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ABSTRACT

Twelve readings, many of which are primary materials excerpted from dated newspapers, are intended to accompany the fifth grade course on regional studies of the West in Unit V described in ED 069 568. Describing past and present conditions in Phoenix, the readings touch upon the Salt River; the civilization and disappearance of the Hohokam Indians; early mining; the building of a number of dams; and several portrayals of Phoenix in the 1870's. Related documents are ED 061 134; ED 062 226; ED 062 227; ED 069 562 through ED 069 568; SO 002 734 and SO 005 460. (SJM)

Grade Five
Unit: Phoenix

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SELECTED READINGS
ON
PHOENIX

Sp 002 740

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THE SALT RIVER

[This description is from Hiram Hodge, Arizona As It Was
Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1877.]

Salt River rises well up towards the eastern part of the Territory, in the White Mountains, its head waters being the White and Black rivers. It has numerous large branches, coming in mostly from the north, . . . [They drain] the country far to the north, including the Tonto Basin, the Sierra Ancha, White, San Francisco, and other mountains. Its course is west and south-west. . . [It] unites with the Gila below Phoenix some thirty miles. This river was named the "Rio Salido," by the early Spanish and Jesuit explorers, on account of its waters being highly impregnated with salt, which is easily noticed at low water. This is caused by a heavy salt formation through which the river passes about one hundred miles above Phoenix. At low water it is a clear, beautiful stream. . . [It has] an average width of two hundred feet for a distance of one hundred miles above its junction with the Gila, and a depth of two feet or more.

The Verde River is one of the largest northern branches of Salt River. . . [Its] upper branches . . . [rise] at different points to the east, north, and northwest from Prescott. It becomes a fine river of eighty feet in width about fifty miles northeast from Prescott. . . [Then it] runs a southerly course to its junction with Salt River near Camp McDowell. Its whole course is about one hundred and fifty miles. . . . The main upper branches of Salt River, the White and Black rivers, are both swift running mountain streams, and rise in the White Mountains.

THE HOHOKAM INDIANS

Edith West

The Hohokam Farmers

The Hohokam Indians lived in the Gila and Salt River valleys in 1300 A.D. They had been living there for over 1500 years. This is over 3 times as long as the time which has passed since Columbus discovered America.

The Hohokams had developed a huge irrigation system. They used sharp sticks to dig long, deep canals. These canals carried water from the Gila and Salt Rivers across the desert land. Some of these canals ran 6 to 12 miles away from the rivers. The Hohokams also dug canals from some of the smaller streams which ran into the Gila and Salt rivers. The Indians even dug one canal on a slant down from a mountain. This canal cut across some of the places where water drained down from the mountain. It collected this water and carried it down into the desert plain.

By 1300, the canals covered some 150 miles. One of them was 30 feet deep. Can you imagine digging such a canal without modern tools?

The Indians built dams across the river. The dams were made of brush which they cut in the mountains. These dams backed up the water and made it easier to send it into the canals. The dams also held back water. They stored the water for times in the year when there was no rain in the mountains.

The Hohokams were farmers who also did some hunting. They grew cotton on their irrigated lands. They also grew corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins. They hunted deer in the nearby mountains. They trapped rabbits and other small game in the desert area.

Irrigation made it possible for the Hohokams to grow a great deal of food. This meant that they could take time to make beautiful pottery. They did not have to work all of the time to make a living from the soil.

The Hohokams also had time for various types of recreation. Huge ball courts have been discovered in the ruins of the ancient villages. The Hohokams probably played a kick-ball game much like one which is still played by Indians in the Southwest. Several of their balls have been discovered.

The Indians also learned how to use the copper which they found in nearby areas. Modern men have discovered small copper bells in the ruins of the villages.

Scientists have also found objects made of sea shell. This means that the Hohokam Indians either visited or traded with people who lived on the sea coast many miles away.

The Hohokams built their homes in villages. The earliest homes were pit houses. The Indians dug holes in the earth. They built walls up a few feet above the ground and added roofs. The walls and roofs were made of poles, brush, and mud plaster. WHERE DO YOU THINK THEY GOT THE POLES? Later homes were built completely above ground with the same types of materials.

Most of the villages which have been discovered consisted of houses of only one floor. By 1300, however, the Hohokams were building houses of several floors. One four-floor building has been uncovered at Casa Grande. It seems likely that the Hohokams learned to build larger houses from some of the Pueblo Indians. These Indians moved into the area and lived next to the Hohokam.

The villages were strung out close together along the irrigated land of the valley. The Indians could not build too far from the rivers and streams. However, their canals let them build as much as a dozen miles from a stream. The villages were close together. Scientists have dug up remains of many villages. They know that the Hohokams built a canal and village and lived in the village many years. Then they moved to a new area. Here they built a new canal and village.

The Disappearance of the Hohokams

Sometime around 1400 the Hohokam Indians seem to have disappeared from the Salt River Valley. We do not know why they left or where they went. Maybe they did not really leave at all. However, the remains of villages and canals seem to indicate that the Hohokams either left or changed their way of life very greatly. No typical Hohokam remains can be found for the period after 1400.

Scientists have developed a number of ideas about why the Indians may have left. Some have thought that many Hohokam were killed by an epidemic (widespread disease). Indians may have become frightened and fled. However, we have no evidence for this theory.

Other scientists think that the area was hit by a severe drought. Suppose the mountains received no or little rain for many years. The rivers would have dried up. Then the Indians would have been unable to grow food.

We do have evidence of a great drought in the mountains from 1277 to 1295 -- a period of 20 years. Modern scientists know this because they can count the size of tree rings. The rings for these years are very narrow. This shows that there was little rain and little growth.

However, scientists also know that some of the villages close to the Gila and Salt Rivers remained during this drought. Only those on the smaller streams were forced to move. Moreover, scientists have no evidence of a great drought around 1400 when the Hohokam seem to have moved from the valley. The drought theory does not explain all of the data we have.

Other scientists have built up still another theory. Their idea is based upon the movement of the Hohokams from one village to another. The Indians went to great efforts to build each long canal. Why did they leave? Why did they go to the trouble of building another great canal from the river in a nearby area and to build a new village? Why did they do this a number of times over the years? Suppose a long drought made it impossible for them to farm the area. Wouldn't they have moved out of all of the land close to the same river at about the same time? Why would they just move from one place along the river to another?

The people who have asked these questions have also noted problems which white men had later in this same area. The early white men in the valley found that after some years of irrigation, they damaged the land. The water did not run off quickly through the soil. Instead, the soil became water-logged up to a few inches from the surface. The surface was dried out by the sun. Remember that the water of the Gila and Salt Rivers contains much salt content. The salty water which remained close to the roots of crops damaged the crops. Finally, the water had deposited so much salt close to the crop roots, that crops could not grow in the soil. The white men learned how to build machines to pump out the water. However, the Indians did not develop such machines. Today some scientists think that the Hohokam had to move their villages and finally leave the valley because they ruined the land for the time being. The land had become water logged and the soil too salty to grow crops. WHY MIGHT THE LAND BECOME USEFUL AGAIN AFTER SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS?

Another theory has been presented recently. One scientist believes that the Hohokam never left the valley. There is evidence that a number of Pueblo Indians moved into the valley and lived beside the Hohokam. This scientist believes that the two groups of Indians intermarried. He thinks that they developed a culture which was a mixture of both older cultures. Scientists find no Hohokam

remains for the period after 1400. However, perhaps this is because the culture changed so much that the remains are not identified as Hohokam. This scientist believes that the Pima Indians who still live in the area are descendants of the Hohokam. He has identified several items of Pima culture which are like the old Hohokam culture. For example, the houses are much like those which the Hohokam finally built above ground. However, this explanation, too, is not accepted completely. The early white men who came to the area wrote reports of the Pima Indians living there. If they are descendants of the Hohokam, why were the old canals not being used? Someday, scientists may dig up more information about the Hohokam.

THE OLD IRRIGATION CANALS

The following description is from Hiram Hodge, Arizona As It Was, Chicago: Rio Grande Press. The book was published in 1877.

A large irrigating canal. . . was from twenty-five to fifty feet wide. This canal took the water from Salt River eight miles above, and can be easily traced for twenty miles or more below.

The people who excavated these canals must have had a knowledge of engineering. . . The canals are cut on a true and perfect grade. Several American engineers. . . admit that they cannot improve the grade. . . .

The largest of the old irrigating canals. . . is some twenty-five miles above Phoenix, on the south side of Salt River, near the point where the river. . . flows from the mountains. . . . For eight miles after leaving the river, it is fully fifty feet wide. For this distance it runs in a southwest course through hard, stony ground, and enters on a vast stretch of mesa or tableland which extends. . . from thirty to sixty miles. . . .

At about eight miles from where this great canal leaves the river, it is divided into three branches, each twenty-five feet wide. . . . Two miles west of where the main canal branches are the ruins of a large town which extends along the mesa for many miles.

Near the centre of this town are the ruins of the largest building yet discovered. Its ground measurement is 350 feet by 150 feet, with outer walls, moats, embankments, and reservoirs, outside the main walls, and ruins of smaller buildings in all directions.

. . . .
On the line of the branch canals. . . are other ruins of towns similar to the others described. Below the great canal and the large ruins described. . . are other irrigating canals of nearly equal size to the others. . . They took water out of the river many miles below the large one mentioned. . . Here there are also the ruins of great houses and towns.

J. ROSS BROWNE'S ACCOUNT OF MINING IN THE GILA RIVER AREA BEFORE PHOENIX DEVELOPED

This account is from Browne's Adventures in the Apache Country. Browne visited in the Gila city area in 1864 while he was traveling from Fort Yuma to Tucson.

We camped at Gila City. . . It was, encircled in the rear by volcanic hills and mountains, and. . . overlooked the bend of the river, with its sand flats. . . and cottonwoods. . . . Gold was found in the. . . near-by hills a few years ago, and. . . gold fever raged throughout the Territory. At one time over a thousand hardy adventurers were prospecting the gulches and canyons of this. . . area. The earth was turned inside out. Rumors of. . . great discoveries flew on the wings of the wind. . . . Enterprising men hurried to the spot with barrels of whisky and billiard-tables. . . Men came with ready-made clothing and fancy wares; traders crowded in with wagon-loads of pork and beans. . . . There was everything in Gila City in a few months but a church and a jail. . . . When the city was built. . . the gold places gave out. . . . There was "paydirt" back in the hills, but it didn't pay to carry it down to the river and wash it out by any ordinary process. Gila City collapsed. In about the space of a week it existed only in the memory of disappointed . . . men. At the time of our visit the. . . town consisted of three chimneys and a coyote.

AN ARMY WIFE DESCRIBES HER VISIT TO PHOENIX IN THE EARLY 1870'S

The following description was written by Mrs. Martha Summerhayes in a book called Vanished Arizona, Recollections of My Army Life.

The heat became intense, as the summer approached. To sleep inside the house was impossible. . . We soon followed the example of the cavalry, who had their beds out on the parade ground.

Two iron cots. . . were brought from the hospital and placed side by side in front of our quarters. . . . Upon these were laid some mattresses and sheets. . . After "taps" had sounded, and lights were out, we retired to rest. . . . We had not thought about the ants, however. . . They swarmed over

our beds, driving us into the house. The next morning Bowen placed a tin can of water under each point of contact. . . /with the ground. The cans/ did not look. . . /beautiful/ but our old enemies, the ants, were outwitted. And now after the eight days of most distressing heat. . . came six days more of journeying down the valley of the Gila.

We took supper in Phoenix, at a place known as "Devine's." I was hearing a good deal about Phoenix; for even then, its gardens, its orchards, and its climate were becoming famous. . . /The/ season of the year. . . /would not have led me/ to form a favorable opinion of that thriving place even if my opinions of Arizona. . . had not been formed already.

We crossed the Gila somewhat below. . . /Phoenix/. . . /The/ entire valley was seething hot. . . .

PHOENIX IN THE 1870's

/This account was written by Rufus Kay Wyllys in his book, Arizona, the History of a Frontier State./

. . . Phoenix. . . had its own newspaper. . . . /To prevent/ complaints of visitors about its heat, the following year /1879/ found ice being manufactured and delivered in wheelbarrows for seven cents a pound. . . . Freighting companies traveled up and down the valley in the seventies. . . /They supplied/ the needs of Phoenix's agricultural surroundings as well as the copper towns of the upper Gila. A regular stagecoach line had been in operation. . . as early as 1870.

Although the first railways. . . /in Arizona did not pass through/ Phoenix, . . the town was. . . /affected/ by them. In 1879 the east-ward building Southern Pacific line. . . halted its construction at what was soon to become the town of Casa Grande. Unemployed workers wandered into the Salt River valley to produce the first riots and crime wave in Phoenix's. . . history.

MARICOPA COUNTY IN 1877

This description is from Hiram Hodge, Arizona As It Was,
Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1877.

Maricopa County is south of Yavapai, and has a population of 3,702. It is the great agricultural county of the Territory, and the larger part of its population are directly connected with agricultural pursuits. The great and rich valley of Salt River is wholly in Maricopa County.

The county town is Phoenix, with a population of 500. It is pleasantly situated in the valley of Salt River, two miles north of Salt River. . . with a fine growth of shade trees along its principal streets. . . . In summer the thermometer ranges here from 80° to 110°, and in winter from 40° to 80°.

There are three fine flouring mills in and close to Phoenix. . . . A court-house, jail, school-house, hotel, restaurant, and several good stores, pleasant residences, etc., make up the town. The population is about one half each, white and Mexicans.

THE SWILLING IRRIGATION COMPANY

This description is from the Phoenix newspaper, the Territorial Expositor, for June 13, 1879.

In the Spring of 1867, we met J. W. Swilling. . . who. . . told us about his project to settle the Salt River Valley. . . He was. . . getting up a party to make the settlement and dig a ditch for the purpose of irrigating the lands. . . . But if our recollection serves us rightly, Mr. Swilling raised a party in the following Winter (1867-8), made settlement and. . . began to dig the Swilling Canal. Other parties say that he did not move to Salt River until the following Winter. . . The settlement was. . . made at a point about four miles east of the present town. Swilling and his partners. . . were poor and had a hard time. They dug the ditch by pure muscle without assistance from any one. . . They did not even use a plow-- horse feed being too scarce. They worked under great disadvantages; their bill of fare was bread, beans and coffee, sometimes with bacon or lard to dress their beans but often without. . . .

EAST AND WEST PHOENIX IN THE 1870's

This description is from the Territorial Expositor for June 13, 1879.

. . . . The settlement increased. . . In the fall of 1870 there were two settlements--east and west Phoenix; the former near where Vell's mill now is and the latter where the present town now stands. About this time one-half section of land, 320 acres, was selected for the site of the present town of Phoenix. . . . In the beginning of 1871, the Legislature passed an act creating the county of Maricopa, and authorizing an election to be held (in May, we think,) for county officers and to fix the county seat. The rivals for that honor were east and west Phoenix. . . . The election was rather a hotly contested one--one man, James Faver, being killed during the discussion. . . preceding it. The town site was surveyed and laid out. . . into blocks of 300 feet square. . . . Along the sidewalk of each street, the water from the irrigating ditches runs continuously. . . That part of the town now built up. . . is well shaded with cottonwood trees, making the town cooler at this season of the year than any place we know of in the same degree of latitude and with no greater altitude above sea level. . . . The population of Phoenix is. . . estimated at between 1200 and 2000, and that

of the county between 5000 and 7000. In our last article we put the population of Phoenix at 1300. . . As it is continually increasing we now say 1400. We are informed by the Assessor that the assessed value of the property of the town proper is about \$500,000 and that of the whole county about \$1,250,000.

AGRICULTURE IN THE PHOENIX AREA IN 1879.

This description is from the Territorial Expositor for June 13, 1879.

The amount of land under cultivation is about 15,000 acres. Some say that Salt River has water enough to irrigate 100,000 acres; but we think this. . . too much. We think it may be made to irrigate 25,000 to 40,000 acres. . . The water all through the valley is found in abundance between eighteen and twenty-five feet from the surface. It is said that the present crop of wheat and barley will average 1600 to 1800 pounds to the acre. In the Fall, Winter, and up to the middle of April, Salt River has an abundance of water. . . It decreases very rapidly in April, May and June. . . To avoid loss of crops, small grain should be sowed as early in the Fall as possible. The present system of irrigation is not good and there is much water wasted. Besides small grain, sugar cane. . . and sorghum can be raised to great advantage. . . All semi-tropical fruits appear to be in their native soil and climate except, perhaps, the orange. . . We think the. . . orange will also be cultivated with profit. . . So far experiments. . . have been rather rude, except at Mr. Hayden's place. . . orange trees are not yet old enough for a test. But alfalfa appears to be in its native element. . . Many farmers are now fattening a large number of hogs. . . They are likely to produce in the near future, more bacon and pork than the valley can consume. Hogs do extremely well, and do not appear to be subject to any disease whatever.

The Cave Creek mines are the nearest to Phoenix--about 25 miles. Next are the Tiptop and adjacent mines--about 40 to 50 miles. The old Vulture mines. . . are about 55 or 60 miles. The roads from Phoenix to all these mines are good. The mines in the Bradshaw Basin. . . are 70 to 80 miles distant, to which a good road will soon be opened. All these mines get their flour, grain and most of their bacon from the producers of Salt River Valley. . . .

The prospects for the future of Phoenix are excellent, and the demand for farm products is ready ahead of the supply. . . .
[V!e] feel satisfied that in less than ten months, flour and grain will again be a scarce resource in Phoenix, and have to be imported from California.

BUILDING NEW DAMS

Edith West

Need for a Large Dam on Salt River

The farmers in the Salt River Valley were hurt by floods on the Salt River. How could there be floods in a desert region? At times heavy rains fall on the nearby mountains. These rains usually come as big storms from the Gulf of Mexico. The downpours send a sudden rush of water into the streams and rivers. They create flash floods. Some floods are even found in dried-up stream beds. People driving through the desert come across signs warning them of flash floods. This means that they are about to cross a former stream bed. This dried stream bed may become a raging torrent of water during a sudden cloud-burst. These sudden floods have at times carried people off the road and drowned them.

The early white farmers in the Salt River Valley cleared out the old Indian irrigation canals. They built their dams out of a few rocks and much brush. These were the same materials used by the ancient Indians. Such dams were not strong enough to hold against flash floods. Floods came often in the years after the white men settled in the valley. When a flood came, the dams were washed out and had to be rebuilt.

The farmers faced another problem because the dams were so small. These dams were not big enough to store much water in the rivers. In 1897 the area was hit by a serious drought /lack of rain/. Very little rain fell in the mountains. The drought continued through 1898 and 1899. For three years, the farmers had too little water to irrigate their lands. The small dams had not stored enough water for such an emergency. They had not even stored enough water for one year of drought. By the end of 1899 the farmers faced disaster.

Then in 1900 a huge storm hit the mountain area. It created a flash flood on the rivers. All of the dams were washed out. A large part of Phoenix was flooded.

Something had to be done if farmers were to remain in the valley. The farmers decided that they needed a large dam in the mountain area. It must be large enough to back up enough water to last for several years in case of drought. It must also be large enough to prevent floods.

Building of the Roosevelt Dam

Building a huge dam in the mountains would be very expensive. The farmers could not pay for it even if all joined together to provide for the project.

Finally a plan was worked out with the federal government. The government built the Roosevelt Dam at a cost of $5\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars. A local association of farmers took over the operation of the dam. This association paid back the cost of the dam over a period of years.

The Roosevelt Dam is very large. It had to be built to cross a canyon 600 feet wide. (This is over twice as long as a football field.) The dam is 284 feet high. COMPARE THE HEIGHT WITH SOME OF THE TALL BUILDINGS IN YOUR TOWN. At the bottom of the river the dam had to be built 170 feet thick to withstand the pressure of the water. (170 feet is over half the length of a football field.) The dam narrows to only 16 feet thick at the top. This dam backed up enough water to cover 300,000 acres of land with four feet of water.

It was very difficult to build this dam. The dam was 60 miles from the closest railroad. Materials had to be brought in by wagon over poor roads. Moreover, no dam could be built while the water still flowed through the river channel. The workers had to cut a 500 foot tunnel through the mountain. The river waters were sent through this tunnel while the dam was being built. Even then, flash floods carried away tools and equipment several times. The dam was completed in 1912. At that time it was the largest masonry dam in the world.

The Need for New Dams on the Salt River

The Roosevelt Dam helped greatly. However, it did not solve all of the problems facing farmers. Between 1912 and 1920 the dam overflowed four times. This meant that much water was wasted. The dam could not store enough water for irrigation if drought lasted very long.

Finally, more dams were constructed. Three were built below the Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River. Two others were built on the Verde River which flows into the Salt River. These dams can now store huge amounts of water. They could provide all of the water needed by the Salt River Valley for two years, even if no rain fell during this time. That is, they could do so if farmers and the people of Phoenix did not greatly increase their demands for water.

The dams have another great value for the Phoenix area. The water running over the dam provides the power needed to produce electricity. This is important since the area is not close to coal fields. Coal to produce electricity would have to be brought some distance by railroad.

From Territorial Expositor of May 9, 1879
PHOENIX

We are not yet sufficiently acquainted with this town and county to be able to speak understandingly of all its various business interests and capacity of development, for the valley of Salt River is a very large one, of which we have not had time to examine one-fourth. And therefore will merely attempt a slight sketch of the town of Phoenix, which is about one mile north of Salt River; has a population of about 1,300, of nearly all races. The American or Anglo-Saxon predominating, and the Mexican ranking next in number.

We count 15 general merchantile establishments in this town, great and small, about six of which carry stocks well up in the tens of thousands. There are two blacksmith and wagon making establishments, two wheelwrights, nine carpenter shops, one hotel, (perhaps lodging house is a better name), four restaurants, two private boarding houses, three lumber yards, two drug stores, one medical dispensary, two breweries, two furniture and cabinet-making establishments, two livery and sale stables and a large number of feed corrals, three bakeries, one auction house, one painter and two tinsmiths; besides there are several stone masons and bricklayers as well as dressmakers, two saddler-shops, eleven lawyers, and six doctors. In the way of saloons and beer houses Phoenix is quite up to most frontier towns. We counted thirteen of these establishments and may have missed one or two.

And now for the moral and educational side of the town. Phoenix has a public school, with an average attendance of 103 pupils, under the supervision of Mr. Smith, principal, who appears to be competent and attentive, assisted by Mrs. Cox and Miss Winn, who appear to be two very competent and amiable ladies. In visiting the school we did not dare to essay an examination of the pupils lest we might betray our own ignorance of those neglected arts, reading,

writing and spelling; but from the exercises we witnessed, we are satisfied that the senior class could teach us a good deal in elocution, mathematics and geography.

And now we come to the subject on which we are always delicate and diffident--religion. The people of Phoenix have two churches--one a commodious and roomy adobe building on the southwest corner of center and Monroe streets, in which Rev. Mr. Hedgpeth of the Methodist (sic) Church South presides, assisted by Rev. Mr. Wiley, and a temporary shade fenced with stakes on the southwest corner of Court House block, in which Rev. Mr. Meyer of the Presbyterian Church preaches on Sundays to a respectable congregation. There is no Catholic Church, but the Rev. Father Becker of Prescott, and Rev. Father Clerc of ~~Phoenix~~ occasionally visit Phoenix and hold divine service at the residence of Don Jesus ~~Claro~~ on Washington street.

Inference to the signs of progress in Phoenix, there are now in course of construction several large and commodious buildings, notably the brick building of Irvine & Co., corner of Washington and Montezuma streets; those of Steinacher & Goodrich, brick front, on Washington street, opposite the plaza; the brick building of Talheimer & Luke, opposite the plaza; the private residences (brick) of Mr. J. Lutgending and Mr. Swain, and the residence (sic) of Mr. Peralta. Besides those enumerated, there are many unpretentious buildings in the outskirts of the town in various stages of construction. We find that the older residents of Phoenix begin to put on style and discard adobe in favor of brick as a building material, and, in fact, few, except those who are as poor and unpretentious as ourselves, talk or think of adobe.

This sketch of Phoenix must necessarily be incomplete, our knowledge of the town and surroundings

being so; but as we become acclimated and posted, we will post our readers not only on the resources and progress of Phoenix, but of Maricopa county, and, as far as means will enable us, on the Territory in general. In doing ~~this~~ we intend to carefully avoid exaggeration, for our experience has shown us that all exaggeration on such subjects is injurious.

That we ourselves have implicit confidence in the future and permanent prosperity of Phoenix, Maricopa county, and Arizona generally, is well established by the fact that we publish this paper here, and we think ~~all~~ expressions of confidence are therefore ~~superfluous~~.