

'Little Araby' Full of Folklore

By Patrick Jordan

Palm Springs is home to 26 unique neighborhoods organized through the City's Office of Neighborhood Involvement – including “Little Araby” in Araby Cove, a neighborhood of about 81 homes in South Palm Springs bordered by the Araby Wash at its northern border and more famously the “rock houses” to the south. Little Araby is flanked to the west by what is known as the Landsdale House built by publisher William Landsdale and to the east by the modernist El Mirador House built by George and Adele Norton.



There has been much folklore about Little Araby, most notably about the rock houses. As some would believe, and it's absolutely a falsehood, the rock houses are not and were never built for the “Wizard of Oz” Munchkins, though the homes have been referred to as “Munchkinville.” The homes, which were built in the late 1920s by architect Lee Miller, are owned and occupied by private individuals who appreciate when would-be gawkers respect their privacy.

A large parcel of land comprising about 17 acres recently was donated to the City of Palm Springs by a longtime Palm Springs homeowner in Little Araby who was an heiress from a pharmaceutical family. The land was donated to be used as open space and not developed.

The oldest home in Little Araby is the home known as “El Dumpo Adobe,” on Araby Drive, which was built in 1926. Just like the residents in Araby who make up a diverse and interesting neighborhood, so do the many different architectural styles, which are part of the area's charm.

Every time we give someone directions to our home in Araby Cove they undoubtedly say, “I had no idea that this ever existed up here” and we just smile and say that's part of the charm of our little oasis, and we like it that way.

As a hillside community, we get our fair share of critters. birds galore, bobcat families that like to take dips in some of the residents' pools, packs of coyotes can sometimes be heard at dusk and dawn traversing the wash areas, snakes of all kinds and of course plenty of rabbits.

“Little Araby” is a diverse community of residents, architectural styles, wildlife and stories -- some true and some not.

For more information about organizing your neighborhood through the City's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, call Lee Hufeldt, Director of Neighborhood and Community Relations at (760) 323-8255 or visit www.palmspringsneighborhoods.com.