

Lehi Heritage Application Draft 1/18/22

1. Neighborhood Name and Boundaries.

What is now considered the neighborhood of Lehi was the original settlement and town in the area. Lehi is nestled in the north boundary of present-day Mesa near the Salt River, bordering the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community. It is bounded between Center Street and partially between Gilbert Road and Val Vista east to west, and Thomas Road and McKellips north to south. The Lehi neighborhood is a city planning subarea. Additionally, while the northeast section typically has construction less than 50 years old, most of the extant agricultural property related to the area's citrus heritage is located here. The heritage overlay boundaries extend to include areas that fully express the neighborhood's heritage.

2. Brief history of the neighborhood

Lehi was Settled in 1877 by Mormon pioneers who were a part of the 'Lehi' Company, under the direction of Daniel Webster Jones. Mormon leader Brigham Young directed the party south to Mexico, though authorized a stop if a suitable place was found. The site of settlement was foretold in a dream by pioneer Henry Rogers before the group left Utah. Rogers' vision '*...looked across an expanse of river bottom, saw a small stream flowing near the west bank... and sitting on his horse in the shade of the trees was a man wearing a broad rimmed hat and looking toward the west.*' (Ward, 1952)

Some believe the vision was realized near the present-day Lehi Crossing monument, set on the side of the Salt River NE of Mesa. Others believe it was realized near the river bottom by Country Club Drive. The party constructed a small fort and named their new settlement Fort Utah, and the historical marker can be found today at the intersection of Horne and Lehi Road. The settlement was called various names before settling on 'Lehi' including Fort Utah, Jonesville and Utahville. Individual land claims followed, with each family group claiming one quarter section of land. It was organized according to the "City of Zion" plan established by Brigham Young.

The Lehi pioneers faced much difficulty in their first years and it was with the help of both Charles Hayden lending credit to the pioneers, and neighboring Akimel O'odham Indian tribes assisting with labor that the new settlement found their footing. (Lisa A. Anderson, 2008) Many of the canals that were cleared, were the remnants of the ancient Hohokam canal system, and can be seen today still following Lehi Road.

A neighboring Chief offered seed to the group and Jones, forming the '*Utah Irrigating and Farming Company*' employed many Native Americans to help clear ditches and get water flowing. The result was the *Utah Canal* which brought river water to Lehi fields. (Project, 2022) (Turner, 2006) Jones invited the neighboring Native Americans to live and work alongside the people of Lehi. This would become a point of contention for the entire salt River Valley at one point or another, but Jones did not relent. During the great flood of 1891, many of the Native Americans came to Lehi to seek shelter. Lehi's relationship with the neighboring tribes remains today, a unique and special example of cooperation. Jones eventually petitioned government officials to establish a permanent reservation along the Salt River. When the reservation was formally designated, a large section of Lehi became a part of the current day Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Reservation and is still referred to a 'Lehi' among the people. (Turner, 2006)

Lehi Pioneers planted fruit orchards and vineyards upon their arrival, and 100 acres of food crops the first year, setting a precedent that is still seen in this widely agricultural community. Land was

donated for the construction of a school, a church and a cooperative store. Homes in Lehi were initially made of adobe, but this changed in the 1890s when George Mason Tiffany, a missionary, came to live along the Salt River. Tiffany was a brickmaker by trade, and he quickly recognized the superior quality of the clays along the riverbanks. His brickyard, located at the northwest corner of Lehi Road and McDowell was the first of several that produced many tons of bricks for homes and businesses throughout the valley and even in the Mesa Mormon temple. These bricks became known as *Lehi Red Brick* and can still be seen throughout Lehi today.

The first school in Lehi was in the home of Francelle Robson on Mesa Drive in 1878. The first Lehi School building was erected in 1881 at Horne and Lehi Roads. It was replaced by a newer building made of Lehi Red Brick in 1914. The original school bell was purchased for \$82.50. In 1914 it was placed on the newer school structure until 1968 when it was relocated nearby in the Pioneer Monument. (Emett, 2015) Lehi had an early post office, opened next to the general store in 1903. Current day Lehi Federal mail route is still designated as *Rural Route 1*, the very first rural mail route in the county.

Water issues in the Valley became paramount in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In 1903 The Town of Lehi pledged its land as collateral alongside others to secure a loan through the National Reclamation Act for the construction of what would become Roosevelt Dam. This became one of the most significant economic drivers in the state. Lehi Agricultural Irrigating District (LAID) was also pivotal in the creation of the Salt River Users Association, now known as SRP (Salt River Project). Lehi voted to join the Association in 1924 and with the final addition, SRP's service area was substantially determined. (SRP, 2017)

Lehi has always found a way to stand apart, and the 20th century was no different. The Japanese were among early settlers in Lehi and included Kurataro Ishikawa (1909) and Mingo Ikeda (1911) who are credited with bringing cantaloupe and other crop innovations successfully to the valley. (Lisa A. Anderson, 2008) Produce of all kinds was sold at markets and the Ishikawa family operated a fruit stand on Lehi Road until the 1970's. (Sato) During World War II Lehi was among the few areas where Japanese residents were not sent to Internment camps. The descendants of these families still reside in present day Lehi. The schools in Lehi were never segregated and Mexican, Japanese and Native Americans alike attended school there. (Lisa A. Anderson, 2008)

Agriculture was always a way of life in Lehi. By the time Arizona gained statehood in 1912, Lehi had already found its place in history. By 1920, crops were diverse, from alfalfa, to melons and considerable sized orchards. By the mid 1900's citrus groves were in full production, and the original fruit and nut tree orchards had been expanded and built upon. Lehi citrus orchards sold produce to Sunkist throughout the citrus boom, and provided produce throughout the region. Some of the citrus orchards remain today in the northeast areas of Lehi, still producing commercial citrus. Wheat and Cotton were grown through war times to support the war effort. Honey was produced in large quantities and supplied the east coast throughout the early 20th century.

During the depression Lehi and Mesa farmers diversified, drawing more heavily on livestock such as the poultry and dairy cattle. At one time there were four operating Dairies in Lehi, shipping milk throughout the Salt River Valley, and the many poultry farms, including Del Rio, supplied meat and eggs. Ancient poultry barns in North Lehi, and old milking barns along Mesa drive still stand while apiaries throughout the neighborhood still buzz with life.

From the 1930's onward, gatherings were held to celebrate the pioneers and to bring the community together. This is echoed today in the Annual Lehi community meetings, and the Annual Lehi Rodeo. The Lehi Crossing Annual horseback ride as well, remains a tradition in early spring, retracing the steps of the original pioneers. People gather on horseback the Lehi Crossing Monument and ride down to the Church near the old Lehi town center. The Friday night gatherings held throughout the early 1900's, where everyone from every faith and background was welcome, is still held once a year at the church after the Rodeo. Lehi has, through the test of time, remained much as it was in the beginning; a true pioneering neighborhood.

While Lehi was the first Mormon colony town located in the southernmost part of the Arizona Territory, it has remained to this day a rural feeling community built around a family lifestyle and open

spaces. Lehi has retained an agricultural environment and original legacy families still live in the community and maintain family farms. Lehi has one of the last remaining 4-H (Youth Leadership) clubs in Mesa and daily, young people can be seen riding horses or walking their livestock alongside the road. The first boy scout troop in Lehi was formed in 1914 and remains the longest standing troop in the State of Arizona. Lehi today is home to over 700 horses, making it a uniquely equine oriented area. The community is still irrigated with open ditches, and small-scale gardens yield family produce or roadside citrus stands. Large open fields visible from the roads, scattered with various types of livestock is a common sight, and family chicken coops are scattered throughout the community. There are open roads with wide dirt shoulders throughout Lehi that allow for walking, wagon rides, horseback riding, and bicycling.

Lehi has grown from a heavily agricultural town into a rural-suburban enclave on the northern edge of Mesa. The Town of Lehi was annexed by the city of Mesa in July 1970. The Lehi planning Subarea was created in 2006 in an effort to maintain the character of the area amid pressures from urbanization. Within the Lehi Subarea homes are on minimum one-acre lots and retain wider livestock privileges than the more urban areas of Mesa. Lehi is identified as Zone 1 in the City of Mesa Lighting Zone Map, requiring more strict guidelines on limits for lighting. The usual street requirements, such as paved streets, curbs, sidewalks and streetlights were waived. This has successfully slowed the pace of development within Lehi. In recent history, Lehi was cut into two pieces by the installation of the 202 freeway, but even the loss of land did not stop the 'Lehi' way of life. Bison breeders and several notable horse breeders (Quarter horse, Morgan and Arabian) have called Lehi home over the years.

Today, livestock of many varieties can be found in Lehi, including horses, llamas, sheep, emus, Donkeys, peacocks, cattle, goats, sheep and exotic birds. The annual sheep crossings that were driven through Lehi on their way to southern grazing pastures are still remembered by some, but smaller farms with a modest head count is what remains. Today, a drive along the roads of Lehi surprises with 100-year-old Irises growing wild along the roads, Cat's claw vines quietly covering homes and ancient oaks and eucalyptus towering above homes still graced with Lehi Red Bricks. Lehi has remained a place of perpetual charm and grace, whispering history from every hidden corner.

3. Concerns for changes that might negatively affect the historic character of the neighborhood.

Lehi Faces many challenges in preserving its unique, rural, agricultural and equine lifestyle. Lehi is generally a quiet community, with dark skies and space for livestock and agriculture. Within Lehi, open space is often compromised for growth and large lots are becoming smaller. The areas surrounding Lehi are becoming increasingly urbanized, often with higher density homes which puts enormous pressure on Lehi by way of traffic, noise and spillover in general. The ability to ride a horse down the street has always been a part of the Lehi 'way of life.' While the wide shoulders remain for use, the increase in speeding and heavy traffic present a concern. The lack of a formally dedicated Trail system through Lehi is a concern as the fringe areas are filled in with higher density projects. Aircraft out of Phoenix are using airspace above Lehi more heavily and create a challenge in maintaining the 'peace and quiet' that was historically a part of this area. Though the City of Mesa has pledged that a Mesa Drive freeway access will not be installed in our lifetimes, the possibility of further cutting up Lehi remains a fear. Keeping the lack of sidewalks and lack of streetlights is paramount to agricultural movement through, and the overall sense of the neighborhood. The allowance for septic systems and special livestock and agricultural privileges is necessary to maintain the historic way of life as well.

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Structures of historical significance and monuments:

1. 704 E Lehi Rd Built by Frank Erastus Shill for the Taylor Family
2. 462 E Lehi Rd Basset/Shill Home Built 1945 By Frank Erastus Shill
3. 2516 N Mesa Dr Otto Shill Senior home built in 1894 (Az historical home site)
4. 2308 N Horne Biggs home. Built for Syrina Biggs in 1886 by Thomas Biggs. W.A. Burton was the carpenter and Milo Shill laid brick. (100 Footprints on forgotten trails, Earl Merrill 1978)
5. 2330 N Horne Old Lehi Store This bldg. was the old Lehi Store, built in 1886 by Syrina Biggs as the 1st commercial bldg., it has a historical marker. It now houses Happy Rods car shop
6. 709 E Lehi Rd Old Shill brick house. This house was built 1930 by Milo Shill, he and his wife Alice Simkins lived there.
7. 2305 N Mesa Dr Old Biggs Farmhouse Built in 1900 by the sons and brothers (brick masons) for Ella Deseret Shill Biggs. This property still has the old wellhead on it (AZ Century historical home sites,)
8. 2701 N Mesa Dr Old River rock house Built in 1930 by Wright Shill as a dairy barn for farming. (Don Biggs, verbal)
9. 756 E Lehi Rd Old Fort Utah trading post Originally built in 1920 as a trading post across from Fort Utah. There was another one near it that blew up from dynamite stored in it. This one was built as a replacement. The house still has the original trading post in the front with additional room built on. The front is original, windows and brick. Karen Cooper raised her children in this house.
10. 2330 N Center Street Ainsworth home Built in 1900 By Freeman family. This home has federal historical marker. Originally the Freeman farm. (AZ Century Historical sites Lehi)
11. 808 E Sorenson circle Built in 1905 is a 1,764 square foot house on a 0.44 acre lot with 1 bathroom (AZ Century Historical sites Lehi)
12. 2258 N Horne 800 square foot house on a 2.25 acre lot with 1 bathroom, built in 1946, used to be a gas station with pumps out front on cement slab (AZ Century Historical sites Lehi)
13. 2158 N Horne- Built in 1900, this - bedrooms, 1 bathrooms Single Family property at 2158 N Horne, Mesa, AZ 85203 is approximately 1410 square feet, this home has been remodeled and looks much bigger and newer. Next to large field (AZ Century Historical sites Lehi)
14. Fort Utah monument Standing at the corner of Lehi Road and Horne in front of the Church with names of the original pioneers and the Original Lehi School bell.
15. Syrina Biggs Residence and Lehi Market Monument Marker, and original post office location
16. Lehi Crossing Monument marker northeast of Lehi along the Salt River marking the original crossing point of the Pioneers. Mesa's first birth and death were recorded here as settlers camped on the riverbank.
17. Original Chicken Coop of Del Rio Farms
18. Shill home historical marker
19. Canal markers

Artists and other notable happenings in Lehi:

1. Circa 1950 Vinyl record by artist Ron Kartchner who also used to play at the Lehi Days Rodeo
2. Annual Pit turkey roast for thanksgiving put on by troop 54 originally chartered by Lehi first Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
3. 'An Hour Before Dawn 1944' Movie filmed 1943 Paramount Pictures, used part of the original Henry Clay Rogers Homestead on Horne
4. 'Angel Unchained' 1970 Film, American international pictures

Plants and features of Natural Heritage elements

1. Mulberry tree located at 755 E McDowell, removed before freeway construction and moved to 533 E Lehi, still standing
2. Original Live Oak trees at 2514 N Mesa Dr brought by the Otto Shill from Texas Circa 1940 Still standing, and scattered throughout Lehi
3. Original Cottonwood tree 2514N Mesa Dr
4. Shirley Basset Irises growing along Lehi Rd at 462 E Lehi Rd originally Planted in 1940's.
5. Dead man's Curve on East Lehi Rd. East of Stapley, Origin unknown
6. Citrus orchards on North Thomas Rd

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