy." The museum uses copies of forms put together by the State Attorney General for the Arizona Historical

¹⁵⁶ Board Meeting Minutes, August 15, 2005, Scottsdale Historical Society papers, Scottsdale Historical Museum.

¹⁵⁷ Sarah Anchors, "Picturing City History Library Scanning Photos into Database," *The Arizona Republic*, May 2, 2001.

Society for the acquisition of artifacts, photographs, and incoming and outgoing loans. Aside from replacing the AHS name with their own, the forms are not changed further to accommodate the needs of the Scottsdale museum.¹⁵⁸

The Scottsdale Historical Society should, nonetheless, be commended on continually keeping the museum open with meager funding and no professional staff. The Scottsdale Historical Society Manager, JoAnn Handley, has attempted to bring some museum standards to collection management by attending workshops, classes, and presentations sponsored by the Central Arizona Museum Association (CAMA) and other local museum associations.

¹⁵⁸ JoAnn Handley, interview by author, Scottsdale, AZ, September 12, 2011.

CONCLUSION

Since their founding in 1969, the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale historical societies have gone through many transitions. I compared and contrasted the institutional histories of the three societies focusing on important events during their histories. For the first ten years, the organizations passed the same milestone of founding a history museum and exhibiting objects, photographs, and documents they had collected. As the founding members came from the Anglo-community within each city, so did the collections they acquired and the objects they displayed. At a time of new social history, the historical societies presented socially exclusive museums. Becoming incorporated within the city government, would prove to be the point of change, the tipping point when the history museums moved from particularism to pluralism. The change, however, did not come overnight. It was change over time.

This thesis introduced three Arizona museums aiming to interpret their city's history. My goal was to bring forth the institutional history of the Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale museums – and the historical societies that founded these museums – while assessing whether or not they were relevant to and integrated within communities they claim to represent. The study was modeled after the Catherine M. Lewis, Kevin M. Guthrie, and Sally F. Griffith studies of Chicago, New-York, and Pennsylvania Historical Societies, respectively. Rather than presenting nationally prominent

museums I describe small/medium size, local museums whose experience most museums nationwide can relate to.

The majority of museums in the United States are small to medium size institutions.¹⁵⁹ Unlike the nationally prominent organizations, small institutions do not have a private funding base – in fact, these museums are lucky if they have one full-time staff member. The Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale museums have struggled to obtain a stable funding source – the fact that Tempe and Chandler turned over museum operation to their local, city governments serves as a lesson to other institutions facing the same issues. My goal in writing this thesis was to provide an example of small/medium size museums which were able to transform – or are in the process of transforming – into community museums and renovate their exhibits and programming to more fully represent their constituency.

Unlike the Tempe and Chandler museums, the Scottsdale Historical Museum did not transfer the operation of their museum to the City of Scottsdale and has, therefore, continued to serve its source community. The Scottsdale museum stands in stark contrast to its Tempe and Chandler counterparts – yet its history mostly resonates with small institutions unable to find a funding source or a professional staff. This

¹⁵⁹ America Association of Museums, “Reinventing AAM Accreditation: Survey Highlights,” April 2009, American Association of Museums. <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/upload/Overview-of-Survey-Results-2.pdf>
Small museums are those with an operating budget of \$350,000 and below; while medium size museums are those with an operating budget of \$350,000 and above.

thesis presents city incorporation as a possible means of attaining funding and a professionalized staff. The renovated Tempe History Museum opened its doors two years ago, presenting Tempe's history using a thematic approach and attempting to tell the story of Tempe's diverse community through oral histories, objects, interactive content, and label text. The Chandler Museum staff members have created a vision and mission statement that sites to inclusivity, multiple voices and experiences, diversity as the guiding principles for the new museum. The Tempe History Museum and Chandler Museum's experiences are an aspiration for other institutions seeking to invigorate their museums and create a fuller museum encounter.

In the twenty-first century, inclusive exhibits that attempt to tell everyone's story equal audience and visitors. Inclusivity, pluralism, and diversity are also key terms used by museum theorists. The "new museology" argues for an approach that is more inclusive, democratic, and representative of diverse communities now served by museums. Those communities are wide-ranging, including groups linked by culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, and neighborhood. There has been a shift in attitude towards museums as a museum is no longer only measured by its internal possessions (collections, staff, etc.) but by an external consideration of the benefits it provides to individuals and communities it seeks to serve. Due to the city incorporation, the Tempe and Chandler

Museums are working towards attaining the ideals outlined in the new museology.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Richard Toon
SHESC

fo From: Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 09/12/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 10/28/2010

IRB Protocol #: 1010005629

Study Title: Deconstructing Historical Society Museums:

Exploring Renovation of Tempe and Chandler Museums

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

The changes to quote individuals directly and use identifiers have been reviewed and the study remains exempt.