A. J. Chandler, D. M. Ferry, and C. C. Bowen incorporated the Consolidated Canal Company in 1892 with offices in Phoenix and Mesa. The Company had $1,000,000 in capital and was tasked with constructing, maintaining, and operating the irrigation system on the south side of the Salt River, including canals, pipelines, gates, and dams.

The Consolidated Canal was a relative newcomer to the valley and the earlier established canals had first rights to most of the water in the Salt River. During periods of low-water flow, acreage served by the Consolidated Canal received insufficient irrigation. In order to augment the supply, Chandler dug one of the most successful wells in the Salt River Valley.[1] To get the water to the surface, he brought the first electric pump to Arizona and operated it with the power from the hyroelectric plant northwest of Mesa.[2] The success of the venture caused him to dig several others in succeeding years.[3]

Despite the presence of the three dredges, most of the work of excavating the canal system was done by teams of horses pulling fresno scrapers. The Consolidated Canal construction utilized over 100 teams of horses day and night to accomplish this engineering feat in one year. This photograph of canal construction on the north side of the Salt River exemplifies the physical labor of both man and beast. (Photo Courtesy of Salt River Project)

After a year of construction in 1892, the Consolidated Canal began delivering water on the south side of the Salt River. In Mesa,the Consolidated Canal branched three ways to send water to different parts of the East Valley. Flowing from the left of this photo is the Mesa Consolidated Canal bringing water from the Salt River to the diversion gates. 33,000 inches of water flowed east and south in the Ferry Canal towards Chandler Ranch, an area that had never received that much water. The smallest canal branching away from this diversion is the Mesa Canal. Chandler had promised Mesa farmers 7,000 inches of water. On the right side of this photo is what today is called the Tempe Crosscut Canal. The Tempe Crosscut Canal also provided hydroelectric power to people living on the south side of the Salt River. (Photo courtesy of Panoramic Photographs, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136821)

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[1]The first well was located on the SW 1/4 of Sec. 22, T. 1 S, R. 5 E. The Santa Fe Railroad transported the well drilling outfit free of charge. Stevens,Robert Conway, The History of Chandler, Arizona, Social Science Buliting No. 25, (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1954) p. 19, footnote #27.

[2]Stevens,Robert Conway, The History of Chandler, Arizona, Social Science Buliting No. 25, (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1954) p. 19

[3]Two of these were in the NW 1/4 of Sec. 34, T. 1 S, R. 5 E. within the later townlimits of Chandler. One of these may have been the well located in the park. Stevens,Robert Conway, The History of Chandler, Arizona, Social Science Buliting No. 25, (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1954) p. 19, footnote #28.

•Exhibit Home	06. Tempe Crosscut and Southside Power ?