

Littleton History

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Avondale was first established by resilient pioneers, but there was another Avondale long before the Spanish and European settlers arrived. The Hohokam Indians, a thriving society of farmers, are believed to be the ancestors of the present day Pima Indians. To this day, many of the canals used by local farmers were first cut through the earth to water ancient crops.

When gold was discovered in Wickenburg and Prescott it created a demand for commerce between Tucson and northern Arizona. Shipments of supplies and people were carried by stagecoaches that needed places to rest their teams of horses and protect their precious cargos from marauding Indians. Weekly service from Tucson to Wickenburg followed the trail leading from Maricopa Wells to the Wickenburg Trail. The alignment of this trail passed through modern day Avondale, which would become known

as Coldwater Stage Station.

The District was named after Dr. S.D. Little who established the town of Littleton west of the Cashion Ranch. Dr. Little was a dentist who settled on the west corner of 115th Avenue, or Avondale Boulevard and Buckeye Road, or Maricopa County Highway 85, where Littleton Elementary School still exists today. A few homes, a small store, and an office were built. The Littleton Elementary School District #65 was created out of District #17 (Tolleson Elementary) on April 22, 1912 in Avondale.

Jim Cashion succeeded in establishing a post office in 1911, and Dr. Little eventually moved to Bisbee. Cashion Ranch raised beef and then later ostriches. The feathers were used for ladies' hats, but like so many fads, the ostrich hats went by the wayside when the automobile was introduced. As a result, the ostriches were sold. Dr. Chandler bought the birds and had them moved to Chandler.

In 1942 teachers at the Littleton School were assigned to teach two grades and attendance reached between 120 and 175 students. By 1960, attendance in the District was at 690 and by 1980; sixty-two classrooms were in use by 2,150 students. Eldard Underdown was the District's Superintendent in the 1940's and 50's. He was not only the superintendent, but also served as the principal and the bus driver in those days.

Quentin Aycock became Superintendent in 1964 following Mr. Underdown's death, and served in that position nearly 30 years. In 2000 the District had just doubled in size twice during the decade to over 5000. The 'little' district that once served the communities of Cashion, Ligas, and area farm-workers now is a diverse suburban blend of families from many regions. The District is now home to a modern Avondale City Hall, Phoenix International Raceway and numerous housing developments and golf

courses.

The town of Cashion was annexed by the growing City of Avondale and allowing both Avondale and the Littleton District to purchase adjacent parcels of land during a bond election. The school district would establish Littleton Unit 2 and later renamed it Underdown Junior High School, after Superintendent Underdown.

In 1963, Underdown Junior High School became home to 526 seventh and eighth grade students' in the west Phoenix community of Cashion.

Underdown Jr. High was reconstituted in 2008 as the home of alternative programs used for students with special needs. The same year all of the District's schools were reorganized into comprehensive kindergarten through eighth grade campuses. Much of the campus now serves as home for the Littleton School District administrative and support offices

(which moved in December of 2009). The current superintendent is Dr. Roger Freeman, who joined the District in 2006 as its fifth chief executive.

Collier Elementary School was built on Thayer and Pearl Collier's homestead farm land in 2002. In 1919 the **Colliers** moved to the district and Thayer served on the school board for fifty-four years.

Quentin Elementary School opened in 2003. This school was named after Dr. Quentin Aycock.

Country Place Elementary School opened in January 2006.

Estrella Vista Elementary School opened in January 2008.

Tres Rios Elementary opened in August 2008. This school was named after the three rivers that connect in this area (Agua Fria, Gila and Salt River).

Fine Arts Academy opened two of its three buildings in July 2016. This school was designed to support the arts because of voter approval and community input which led to the focus school choices the Littleton Elementary School District offers today.