

Arizona Stories: Civil Rights in the 48th State

JAN. 5

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The Struggle for Civil Rights

In March of 1964, many African American Arizonans gathered at the state capitol to protest for a public accommodations bill. George Brooks was president of a local chapter of the NAACP and was one of the coordinators for the protest. The bill at the center of their protest would force businesses to end decades of discrimination toward African Americans.

The Public Accommodations Bill was approved by lawmakers only after Congress approved the Civil Rights Act of 1964 later that year.

The USS Arizona

The USS Arizona, known as the final resting place for the numerous lives lost in the attack on Pearl Harbor, was refitted for war by the Navy in late 1940. Letters from the sailors and photos capturing the Arizona are stored in the collections of the State Capitol Museum.

A statue known as The Arizona Miner was a gift from the state to the ship. When the ship was being prepared for war, the statue had been lost. The statue was miraculously found with a confusing label which had made it so hard to find. The statue is now back in Arizona stored at the Capitol Museum.

Hispanic Flyboys

There was no more dangerous a job during World War II than flying bombing missions over enemy territory. 185 Arizona Hispanics served as pilots, co-pilots, bombardiers, gunners and radio operators.

It's been over 50 years since the Hispanic Flyboys of World War II took to the skies. This segment gives viewers a look into the life of Mesa resident, Gilbert Orrantia who flew 50 missions in B-25s in 1942.

The Mission at San Carlos

Though it is a harsh and unforgiving land, the Apaches of San Carlos have called this desert their home for generations. Forced by the government to settle there over a century ago, they've had to struggle to survive and to preserve their culture, which gradually disappeared due to the influences and intervention of a non-native world.

Father Gino Piccoli is the pastor at St. Charles Catholic Church in San Carlos. Unlike his predecessors, Father Piccoli is committed to helping restore and nurture the Apache culture. He does this by incorporating it into the fabric of parish life.

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