

The Town of Cave Creek (Arizona) is located in northern Maricopa County and is bounded by Maricopa County to the north, Phoenix to the west and south, Carefree to the east and Scottsdale to the southeast. The Town encompasses approximately 31 square miles.

The Town is well situated for access to regional transportation. Interstate Highway



17 (I-17) is located approximately 8 miles to the west, via the Carefree Highway. This north/south route connects Phoenix and Flagstaff. The recently completed 101 Loop is accessible 12 miles to the south, from Cave Creek Road. This road provides connections to the commercial and shopping areas in the East Valley. Air transportation is available at Scottsdale Municipal Airport, Deer Valley Airport and Sky Harbor International Airport. Recreation opportunities are available at nearby Lake Pleasant, Bartlett Lake, as well as the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area, Cave Creek Recreation Area, and Gateway Desert Awareness Park.

The 2000 population of Cave Creek is 3,728 persons. Between 1990 and 2000 the population increased 27.5% or by 803 people. Cave Creek's population growth is less than neighboring jurisdictions of Phoenix (31.3%), Scottsdale (35.8%) during the same period.

OUR HERITAGE

The Town of Cave Creek is named for Cave Creek, the small stream that originates in the hills to the northeast and flows southwesterly for 25 miles before reaching the vicinity of Paradise Valley. The stream derives its name from a high, overhanging bluff along its west bank that forms a wide open-mouthed cavern about two miles north of the present-day Town.

Cave Creek can trace its history back 100 years, but Native Americans were living in these.





hills long before any Europeans came. Various tribes of prehistoric Indians came into the area periodically to hunt game and gather wild foods. The Hohokam settled permanently in small villages along Cave Creek to grow crops. These villages used the waters of Cave Creek and nearby springs to irrigate their fields. These original inhabitants occupied the land from about 800 A.D. until 1400 A.D. and then disappeared. They left behind the crumbling remains of their irrigation ditches and the foundations of their small houses

After the departure of the Hohokam, the Tonto Apaches claimed the land. The Tontos did not build villages, but roamed central Arizona in small groups from their homeland in the Tonto Basin east of the Verde River. Their dominance over the land was ended by events elsewhere.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 brought thousands of miners to the West. In 1863 central Arizona had its turn at gold rush days. As prospectors explored farther eastward, the Tontos resisted their efforts of expansion and also raided their mining camps. To combat these



raiders, the US Army established Fort McDowell, on the west bank of the Verde River in 1865. The actual Town of Cave Creek can trace its beginnings to the Army's decision. In 1870, following an Indian trail through the Cave Creek area, the military forces built the first wagon road across the land, which connected Fort McDowell with Fort Whipple, near Prescott. In 1873, Cave Creek Road was built from the small village of Phoenix northward to join the Army's road near the flowing springs on the east bank of Cave Creek. When the Apaches became less menacing, prospectors traveled the new roads into unexplored land.

In 1874 William Rowe located a rich gold mine on Gold Hill, northwest of Cave Creek. His discovery touched off a gold rush to the area. Tales of great riches to be had soon circulated through mining camps and saloons. As the miners came and went, the land began to attract more permanent settlers. Jeriah Wood, a young cattleman from Missouri, established a ranch on the east bank of the Cave Creek. By 1877 he had built a home that was called Cave Creek Station. He sold goods to miners and travelers. A small post office, called Overton, was maintained at his ranch. When mining went into one of its periodic slumps, the Overton Post Office closed and Jeriah Wood moved to Phoenix. Another Missouri cattleman, Andrew Jackson Hoskin, took over the Cave Creek Station. Hoskin moved his family to Cave Creek to live and soon other families moved in.



A lively community grew up around the Hoskin Ranch. By 1886 there was a need for a one-room schoolhouse, and this was built beside Cave Creek .

Mining activity declined around 1894, although it never stopped completely.

TWENTIETH CENTURY CAVE CREEK

Around 1900, James D. Houck, a sheepman from eastern Arizona, bought Cave Creek Station and turned it into a sheep shearing

camp. Open rangeland surrounded the station in every direction. This, along with the post office, school, and house suited Houck perfectly. He added a rock building to house a store, the first in Cave Creek, and a saloon. He also began regular stage services to Phoenix.

Houck's shearing camp was a huge success for about ten years, then a series of misfortunes beset him. Stricter grazing laws, drought, and personal problems took their toll and Houck died by



his own hand in 1921. In 1924 Cave Creek Road was rerouted eastward, bypassing Houck Ranch, and Cave Creek Station slid into oblivion. Only a few traces of the old station remain today.

The same conditions that led to the demise of Houck's sheep business also affected the cattlemen along the creek. Not all of them gave up: some stayed for generations. Remnants of mining and cattle raising are still present today and a few prospectors even pick away at old claims in these hills.

The Cave Creek School reopened in 1930. Around this time period, some former cattle ranches became dude ranches.

From 1935 to 1939, the building of Bartlett Dam on the Verde River brought increased activity to the village of Cave Creek. From 1940 to 1943, Horseshoe Dam, also on the Verde River, was cause for another boom for the village.

In 1946, electricity and telephones came to Cave Creek, and in 1952, Cave Creek Road was finally paved all of the way from Phoenix.

In 1986, The Town of Cave Creek was incorporated.

