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Dorothy Gilbert and the Phoenix Mountains Preserve

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Introduction

Home | Introduction | 1960-64 | 1965-69 | 1970-74 | 1975-79 | 1980-84 | 1985-89 | 1990's

[Introduction](#) | [Preliminary Materials](#) | [Land boundaries](#) | [Maps](#)

Introduction

In the late 1950s, there was indication of impending growth and sprawl in the Valley of the Sun. Concerned citizens of Phoenix, led by Dorothy Gilbert and other founding members, banded together to “save the mountains” from encroaching development. Once organized, the advocates for preservation circulated petitions and sent informative and persuasive letters to influential politicians. This was a “grassroots” effort to protect the mountain range wilderness and preserve it as an urban oasis.

In 1971, the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council was organized. With approximately 800 acres of preserved land, the council launched a nearly 30 year quest to attain and maintain the present 7000 acres of wilderness in The Phoenix Mountains Preserve. For more information, visit <http://www.phoenixmountains.org/>.

Dorothy "Dottie" Gilbert was born in Cleveland, Ohio. As a young girl, she had an affinity for horses and made every effort to ride and eventually own a horse. As a young adult, she was a journalist who worked first at Newsweek Magazine and then Time Magazine, where she developed her skills in journalism and research. In 1941, Dorothy married Elbert Roy Gilbert, a chemical engineer, who was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. Within 10 years their family grew to three sons. Then in 1953 they decided to relocate to Phoenix for a lifestyle change and to raise their family.



Horses, nature and journalism are ingredients that fostered Dorothy's passion as an advocate for preservation, and soon she was to spearhead the grassroots organization that convinced the state and federal government to designate 7000 acres of prime land as an urban mountain preserve.

"Dorothy Gilbert and the Phoenix Mountains Preserve" comprises select digitized primary and secondary source materials from the Dorothy Gilbert Collection that trace the evolution of the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council. Preliminary Materials include historical summaries about the preserve and council. The Timeline includes primary and secondary source materials that exemplify the grassroots effort. Land Boundaries include primary source materials that identify the boundaries of land acquisitions. Maps includes a list of selected maps that illustrate the development of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve and the maps' location in the Arizona Collection.

The web site is designed as a resource of historical information about Phoenix Mountains Preserve and the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, and as an example of grassroots organizational methods.

Preliminary Materials

[Squaw Peak Park Calendar of Events](#), 1957-1973. ACC# 98-1906, 1/8, 3 pages
[Phoenix Mountains Preserve Timeline](#). ACC# 98-1906, 3/23, 3 pages
[Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council History](#), 1981, by Dottie Gilbert. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23, 3 pages
[“Phoenix Mountains Preserve: Not just another pretty place but a matter of dollars and sense,”](#) facts and figures on the Phoenix Preserve, 1975. ACC# 98-1906, 1/50, 2 pages

Manuscripts that give specific land areas and boundaries

[Squaw Peak Area Study](#), 8/60. ACC# 98-1906, 1/52
[Department of Interior press release](#), 5/31/61. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23, 2 pages
[Squaw Peak hand drawn boundary map identifying plots](#), 1961. ACC# 98-1906, 4/4
[Hand drawn map with names of land owners](#), 1961. ACC# 98-1906, 4/4
[Bureau of Land Management](#), 6/30/66. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23, 5 pages
[BLM gives 162 acres](#), 10/17/69. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23, 2 pages
[BLM notice of 638 acres of public land](#), 11/16/70. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23
[Request for lands](#), 10/2/73. ACC# 98-1906, 3/23
[Exclusion of Parcel No. 603 from Phoenix Preserve with map](#), 7/15/80. ACC# 98-1906, 2/5, 2 pages
[Status of Preserve](#), 3/3/83. ACC# 98-1906, 7/4
[Minutes of special board meeting about purchase of property from Phoenix Art Museum](#), 2/5/85. ACC# 98-1906, 7/29, 4 pages
[Status Mountains Preserve Program](#), 1/30. ACC# 98-1906, 1/31

Maps showing plots and Phoenix Mountain Preserve Boundaries (available at the Department of Archives and Manuscripts)

Squaw Peak Park Extension Land Applications 1960s ACC# 98-1906, 1/45

Copies of Squaw Peak Topographical map 1960 one showing mine claims another showing trails 1960s. ACC# 98-1906, 1/45

Land Acquisition plan for BLM 1964. ACC# 98-1906, 1/44

Open Space Plan for Phoenix Mountains- Squaw Peak 4/66. ACC# 98-1906, 1/44

Squaw Peak Mining Claims 1969. ACC# 98-1906, 1/44

Paradise Valley Wilderness Area 8/4/69. ACC# 98-1906, 1/47

Colored coded Phoenix Mountains Preserve boundaries; to be acquired and under option lands as of 1975. ACC# 98-1906, 1/45

Phoenix Mountains Preserve Amended Boundary, revised 3/29/75. ACC# 98-1906, 1/44

Phoenix Mountains Preserve amended boundaries as approved by the city council 7/14/75, revised 5/17/76. ACC# 98-1906, 1/12

South Mountains Preserve 7/14/75 revised 12/2/75. ACC# 98-1906, 1/44

Land Acquisitions and Current status PMP, City of Phoenix-Parks Division 3/21/77. ACC# 98-1906, 1/48

Phoenix Mountains Preserve Alternate 1, adopted by resolution #14026, January 24, 1978 8/4/81. ACC# 98-1906, 1/42

City of Phoenix Quarter Section Map showing right of way properties around the preserve 11/5/82. ACC# 98-1906, 1/41

General Plan Phoenix Mountains Preserve adopted by PR & LD 12/83. ACC# 98-1906, 1/53

The Pointe South Mountain a Gosnell Map- Land Exchange Map 1/3/86. ACC# 98-1906, 4/16

[Home](#) [Introduction](#) [1960-64](#) [1965-69](#) [1970-74](#) [1975-79](#) [1980-84](#) [1985-89](#)

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