

New Frontiers of Western Heritage

by Odessa Kellum McClary for Kraft, Inc.

THE HERITAGE OF COOKING SERIES

Cities in southwestern United States, specifically, Phoenix, Arizona and San Diego, California, boast of a "liveable climate and an abundance of beautiful natural landscapes." These may be the primary reasons why they continue to beckon many energetic, enterprising Americans, including Black Americans, to make their homes in a locale where it's said, "The West is at its best."

1970 figures for these cities indicate that the Black population is small, but growing. In Phoenix, a city of 700,000, 6% are Black, and Blacks in San Diego represent 14% of the total population of 850,000. Both the percentage and population figures are expected to show increases after the 1980 census.

Historians have it that the first recorded presence of Blacks in Arizona occurred even before the territory was a state. An African guide and explorer, Estevanico (referred to as Little Phillip by Black historian John Hope Franklin), paved the way for the Spanish explorers.

His scouting reports, sent back to the Spaniards from his frontier posts, supplied the information necessary for the Spanish to succeed in their conquest of the region.

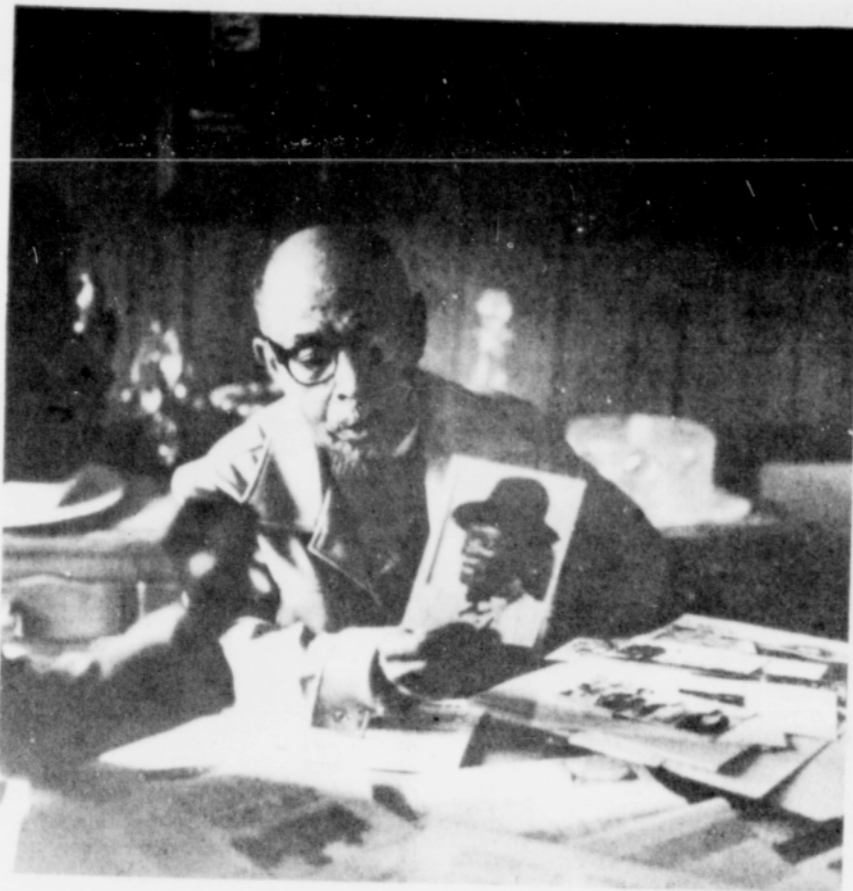
The documented exploits of the extremely capable Estevanico and their importance to Arizona is commemorated in one of eight murals representing historic Arizona events and hanging in the state capitol building in Phoenix.

Local Black historian Richard Harris did not turn up a name of any one individual who holds the claim of being the first black resident of the area. However, the 1890 census figures disclosed that there were 26 Blacks living in Arizona at that time.

Harris has done an enormous amount of research about Blacks in Arizona and recounts many of their achievements, trials and tribulations in his booklet "Black Heritage in Arizona" which was printed in 1977.

Gold mining prospectors, cowboys, Indians and Mexicans, all share with Blacks in the folklore of the area, and his booklet tells of many instances of intermarriage between the groups.

So, understandably, many of the foods usually associated with any



Richard Harris, Arizona historian, describes early life of the region and tells of some of the exploits of Blacks, like the "Buffalo Soldiers" or Cowboy John Swain (pictured), who played important parts in that history.



Richard Harris and wife, Laura (far right), and her sisters, Mrs. Mary Lou Harvey, and Mrs. Blanche Christopher, share reminiscences of old Phoenix.

Harris has many legends of the west to tell about: Black cowboys, early prospectors, pioneer skilled craftsmen, the reception given visiting dignitaries including Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute fame, and the famed 19th Calvary, commonly called the Buffalo Soldiers.

One tale which still holds a fascination for people living in the area is that which surrounds Superstition Mountain. The legend has to do with misfortunes encountered by a series of persons including a Black woman who tried to locate a hoard of gold after the original owner died, and what happened to her.

Two people who have their fingers on the current pulse of the Black community in Arizona spent their growing years in Phoenix. They are Cloves and Charles Campbell, brothers and co-publishers of the nine-year old black newspaper, The Arizona Informant.

Cloves, president of the NAACP chapter in Phoenix, has the distinction of being the first and only Black to ever serve in the Arizona state senate. Prior to his years in the senate (1966 through 1972) he was a member of the Arizona house of representatives for four years.

one of these groups can be found being prepared and eaten by members of the other groups.

Mrs. Mary Lou Harvey (sister-in-law to Harris), and one of the three sisters who along with Harris welcomed the "Kraft Heritage of Cooking Team" to Phoenix, recalled an experiment with cooking "cowboy style." That venture, for all intents and purposes, failed.

"One day we dug a big hole in the backyard, the same way we know cowboys do," Mrs. Harvey explained. "We built a fire, put some beans and seasonings in the pot with some water, put the pot on the fire, put the lid on it and covered the hole with earth and grasses." Neither she nor her sisters, Mrs. Laura Harris (wife of the historian) and Mrs. Blanche Christopher, have any enthusiastic memories of the resulting dish. Nor do they recall ever trying the experiment again.

However, a modern adaptation of this method of cooking is guaranteed to produce satisfactory results. Short ribs placed in a covered dish and slow baked involves the same

principals which produced the moist, flavorful, food cooked the cowboy way.

The following recipe developed by the Kraft Kitchens with the inclusion of Kraft hickory smoke flavored or hot barbecue sauce, is bound to deliver a taste that conjures up thoughts of the Old West.

Mrs. Harvey indicates that she has been successful with changing a standard Mexican dish to suit her family purposes and tastes. One dish that makes regular appearances on her table and that of her sisters, is enchiladas. The sisters say they make enchiladas with a difference.

"I actually build the enchilada in

layers," Mrs. Harvey explained. "I use a regular tortilla softened in oil, and spread with beef, tomatoes, chopped onions and cheese. I follow that with another tortilla topped the same way until I have a stack of about five or six. The stacks are placed in the oven and baked for about one half hour until the cheese is thoroughly melted. The result is Mexican food with a whole lot of taste."

Following is a similar layered enchilada recipe as developed by the Kraft Kitchens.

Mrs. Harris and her husband, Richard (a former newspaper man and now a retired Urban League official), moved to Apache Junction,

some 35 miles outside of Phoenix, before the area was really built up.

"When I moved out here and started building my home," Harris said, "there were no other people for miles around. Then," he said, "there was plenty of fishing and lots of land for gardens." Harris still maintains a small, well kept garden at the back of his home.

"Many of the people, black as well as white, moving into Phoenix and surrounding area are people who have absolutely gotten tired of the winter weather in the northern states and want a nice, quiet, warm place to retire to," he said with conviction.

These newcomers appear to be welcome, perhaps a little grudgingly, but welcome nevertheless. But there is another type of person who is made polite fun of. Northerners who visit Phoenix during the winter months are referred to as "snowbirds." So called, I was told, because usually they are fleeing the snow of the north. That charge stood without contradiction on my part, having just flown in from Chicago, myself.

SAUCY SHORT RIBS

3 to 4 lbs. beef short ribs
1/2 cup Kraft hickory smoke flavored or hot barbecue sauce
Place ribs in 13 x 9-inch baking pan; cover with foil. Bake at 350°, 1 hour and 30 minutes. Drain fat; brush ribs with 1/2 cup barbecue sauce. Cover; bake additional 1 hour and 30 minutes. Uncover; brush ribs with remaining barbecue sauce. Continue baking 15 minutes. 6 servings.

LAYERED ENCHILADAS

1 lb. ground beef
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 8-oz jars taco sauce
12 tortillas
Oil
1/2 cup pitted ripe olive slices
2 cups (8 oz.) shredded Kraft sharp natural cheddar cheese
Brown meat; drain. Add onion; cook until tender. Add taco sauce; simmer 10 minutes. Dip tortillas in hot oil to soften; drain. Layer tortillas, meat sauce, olives and cheese in two stacks in 11-1/4 x 7-1/2-inch baking dish. Cover the aluminum foil. Bake at 350°, 30 minutes. Cut into wedges to serve. 6 servings.

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