

National FFA Officers — 1966 - 67



Arizonans were especially active at the 39th annual convention of Future Farmers of America last fall in Kansas City, when more than 11,600 Future Farmers participated.

One Arizona FFA member was named to a national office, appearing in the group above. Back row, left to right, National Vice Presidents Harold Brubaker of Pennsylvania, Monte Reese of Oklahoma, Richard Morrison of Arizona, and Keaton Vandemark of Ohio. Front row, Gary Swan, president, from New York; and Paul Tarpley, secretary, from Louisiana.

This photo was given to us by Len Richardson, associate editor of *The National Future Farmer* magazine, after the picture's use in that publication. Len is an Arizona boy, graduating a few years ago with an agricultural journalism major from the U of A College of Agriculture.

In the same (December-January) issue of *The National Future Farmer* appears a story about Gary Hatch of Gilbert, Ariz., who won the national FFA public speaking contest with his original speech on "The Modern Farmer in This Space Age." With the award went a \$300 check. Also at the convention, Paul Bell of Avondale, Ariz., was one of the Vocational Agriculture teachers given an honorary "American Farmer" degree.

The full page color cover of the magazine shows two young FFA farm scientists at work in the vocational agriculture department of Coolidge, Ariz., High School. It is tied to a feature story, "Agriculture — the Crown of All Science," by — you guessed it — our former student, Len Richardson.

(Len was in school here with his twin brother, Glen, now on the staff of a dairy magazine in California. The twins' home was in Phoenix).

Salt River Valley Irrigation Farming Existed Before Christ

Winter visitors and other newcomers to Arizona are informed, by the Valley National Bank's agricultural newsletter, that those irrigation canals

in the rich Salt River Valley were built long before construction of Roosevelt Dam in 1911.

"Actually," says the publication, "the nucleus of our canal network dates back some 2,000 years when a tribe of Indians, called Hohokam by historians, wandered into the fertile valleys of the Salt and Gila rivers and decided to make that area their permanent abode."

It seems incredible to us that at the time of Christ there were farmers

in the Salt River Valley, but they were there, irrigating their fields, raising corn, squash, beans, cotton and tobacco. They were an advanced civilization and had a variety of skills — masonry, weaving, woodworking, making of jewelry, even a primitive form of copper metallurgy. They were the first Americans to bring water onto fields via carefully graded irrigation ditches and connecting laterals.

In a thousand years — by 1066 when William the Conqueror invaded Britain — the Hohokam had a number of communities throughout the Gila watershed. They had hammers, axes and other tools, clay bowls and dishes, adobe houses, and they wore clothing made of animal skins or woven from the cotton they raised. By 1300 they were an advanced culture.

Yet in the next century they had completely disappeared, and were gone before Columbus and his followers discovered this continent. Whether the Hohokam died out through disease, were destroyed by hostile neighbors, left their homes because of some religiously-inspired exodus, archeologists and historians do not know. None was left when the Spanish missionaries and conquistadors, trappers and mountain men first entered those rich valleys.

By the time of our Civil War, a century ago, the rich central valleys of Arizona were again populated by a race which tilled the soil, raised its food and cotton — the peaceful Pima and Papago Indians.

The first irrigation company in Arizona was the Swilling Irrigation Canal Company, formed in 1867 by Jack Swilling, a Confederate officer in the Civil War's only engagement on Arizona soil, at Picacho Peak. With \$10,000 Swilling started his company and had his men clean out some of the prehistoric Indian canals, beginning of the Salt River Valley's transformation into one of America's largest and most spectacular desert oases.

The crowning fortune of a man is to be born to some pursuit which finds him both employment and happiness, whether it be to make baskets or broadswords, or canals, or statues or songs — Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Success is the art of making your mistakes when nobody is looking.

Try to save some money, if possible. Some day it may be valuable again.