

Timeline for Southside Grove Time Table, Final Sandblasted Version

13.8 billion years ago: Big Bang initiates the Universe.

13.6 billion years ago: Milky Way Galaxy is formed.

4.5 billion years ago: Earth is born.

1.8 million years ago: Stratovolcanic basin in Northern Arizona is scoured by glacial ice to form mountain ranges.

The ancient names for the Sacred Peaks are **Dook'ó'ooslííd (Diné/Navajo)** and **Nuva'tukya'ovi (Hopi)**, home of sacred Deities and healing medicines.

Indigenous peoples have their own origin & creation stories that place them in these homelands amongst mountains sacred to them.

16,000–10,000 BCE: First Peoples are dwelling in the region.

1085 CE: Sunset Crater erupts, resulting in fertile soil due to volcanic ash.

1100–1250: Pueblos at Wupatki and Walnut Canyon are built and lived in.

1539: Fray Marcos de Niza, Franciscan friar and explorer for Spain, scouts region.

1600s: Franciscans settle at Hopi village of Oraiba and bestow the name San Francisco Peaks on the mountains, after St. Francis of Assisi.

1821: Mexico wins independence from Spain and takes control of all former Spanish territory including Arizona.

1848: U.S. Army prevails in war with Mexico and Arizona Territory becomes part of the U.S.

1853: Army Lieutenant Whipple arrives in Flagstaff with survey crews at Antelope Spring.

1860s: The Diné (Navajo) are removed from their homelands after a scorched earth campaign by the U.S. government and forced into the Long Walk to the Bosque Redondo Reservation in New Mexico.

1862: President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation stating that enslaved people shall be free.

1863: Arizona becomes an independent territory, with 21 freed Black people on its census.

1866: Buffalo Soldiers, African American U.S. Army troops, are stationed in Arizona.

1867: Early settlers, originally from Boston, use a Ponderosa Pine tree as a flagpole, inspiring Flagstaff's name.

1868: The Diné (Navajo) are permitted to return to their homeland under a treaty with the U.S. government establishing the Navajo Reservation.

1880: Atlantic and Pacific Railroad begins construction across the Southwest U.S.

1881–1882: Lumber mills in Flagstaff expand to support construction of the railroad that spurs development of Old Town.

1882: President Arthur passes an executive order creating the Hopi Reservation.

1883: Flagstaff's Railroad Depot moves east and New Town forms near it.

1884: Fire destroys much of Old Town Flagstaff.

1887: Arizona Lumber and Timber Company opens in Flagstaff's Southside.

1888: Rio de Flag floods.

1892: La Iglesia Metodista Mexicana El Divino Redentoris is built.

1890: Old Town area evolves into La Plaza Vieja, a working-class Mexican neighborhood.

1894: Dr. Percival Lowell establishes astronomical observatory on Mars Hill.

1896: Rio de Flag floods.

1899: Northern Arizona Normal School, renamed Northern Arizona University in 1966, is founded as a teaching college.

1900s: City of Flagstaff redirects the Rio de Flag through the Southside neighborhood.

1901: Northern Arizona Normal School's first graduating class includes four women.

1903: Rio de Flag floods.

1909: Arizona Legislature decrees segregation in education.

1912: Arizona gains statehood.

1915: Flagstaff Public Library founded by Women's Club.

1916: Wong family becomes Flagstaff's first permanent Chinese settlers, operating American Laundry in the Southside.

1919: Grand Canyon National Park is established.

1920: Rio de Flag floods.

1920s: Many African Americans migrate from the South to Northern Arizona to work at lumber mills.

1923: Rio de Flag floods.

1924: Southwest Lumber Mills opens, employing many Southside residents.

1926: Route 66 is established.

1925–1926: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is built by its future parishioners.

1926: Basque boarding house with pelota fronton handball court is built.

1926: Dunbar School opens as a segregated school for African American students.

1926-1940: Cleo Wilson Murdoch, African-American teacher and leader, serves as principal of the Dunbar School until her sudden death from a heart attack at age 39.

1928: City of Flagstaff is incorporated.

1928: Museum of Northern Arizona is founded to protect and preserve natural and cultural heritage.

1929–1979: All-Indian Pow Wow is held annually in Flagstaff on the Fourth of July.

1929: Du Beau's Motel Inn is established on historic Route 66 and later included in the Green Book.

1930: Pluto is discovered at Lowell Observatory.

1930s: Nackard Inn (later renamed The Downtowner) is established and later included in the Green Book.

1936: South Beaver School opens as a segregated school for Mexican and Native American students.

1938: Rio de Flag floods.

1938: Protection efforts of Sacred Mountain begin.

1939: Ida Mae Fredericks Mowabbi Murdock becomes first Hopi graduate of NAU.

1940: Wilson C. Riles, Civil Rights activist, becomes first African American graduate of NAU.

1940s–1950s: The Great Migration increases Flagstaff's African American population.

1942: WWII Navajo Code Talkers recruitment begins, based at El Pueblo Motor Inn on Flagstaff's Route 66.

1946: Katherine "Mother" Hickman migrates to Flagstaff from Louisiana.

1947: Wilson C. Riles becomes principal of the Southside's Dunbar School.

1948: Arizona Indigenous nations win the right to vote, with full voting rights 20 years later.

1953: Flagstaff Schools are desegregated through an effort led by Wilson C. Riles and Sturgeon Cromer and Dunbar School closes the following May.

1954: Brown v. Board of Education results in nationwide desegregation of schools.

1954: Arizona Lumber and Timber Company closes.

1960: Sit-in Protest by Flagstaff NAACP members occurs at El Charro Restaurant.

1960: Portions of the abandoned Dunbar School become a community center named for former principal Cleo Murdoch.

1960s: "Mother" Hickman hosts regular story hour for Southside children.

1963: Annie Dodge Wauneka, Diné (Navajo) leader and public health activist, is first Indigenous American recipient of Presidential Medal of Freedom.

1964: Joan Dorsey, Southside resident, becomes first African American flight attendant for American Airlines.

1968: National Flood Insurance Program is enacted by U.S. Congress.

1969: Ted Johnson becomes first African American faculty member at NAU.

1971: Native Americans for Community Action is established in Flagstaff.

1974: Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation is created by U.S. Congress to resolve land disputes.

1980s: Butler Avenue is widened and the Cleo Murdoch Center is relocated and rebuilt, with a few stones of the original Dunbar School serving as its foundation.

1983: FEMA delineates Rio de Flag Floodplain.

1984: Steven A. Darden is elected as first Native American to serve on Flagstaff City Council.

1986: Our Lady of Guadalupe is listed on National Register of Historic Places.

1993: Rio de Flag floods.

1996: Delia Ceballos Muñoz begins Southside Community Oral History Project.

2004: City of Flagstaff and Army Corps of Engineers execute agreement to cooperatively enact the Rio de Flag Flood Control Project to reduce flooding in the Southside.

2005: Southside Community Association is formed with the purpose of improving the quality of life for Southside residents and preserving the history and culture of its original inhabitants.

2011: Murdoch Center mural, celebrating Black history in the Southside, is painted under direction by NAU Professor Dr. Ricardo Guthrie.

2012: Memo of Understanding is established between City of Flagstaff and Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission to improve relations.

2016: Coral Evans, third-generation Southside resident, is elected as Flagstaff's first Black female Mayor.

2016–2017: Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff City-wide Forums are held and recommendations are accepted by City Council.

2014: Diane Humetewa, Hopi, becomes first female Native American Federal Judge.

2020: Lived Black Experience Community Coalition Forums are held at Murdoch Center.

2022: Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, Diné language scholar at NAU, passes away.

2024: Dr. Chip Thomas, known for his work on the Navajo Reservation, contributes to a mural on the back of the Nackard Building celebrating Southside African Americans.

2024: Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples Day are established as official holidays by Flagstaff City Council.

2025: Downtown Connection Center opens in Flagstaff's Southside.