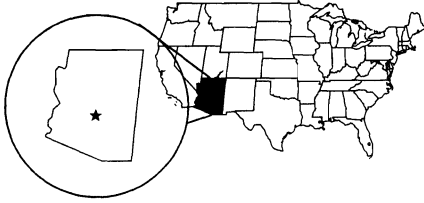


## GILA RIVER PIMA & MARICOPA



South of Phoenix, Arizona, lies the 372,000-acre Gila River Reservation, one of two central Arizona homes to the Pima and Maricopa Indian nations. The other, north of Phoenix, is the Salt River Reservation. The Gila River community dates to 1939 and has more than 12,000 people; its main source of revenue is agriculture.

The Pima name is derived from a native phrase *pi nyi match* which means “I don’t know”, the response Pima gave when questioned by early Spanish explorers. Their own name is *Akimel O’Odham* (*Ah kee mult o o tam*), which means “River People” (ENAT, 186-187). The Pima are divided into two distinct groups, the Upper Pima and Lower Pima. The Upper Pima are treated here; the Lower Pima are residents of the Mexican State of Sonora.

The Gila River community has adopted a flag; only three copies are known. One hangs in the office of the community’s governor, another in the office of the lieutenant governor, and the third is in Tribal Headquarters in Sacaton, Arizona.



The flag has a white field with a simplified outline map of Arizona in a brownish-copper color (Arizona is the “Copper State”). On the map is a white native shield bearing seven stylized black feathers, one for each of the seven districts that make up the reservation. Arching above the shield in black is “GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY”; below is “PIMA MARICOPA”. Overlapping the shield is a reservation map in beige, with black lines indicating the seven districts and the Gila River. Both maps are shown with a heavy black edging (“Symbols of the Pima & Maricopa Indian Nations”, *NAVA News*, Nov./Dec. 1990, 8).

Above the reservation map, yet within the shield, is a small black stick figure known as “The Man in the Maze”. This figure is a recurring character in Pima art and is usually depicted at the top of a circular maze in Pima baskets, cloth work, and other art of the region. The “Man in the Maze”, shown complete with his traditional maze, is the basis of the seal of the other Pima & Maricopa community in Arizona [see Salt River Pima & Maricopa].

In a unique historical flag note, a Pima, Ira Hayes, was one of the six U.S. servicemen who raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in World War II, thus creating one of the great icons of modern flag usage. ☛