

# HISTORIC OLD TOWN SCOTTSDALE

A 60-MINUTE SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR



Scottsdale began as a small farming community when Rhode Island banker Albert G. Utley subdivided 40 acres of virgin desert land into town lots in 1894 and named it to honor United States Army Chaplain Winfield Scott, whose untiring efforts brought most of the early settlers to the new community. The original Scottsdale townsite encompasses most of the following historical locations.

## 1 THE “LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE”

Your walking tour begins at the Little Red Schoolhouse, now the home of the Scottsdale Historical Museum. The schoolhouse is located on Scottsdale Civic Center Park, a pedestrian mall that lies in the center of the original Scottsdale townsite. Main Street, which now ends at Civic Center Park, used to run directly in front of the schoolhouse. When the Park was built in the 1970s, the Little Red Schoolhouse was preserved as a reminder of Scottsdale’s past.

The Little Red Schoolhouse was built in 1909 at a cost of \$4,500. It had two classrooms for grades one through eight, as well as a lower level which was used as a church and for town meetings. From the 1920s until the 1960s, the area south and east of the schoolhouse contained a barrio, or neighborhood, that began when Mexican laborers and their families arrived from southern Arizona to work in the cotton fields surrounding Scottsdale. The Little Red Schoolhouse served as a community center for the Mexican settlement and also as a school for the Mexican children. In later years, the schoolhouse became the Scottsdale City Hall and Justice Court, the Scottsdale Public Library and then the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce.

The Scottsdale Historical Society, a non-profit organization, opened the Historical Museum in the Little Red Schoolhouse in November, 1991. In 1994, the historic structure was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Items displayed in the museum include furniture belonging to Scottsdale’s founding fathers, as well as a replication of a 1910 school room. Photographs and other items depicting Scottsdale’s early days also can be seen. The museum also houses the Scottsdale History Hall of Fame plaque, which honors those individuals and organizations that have helped to create Scottsdale. This program was initiated by the Past Presidents Council of the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce.

*Walk west to Brown Avenue. Standing on the northeast corner of Brown Avenue and Main Street, you will be able to view the next several points of interest.*

## 2 MEXICAN IMPORTS SHOP

On the northeast corner of Brown Avenue and Main Street, the Mexican Imports Shop occupies a building originally built in 1923 as Johnny Rose’s Pool Hall, which also doubled as a silent movie theater on Saturday nights – admission was five cents. A youngster without a nickel could get in free by helping pump the player piano. The white glazed bricks on this building are the original ones – they have never been painted or replaced. In 1929 a Chinese family acquired this building and opened a grocery store. A tiny sign under the porch roof still

bears the name of the family patriarch, J. Chew. The family lived upstairs in rooms over the store. In the 1950s they turned their grocery store into a Mexican imports shop.

*Cross Brown Avenue.*

## 3 SABA’S

On the northwest corner of Brown Avenue and Main Street, Dr. Walter S. Lawson built the Sterling Drug Store in 1921 and added his establishment to the burgeoning business district that was growing up around that sleepy intersection. A cotton boom brought large numbers of newcomers to the Salt River Valley, and, where only three businesses had comprised downtown Scottsdale in 1920, there were nine just one year later. Lawson’s red brick pharmacy still stands today behind the modern façade of Saba’s.

In 1937, Walter Lawson sold the drugstore to William Butler, who renamed it Scottsdale Pharmacy. In 1948 Butler moved his pharmacy to another location and the Saba family from Chandler bought the property, added a rustic Western façade and porch, and opened Saba’s Department Store. Later, the family moved the department store and Saba’s has inhabited the old drugstore ever since selling Western boots and accessories.

There were homes along Main Street, but in the 1940s many of them were converted into businesses. About that same time, Scottsdale’s image as “The West’s Most Western Town” was created and businessmen added rustic, frontier-style façades and hitching rails to their establishments.

## 4 PORTERS OF SCOTTSDALE

By 1928 Scottsdale was big enough to have a regular post office instead of just a corner in Brown’s general store. The first post office was the two-story building on Brown Avenue that now houses Porter’s. The little annex on the right was not a part of the original building. On the second floor were two rental apartments. The mail came out from Phoenix twice a day and everyone gathered around the post office at mail time, chatting and visiting while the mail was sorted.

*Walk north along Brown Avenue to First Avenue. Head west one block to the corner of First Avenue and Scottsdale Road.*

## 5 SUGAR BOWL

Located on the southeast corner of First Avenue and Scottsdale Road, the Sugar Bowl is a long-time favorite among both residents and visitors. Originally constructed in 1950, the

building first served as a general store that offered both retail and automotive services. In 1958, Jack Huntress, a former Chrysler executive, converted the building into the Sugar Bowl Ice Cream Parlor in response to the growing tourist trade and the need for a family oriented restaurant in downtown. The Sugar Bowl is still owned by the Huntress family today and continues to serve family style food and tasty ice cream treats.

*Walk south to Main Street. Turn left on Main Street and head east.*

## 6 RUSTY SPUR SALOON

On the south side of Main Street, the Farmer's State Bank of Scottsdale opened in 1921 where the Rusty Spur Saloon is today. The bank closed during the Depression and the building housed several businesses, including the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce, before reopening as the Rusty Spur in 1951. Today, the old bank vault holds liquor instead of money, and the Rusty Spur continues to thrive as Scottsdale's first and longest-running saloon.

## 7 BISCHOFF'S SHADES OF THE WEST

For many years, the intersection of Brown Avenue and Main Street encompassed the entirety of downtown Scottsdale. Bischoff's stands on the site of Scottsdale's first general store and post office, built by J.L. Davis in 1897. In 1904 Sarah Thomas, originally from Wisconsin, acquired the store and asked her brother-in-law, E.O. Brown, to run the establishment. In 1920, the same year electricity came to Scottsdale, Brown added an ice plant that was run with a gasoline generator. In the 1940s, the old store and ice plant became the first arts and crafts center in the Valley, called the Arizona Craftsmen.

*Cross Brown Avenue and turn right. Head south on Brown Avenue.*

## 8 MISSION CHURCH

This little white building, located on the southeast corner of First Street and Brown Avenue, was built with volunteer labor and donated materials in 1933 by the residents of the Mexican settlement. Jesus Corral, a leader in the Mexican community, took charge of the construction. The building's 14,000 adobe blocks, each weighing 50 pounds, were made right on the site. Barnebe Herrera, a tinsmith, made the stained glass windows. For many years this little church was the only Catholic church in Scottsdale.

*Walk south on Brown Avenue to Cavalliere's Blacksmith Shop on the northeast corner of Brown Avenue and Second Street.*

## 9 CAVALLIERE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP

George Cavalliere, a blacksmith, brought his family to Scottsdale around 1910. He wanted to put his shop on Main Street, but the town fathers told him he would have to put it "out on the edge of

town." The original building was tin, and it was replaced by this adobe structure in 1920. The Cavallieres still own and operate the blacksmith shop, and now make ornamental wrought iron items as well.

*Walk east on Second Street to Los Olivos Mexican Patio.*

## 10 LOS OLIVOS MEXICAN PATIO

Los Olivos restaurant was established by the Corral family more than 50 years ago and was named for the old olive trees along Second Street. This building was first a pool hall, then housed church meetings before becoming Los Olivos Mexican Patio. The Corral family has been in Scottsdale since 1917 and still runs the restaurant today, serving up authentic Mexican cuisine for lunch and dinner, seven days a week.

*Continue walking east. The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) will be on your left and the historic olive trees will be in the second street median to your right.*

## 11 OLD OLIVE TREES

Down the center of Second Street and on Drinkwater Boulevard approaching Osborn Road, you will see several large olive trees. They were planted in 1896 by Chaplain Winfield Scott, the founder of Scottsdale, to enclose a 40-acre orange grove. On April 29, 2011, one of these historic trees on Second Street was dedicated as Arizona's first Centennial Witness Tree, meaning it was providing shade on Statehood day, Feb. 14, 1912. Today these olive trees serve as hearty symbols of Scottsdale's agricultural beginnings.

## 12 SCOTTSDALE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) was designed by award-winning architect Will Bruder, who combined new architecture with an ingenious renovation of an old movie theater. The movie theater, built in the early 1970s, showed one-dollar movies until it closed in the mid-1990s. Instead of destroying the old theater to pave the way for SMoCA, Bruder incorporated the old building into his architectural plan for the new museum, which today houses five galleries for showcasing changing exhibitions and works from the museum's growing permanent collection. Visit smoca.org or call 480-874-4666 for more information.

*Turn north walking along the east side of the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art toward Scottsdale Civic Center Park. The Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts is on your right, directly across from SMoCA.*

## 13 SCOTTSDALE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Designed by renowned architect Bennie Gonzales and built on the site of the Corral family's former adobe pit, the recently renovated Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts offers a wide range of entertainment dedicated to fostering the cultural interests of Valley residents. The center houses the 853-seat Virginia G. Piper Theater, the more intimate Stage 2 theater, gallery exhibition space and a gift shop, The Store. Admission to the gallery and The Store is free. For more information, including performance schedules and to purchase tickets, call 480-499-TKTS or visit [www.scottsdaleperformingarts.org](http://www.scottsdaleperformingarts.org).

*Turn east and walk across Scottsdale Civic Center Park to the Scottsdale Public Library. The library and City Hall buildings to the north were built in the 1960s in the modern Southwestern style of famous local architect Bennie Gonzales.*

## 14 SCOTTSDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY (CIVIC CENTER BRANCH)

The Civic Center Branch, Scottsdale's main library, doubled in size during 1993-94. The library's Scottsdale Room houses a large reference collection of works related to the history, literature, life and culture of Scottsdale, Arizona and the Southwest. The Civic Center Branch also is home to one of Scottsdale's most popular public art installations, "Imagination Gives Us Wings" by Larry Kirkland. Guided tours of the library are available by appointment. Call 480-312-2474 for more information.

*Walk north on the path to the Scottsdale City Hall.*

## 15 SCOTTSDALE CITY HALL

In the center of the building is the 'Kiva', a Pueblo Indian word for a room that is built below ground for council meetings or ceremonies. The City Council meetings, board and commission meetings and other activities are held in the Kiva. The stained glass ceiling above signifies the Kiva's opening to the sky.

## Visit These Other Scottsdale Historic Sites

**Site of the Original Scottsdale High School**  
*Indian School Road at Drinkwater Boulevard*  
The school opened in 1923 and closed in 1983. In its heyday, it was home to the Scottsdale "Beavers."

**Statue of Winfield Scott**  
*North of the intersection of Brown and Indian School roads, in the courtyard between the financial centers.*  
This statue marks the site of the original homestead Winfield Scott shared with his wife, Helen, and their trusty mule, Maude.

**Titus House\***  
*1310 N. Hayden Road*  
This is Scottsdale's oldest residence, built in 1892. Today, the house is a private residence.

**Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West**  
*12621 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard*  
This masterpiece was built by the legendary Frank Lloyd Wright in 1937 as an architectural school and winter home. Taliesin West is open to the public. Call 480-860-2700 for tour and program information.

**Kerr Cultural Center**  
*6110 N. Scottsdale Road*  
This adobe building was constructed in 1948 and served as the home and studio of the late

Louise Lincoln Kerr. Today, the center hosts a year-round calendar of performing arts presentations. Call 480-596-2660 for program information and tickets.

**Scottsdale Artists' School\***  
*3720 N. Marshall Way (at the site of the old Loloma School)*  
Built in 1928, this building is now home to the Scottsdale Artists' School, which offers a year-round calendar of fine art classes and exhibits. Call 480-990-1422 for program info.

**Scottsdale Airport**  
*15000 N. Airport Drive*  
This facility served as the Thunderbird II Primary Training Facility and was used for training World War II pilots from 1942-45. Today, Scottsdale Airport is one of the busiest single-runway facilities in the nation, with more than 200,000 operations (take-offs and landings) each year.

**Huhugam Ki Museum**  
*10005 E. Osborn Road (on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community)*  
This museum displays art, crafts and artifacts from the Pima and Maricopa people. Call 480-362-6320 for more information.

*\*Indicates sites where a Scottsdale Historical Plaque is installed.*

**Interested in learning more about Scottsdale history?**

**Check out these resources:**

*Scottsdale – Jewel in the Desert*  
by Patricia Meyers

*Historic Scottsdale: A Life from the Land*  
by Joan Fudala

*Winfield Scott: A Biography of Scottsdale's Founder*  
by Richard Lynch

*In Old Arizona* by Marshall Trimble

*Scottsdale Historical Society*  
[scottsdalemuseum.com](http://scottsdalemuseum.com)



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