

## Tal'-wi-wi Ranch Bumstead, Arizona

The Litchfield Park Historical Society/P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center for the Southwest Valley is nominating the Tal'-wi-wi Ranch, with the historical headquarters on Litchfield Road, to be included on the National Register of Historic Places. We are asking the City of Phoenix Aviation Department to consider the historical significance when marketing and selling the property.

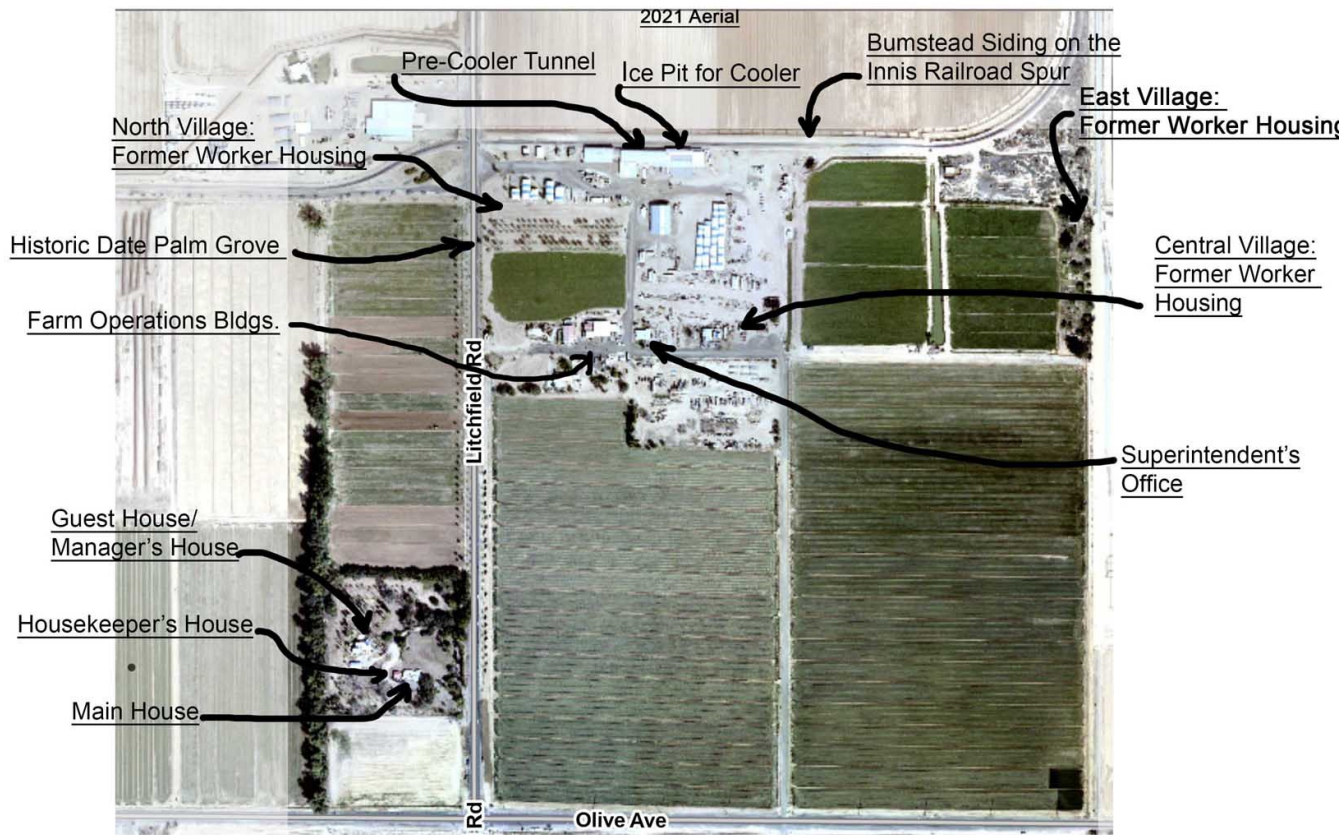
Col. Dale Bumstead brought scientific farming to Arizona in the 1920s. At his death in 1952, he was described as a "Self-Taught Farming Scientist". *Arizona Highways* referred to him as a "distinguished agriculturist" in one of the two feature articles on Tal'-wi-wi Ranch published in the 1940s.

Bumstead's farming operation, Tal-wi-wi Ranch, is centered at Litchfield Road and Olive Road in the west valley. It took Col. Bumstead four years of research before he began planting his first crops in 1927. Col. Dale Bumstead died in 1952. Now owned by Col. Bumstead's son, the farm would continue in operation for many years with the direction of long-time General Manager, Kenneth T. McGeorge. The Bumstead family sold Tal'-wi-wi Ranch to Robert McKee in 1977 who continued to farm the land. The City of Phoenix Aviation Division acquired the property in 2000 for the purpose of protecting the land near Luke Air Force Base from development. The land has been leased to area farmers and many of the existing buildings and farmland are currently in use.

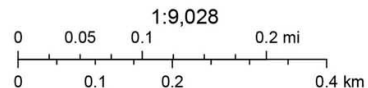
- Tal'-wi-wi is a landmark for those of us who know this area, of a significant diversified family farming enterprise, begun in the 1920s. The land has been under continuous cultivation for almost 100 years, with only three owners.
- Most of the remaining historic building are still in use.
- The Bumstead home is in a "park-like setting" and was designed by Lescher & Mahoney Architectural Firm.
- Crops were selected for their suitability to our climate and the lower water requirements. Col. Dale Bumstead was a water and soil conservationist, in the late 1920s, before most farmers were practicing these methods.
- The Cardinal Grape was first grown for commercial sale at Tal'-wi-wi Ranch in 1944. This popular, early variety of dark purple table grapes were shipped to the eastern United States as the first grapes of the season. Bumstead is noted for their popularity and helped large grape growers in California establish their own groves.
- Tal'-wi-wi Ranch was nationally known for its dates and raised two varieties. These were also selected for their low water use and suitability to the desert environment.
- Col. Dale Bumstead was nationally known as a progressive agriculturist. Experts were consulted each year, locally and nationally, to increase the quality and quantity of the harvest, and improve methods of production and transportation. For at least 10 years, Col. Bumstead trucked his many carloads of produce into Glendale to reach the rails for shipping, to his own packing shed which he built along Grand Avenue. In 1938 a new railroad spur was built to serve the ranch directly.
- Bumstead designed and built a cooling tunnel. This 90' long tunnel was constructed of refrigerator sections made for the military to use in the South Pacific in World War II. With an ice pit and fans to blow air over the ice, produce could be pre-cooled before being loaded onto refrigerated rail cars for shipment. Pre-cooling contributed to the quality of the produce at its destination, an advantage to getting premium prices. With his own packing operation, pre-cooling tunnel and situated on a rail line, Tal'-wi-wi workers could have fruit picked, packed, cooled and in a refrigerated rail car in just four hours.
- Tal'-wi-wi crops and livestock were selected to provide diversified agriculture. This would reduce risks in the market and distribute income and labor over the year.
- Bumstead and Tal'-wi-wi Ranch had an international reputation for modern farming methods. The U. S. State Department reached out to him to receive the Shah of Iran in 1949 and His Royal Highness Saud Al Saud, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia in 1947 to demonstrate how scientific farming methods were used to transform the desert in a short amount of time.

- Col. Dale Bumstead and his wife, Eva moved to Phoenix in 1924 from Oak Park, Illinois and were prominent in social circles in Arizona. An avid horticulturist, Eva worked on Arizona State legislation to protect native plants. Her efforts in cultivating and planting the area around their home in Tal'-wi-wi Ranch turned the four-acre estate into a beautiful park where the Bumstead's entertained many groups over the years.

## Bumstead Ranch/Tal'-wi-wi Ranch



Portions of Bumstead Ranch  
In Sections 27 and 28, 3N 1W



1930s adobe residence. Originally the Bumstead home. Later it was the residence of the Ranch Manager and family. (2023 Photo)



Remains of historic date palm grove lining the original entrance to the ranch. (2023 Photo)