


Drew Purcell

Sock
Hop
Studio

MYSTERIES OF THE WEATHERFORD



**UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS FROM THE
HISTORY OF ARIZONA'S
OLDEST CONTINUALLY-
OPERATING HOTEL**

featuring:

What caused seemingly well-regarded Prescott contractor Henry Rockmark to unleash a spray of bullets in our lobby in 1912?

Did President Theodore Roosevelt really ever stay at the Weatherford?

The Strange Case of Henry Rockmark

During the fall of 1912, Prescott-based contractor Henry Rockmark was staying at the Weatherford Hotel while working on a lucrative contract (\$3,141!) for building renovations at Northern Arizona Normal School (currently NAU) on what is now "Old Main."

Newspaper accounts attest that on the night of October 4, under the influence of alcohol, Rockmark "went amuck" and unloaded his 45 calibre six-shooter. After the front desk clerk contacted the Sheriff's Office (a phone system had been installed a mere three years before, based out of what is now the Exchange Pub), Sheriff Fairchild arrived with a deputy and after a struggle, Rockmark was shot dead.

While we will never know exactly what caused Henry Rockmark to act this way, I've collected some contemporary accounts that may paint a bigger picture of the situation.

Please join me in consulting the following newspaper clippings in order to shed light on the situation.

Disclaimer:
Please note that despite my BS from NAU in History (which took me ten years to finish), I'm no real historian, as anyone who flips through this can probably tell.

Please forgive any errors in content, omissions, grammar, etc., and reach out to let me know of any mistakes you find or any research that turns up adding to or contradicting what I present here.

-Drew Purcell
drewcpurcell@hotmail.com

Key to newspaper sources:

AR: Arizona Republic
BDR: Bisbee Daily Review
CAML: The Copper Area and Morenci Leader (Clifton/Morenci)
CS: Coconino Sun (Flagstaff, precursor to AZ Daily Sun)
WDM: Winslow Daily Mail
WJM: Weekly Journal Miner (Prescott)
WN: Williams New
TC: Tucson Citizen

Henry Rockmark in the years leading-up to his death

WJM, 5-19-1909
(first mention of full name)

Home from Tombstone.

Henry Rockmark arrived home yesterday afternoon from a visit to Tombstone on court business.

WJM, 4-13-1904
(first presumed mention in Prescott)

Proposals Received.

The building committee of the Congregational church met in Architect Millard's office yesterday afternoon at five o'clock and opened the bids for the new Congregational church building.

There were four bids presented as follows:

Sines & Rockmark, \$9465; Thorne & Parkins, \$9745; Fifield & Gallagher, \$10,733; Barr & Silman, \$12,485.

WJM, 10-13-1909

Business Mission.

Last night's train to the south carried the following residents of Prescott, who have important matters to attend to in southern Arizona in connection with land transactions: George Merwin, J. M. W. Moore, Homer Wood, W. A. Cline, Dr. J. H. Vevey Blain, J. H. Mulrein, J. E. Russell, J. I. Gardner, H. Brinkmeyer, Henry Rockmark and F. E. Andrews.

WJM, 7-6-1910

SECURE GOVERNMENT JOB.

Henry Rockmark yesterday was the successful contractor in the recent bids opened for the construction of the new government stables at Fort Whipple for the quartermaster's department of the army. He started a force of mechanics on the work immediately. The bid approved was for the sum of \$6,990, for the work he will perform, while the total cost of the building will run to a total of \$8,290. Wood and concrete will be the materials used and the accommodations will provide for caring for twenty-four mules. It will be situated near the present stables used by the quartermaster. The stable will be electrically wired, with other modern conveniences.

Henry Rockmark in the years leading-up to his death (continued)

WJM, 4-3-1912

Prescott Iron Works vs. Henry Rockmark, S. F. P. & P. Railway company, garnishee, set for trial April 4.

WJM, 6-29-1910

Henry Rockmark vs. J. B. Girand, administrator of the estate of the late Park Latimer, case on trial.

*check out the appendix for more info on the Arizona Pioneers' Home in Prescott -- it's unrelated to the case, but worth the read!

AR, 5-29-1910

Phoenix, Arizona, April 26, 1910.

According to call, duly advertised, the Board met at its office at 2 o'clock on the above date and opened bids for the construction of the Pioneers' Home at Prescott. Bids were received from:

- Miller & Kendall, Prescott.
- Clinton Campbell, Phoenix.
- Henry Rockmark, Prescott.

The contract was awarded Henry Rockmark of Prescott, his bid of \$22,900.00 being the lowest.

ROBT. A. CRAIG, Secretary.

CS, 8-9-1912

Normal Contract Let

The Board of Education of the Northern Arizona Normal School held a meeting at the offices of George Babbitt on Monday, Aug. 5th, at which the bids for the work of remodeling the upper story and basement of the school were opened. The bids were as follows:

D. L. Hogan, carpenter work and plumbing, \$4300.

W. J. Mullen, carpenter work and plumbing, \$3951.70.

Henry Rockmark, carpenter work, \$3141.

T. A. Slattery, plumbing, \$636.

Wilson & Coffin, plumbing, \$1450.

The bids of Henry Rockmark and T. A. Slattery forming the lowest combination for all of the work, were accepted and the contract let to those gentlemen, at a total figure of \$3777.

Accounts of the Shooting

CS, 10-4-1912

HENRY ROCKMARK RUNS AMUCK---KILLED BY OFFICER

Contractor Became Insane Suddenly in Night—
Startles Weatherford Hotel by Shooting Up
Lobby—Killed by Deputy Sheriff
Frank Fairchilds

Henry Rockmark became suddenly insane about one o'clock Thursday morning, run amuck and was shot by Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild to protect himself and others.

Rockmark was rooming at the Weatherford hotel. He seemed reasonably sane during the evening and went to bed about 10 o'clock. About 1 o'clock he got up and fired three shots from his .45 calibre six shooter in his room, then started down the hall in his night clothes and reached the office. In the office he kept exclaiming: "I want to kill that clerk!" By this time the house was aroused. In the office he kept up his crazy mumblings and shot twice at the head of the stairs, which shots were on a line with anyone who attempted to come down. Phil Rickel from across the street heard the shooting and called Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild. In the meantime Wm. Bosco, night bartender at the Commercial, was run out of the office by Rockmark with his gun. Fairchild secured the assistance of John Woody and with Bosco, went back. Fairchild told Rockmark to come out; at first he refused, but in a moment he came out flourishing his gun, saying: "I'll get you fellows out of here." Fairchild endeavored to make him drop his gun, but Rockmark seemed infuriated at something and with a cocked gun started for Fairchild. Fairchild's shot seemed to stop

him, but he crouched over, still holding the gun. As he advanced Fairchild tried to shoot the gun out of his hand, but failed, hitting Rockmark in the leg. Fairchild's gun was an automatic and he fired four or five times in quick succession in attempting to hit Rockmark's gun. Rockmark fell in front of the office and was taken in, but lived only a short time after being shot, as the first bullet entered his left breast just above the heart and ranged downwards.

Rockmark was a contractor and an intelligent appearing man, but drank considerable. During the few days previous to the shooting he did not drink as heavily as usual, but seemed partially demented, doing many strange things that were only noticed by those who knew him. It is reported that he fired a couple shots in his room the night before at some imaginary persons whom he said was disturbing him.

The coroner's inquest was held yesterday afternoon before Judge Harrington. After hearing all the witnesses, the jury was out but a few moments and returned a verdict that the deceased came to his death by gunshot wounds from a gun in the hands of Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild, in course of his duty as an officer; that the same was justifiable.

Rockmark was a member of the Odd Fellows and Elks lodges of Prescott, so it is reported. He had no known relatives in this section of the country.

Accounts of the Shooting

TC 10-8-1912

WJM, 10-9-1912

OFFICER SHOTS AND KILLS CONTRACTOR

FLAGSTAFF, Oct. 7. — Henry Rockmark, a former prominent contractor of Prescott, was shot and killed by Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild. Rockmark in his night clothes and undoubtedly insane started shooting in a room of the Weatherford hotel. He went down stairs into the office with his gun and shot twice at imaginary persons annoying him. Fairchild was called and attempted to mollify him but he rushed out of the lobby at Fairchild with a six-shooter when Fairchild shot to knock the gun out of his hand. The first shot struck Rockmark above the heart but failed to stop him at once, but he fell, and was taken into the hotel when he died in a short time.

Rockmark had been drinking but not much in the last few days. He seemed mildly insane for several days according to the testimony at the coroner's inquest today which exonerated Fairchild.

It is extremely fortunate that others were not killed or injured by Rockmark.

It is reported that Rockmark belonged to the Odd Fellows and Elks at Prescott.

PRESCOTT CONTRACTOR KILLED AT FLAGSTAFF

Special to the Journal-Miner.

FLAGSTAFF, (Ariz.) Oct. 3.— Henry Rockmark a former prominent contractor of Prescott, was shot and killed at one o'clock this morning by Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild. Rockmark in his night clothes and undoubtedly insane started shooting in a room of the Weatherford Hotel. He went down stairs into the office with his gun and shot twice at imaginary persons annoying him. Fairchild was called and attempted to mollify him but he rushed out of the lobby at Fairchild with a six-shooter when Fairchild shot to knock the gun out of his hand. The first shot struck Rockmark above the heart but failed to stop him at once, but he fell, and was taken into the hotel when he died in a short time.

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FURTHER LIGHT ON FLAGSTAFF TRAGEDY.

Further particulars of the tragic death of Henry Rockmark, the well known former contractor of Prescott, at Flagstaff, are contained in the last issue of the Coconino Sun. The account follows:

Henry Rockmark became suddenly insane about 1 o'clock Thursday morning, run amuck and was shot by Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild to protect himself and others.

Rockmark was rooming at the Weatherford hotel. He seemed reasonably sane during the evening and went to bed about 10 o'clock. About 1 o'clock he got up and fired three shots from his 45 calibre six-shooter in his room, then started down the hall in his night clothes and reached the office. In the office he kept exclaiming: "I want to kill that clerk!" By this time the house was aroused. In the office he kept up his crazy mumblings and shot twice at the head of the stairs, which shots were in a line with anyone who attempted to come down. Phil Rickel from across the street heard the shooting and called Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild. In the meantime Wm. Bosco, night bartender at the Commercial, was run out of the office by Rockmark with his gun. Fairchild secured the assistance of John Woody and with Bosco, went back. Fairchild told Rockmark to come out; at first he refused, but in a moment he came out flourishing his gun, saying: "I'll get you fellows out of here." Fairchild endeavored to make him drop his gun, but Rockmark seemed infuriated at something and with a cocked gun started for Fairchild. Fairchild's shot seemed to stop him, but he crouched over, still holding the gun. As he advanced Fairchild tried to shoot the gun out of his hand, but failed, hitting Rockmark in the leg. Fairchild's gun was an automatic and he fired four or five times in quick succession in attempting to hit Rockmark's gun. Rockmark fell in front of the office and was taken in, but lived only a short time after being shot, as the first bullet entered his left breast just above the heart and ranged downwards.

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Rockmark was a member of the Odd Fellows and Elks lodges of Prescott, so it is reported. He had no known relatives in this section of the country.

More Accounts of the Shooting

CONTRACTOR KILLED BY DEPUTY SHERIFF AT FLAGSTAFF

Drunken Contractor of Prescott is
Shot and Killed by an Officer.

FLAGSTAFF, Oct. 3—Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild shot and killed Henry Rockmark, a contractor and builder of Prescott, at the Weatherford hotel here at 2 o'clock this morning. Rockmark was drunk and was shooting up the hotel when the officer was called. He attempted to shoot Fairchild and was shot three times. Death was instantaneous. The officer is exonerated by witnesses.

WJM
10-16-
1912

CEML, 10-4-1912

Still More Accounts of the Shooting

CS, 10-5-1912

DRUNKEN CONTRACTOR KILLED BY OFFICER

Was Shooting Up Hotel in Flag-
staff When Officer Was
Called

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., Oct. 4.—Deputy Sheriff Frank Fairchild shot and killed Henry Rockmark, a contractor and builder of Prescott, at the Weatherford hotel here at 2 o'clock this morning. Rockmark was drunk and was shooting up the hotel when the officer was called. He attempted to shoot Fairchild and was shot three times. Death was instantaneous. The officer is exonerated by witnesses.

The Aftermath

CS, 5-9-1913

BDR, 7-12-1914

Notice to Creditors

Estate of Henry Rockmark, deceased.

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned administrator with the will annexed of the Estate of Henry Rockmark, deceased, to the creditors of and all persons having claims against the said deceased, to exhibit them, with the necessary vouchers, within 10 months after the first publication of this notice to the said Administrator at the Citizens Bank, in the town of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona, the same being the place for the transaction of the business of said estate, in said County of Coconino.

M. I. POWERS,
Administrator with the will annexed of the estate of Henry Rockmark, deceased.

Dated Flagstaff, this 22nd day of April A. D., 1913. April 25-4t.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COUNTY OF COCONINO, STATE OF ARIZONA.

IN THE Matter of the Estate of
Henry Rockmark, Deceased.
Notice of Private Sale.

UNDER Authority of an order granted by the Superior Court of the County of Coconino, State of Arizona, dated the 26th day of June, 1914, I, the undersigned administrator, with will annexed, will sell at private sale, the following described property:

That certain tract of land situate in the County of Cochise, and State of Arizona, and described, as follows, to-wit:

Lot number five hundred and six (506), in block number six (6), of Warren Townsite, in the County of Cochise, and State of Arizona.

The sale will be made on the 30th day of July, 1914, and bids will be received at the Office of the undersigned at The Citizens Bank, at the Town of Flagstaff, in the said County of Coconino, and State of Arizona.

The terms of the sale are as follows: For cash—lawful money of the United States—Ten per cent of the amount bid when notified that bid has been accepted and balance upon confirmation of the sale by this Court.

Dated June 29th, 1914.

M. I. POWERS,
Administrator, with Will annexed of the Estate of Henry Rockmark, deceased.

The Aftermath

WDM, 10-19-1912

(two weeks after his death, the news apparently hadn't made its way to Winslow)

COAL CLAIMANTS AWARDED PATENT

Advices have been received by the local land office that by order of President Taft, dated September 2, all persons who made entries in the Navajo county coal fields will now be granted patents.

This announcement affects the celebrated coal fields of southern Navajo county, which were filed upon three years ago by Prescott locators, since which time the elimination of the strip acquired has been under consideration. After patiently awaiting official action since that time title has at last been acquired. The following residents of Prescott, accordingly, receive absolute title to 160 acres each of coal lands, which have been appraised by government engineers at from \$300 to \$1000 per acre: George Merwin, H. R. Wood, P. C. Wilder, Robert Keating, Ben Silverman, J. M. W. Moore, Fred C. Moore, A. C. Massey, J. E. Russell, W. A. Cline, J. I. Gardner, J. H. Mulrein, W. L. Fox, J. Harvey Blain, W. L. Fox, E. Andrews, H. F. Ashurst, George M. Hubbell, Henry Rockmark.

CS, 2-14-1913

In the Superior Court of the State
of Arizona, in and for the
County of Coconino

In the matter of the estate of
Henry Rockmark, deceased.

Notice of hearing petition.

Notice is hereby given that Fred Rockmark, a brother has filed in this court a petition that the last will and testament of Henry Rockmark, deceased, be admitted to probate, and that M. I. Powers be appointed administrator with the will annexed, and that the same will be heard on Tuesday the 18th day of February, A. D., 1913, at 9:30 o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the court-room of said court, in Flagstaff, County of Coconino, State of Arizona, and all persons interested in said estate are notified then and there to appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of said petitioner should not be granted.

Dated January 24, A. D., 1913.

CHAS. H. ADAMS, Clerk.

1st pub. Jan' 31, 1913.

Last pub. Feb. 14, 1913.

CS, 6-5-1914

In the Superior Court of the State of
Arizona, in and for the County
of Coconino

Order to show cause why order
of sale of real estate should not be
made.

In the matter of the estate of
Henry Rockmark deceased.

It appearing to this Court, by the petition this day presented and filed by M. I. Powers, administrator, with the will annexed of the estate of Henry Rockmark deceased, that it is necessary to sell the whole or some portion of the real estate of said decedent to pay the debts of decedent due the Prescott Iron Works, and the expenses and charges of administration, said debts being in the nature of a judgment lien

Lot Number Five Hundred and Six, in Block Number Six of Warren Townsite, in the County of Cochise, and State of Arizona.

It is therefore ordered by this Court: That all persons interested in the estate of said deceased appear before the said Superior Court on Friday the 26th day of June, A. D., 1914, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M., of said day, at the Court Room of said Court, at the Court House in the Town of Flagstaff, County of Coconino State of Arizona, to show cause why an order should not be granted to said administrator to sell so much of the said real estate as shall be necessary and that a copy of this order be published four successive weeks in the Coconino Sun, a newspaper published in the said County of Coconino.

Dated May 23rd, A. D. 1914.

F. W. PERKINS,

Judge of the Superior Court.

May 29-June 19.

Did President Teddy Roosevelt Ever Actually Stay at the Weatherford?

If the historical plaque outside the entrance to the Weatherford Hotel is to be believed, by far the most notable person to have slept at the Weatherford Hotel is Theodore Roosevelt.

When the Weatherford opened its doors on New Year's Day, 1900, Roosevelt was the governor of New York, having assured his status as a national hero at San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War less than two years before. Within two more years, he would become Vice President of the United States, and following the assassination of President McKinley soon after, he would assume the Presidency, an office he would be reelected to and hold until 1909. TR was as much of a celebrity as he was a political figure until he passed away from a sudden blood-clot in 1919, and historians continue to regard him as one of the greatest presidents, as evidenced by his placement on Mount Rushmore.

Although it is often said that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," the lack of information about Roosevelt's supposed visit to the Weatherford is notable, as its inclusion on the historical plaque is the first instance of this claim that I can find. Since he was arguably the most famous man in America during the first twenty years of the hotel's existence, it would have been major news if he had ever visited Flagstaff. I'd love to be proven wrong, so let me know if other evidence turns up! In the meantime, let's look at the historical record to see what we can find.....

TR & Flagstaff

CS, 4-25-1903

Great preparation is being made for the Roosevelt excursion to the Grand Canyon on May 6th. Two hundred people will probably go from Flagstaff. Excursions will be run from all over the territory and at least a thousand people will be there on that day.

CS, 5-9-1903

PRESIDENT PASSES THROUGH FLAGSTAFF

On His Way to the Grand Canyon Wednesday Morning—
Early Watchers Disappointed

FLAGSTAFF'S PATRIOTIC PEOPLE
FOLLOW HIM IN GOODLY NUMBER

To Do Honor to the Nation's Chief Executive—President Presents
Diplomas to Flagstaff High School Graduates—The
Citizens of Flagstaff Present Beautiful
and Costly Navajo Blanket.

CS, 4-18-1903

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

—AT—

...Grand Canyon...

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6th,

9:00 A. M. TO 6:00 P. M.

For excursion rates see agent

SANTA FE

CS, 5-9-1903

Wednesday morning a large number of Flagstaffians gathered at the railroad station in order to be on hand to take advantage of the necessary stoppage for water, should Mr. Roosevelt arise so early, of catching a glimpse of the nation's well-loved chief magistrate, President Theodore Roosevelt.

At 4:03 a passenger engine drawing six Pullman coaches flashed by the station, seeming to frighten the shadows of night which seemed averse to giving way to the just-breaking dawn, back from the railroad into the settled portion of the town, to come creeping back again when the engine had replenished its water supply and continued on its way. It was the Presidential train, and those who awaited with the expectation of catching sight of Mr. Roosevelt were disappointed, for he did not make his appearance. The train carrying the Presidential party continued on without material stoppage to Williams, thence over the Grand Canyon branch, arriving at Bright Angel at 9:30 a. m.

TR & Flagstaff (10 years later)

CS, 7-18-1913

ROOSEVELT GREETES CROWD AT FLAGSTAFF

Col. Roosevelt went through Flagstaff Saturday evening on the Limited accompanied by his sons Archibald and Quentin, on their way to the Grand Canyon. He was met here by his nephew Nicholas Roosevelt who has been here for sometime past.

There was a good sized crowd at the station to greet the Colonel. He made no speech but heartily greeted Dan Hogan and asked for Bill Wallace then wanted to see Rickety Bob Rickets.

Hogan and Wallace both served in his Rough Rider regiment and whatever may be said about your Uncle Teddy, he always remembers a good soldier.

Different Sides of the Aisle?



Although the early 20th century could not have been as politically polarized a time as it is now, it's worth wondering -- even though the Weatherford was the preeminent hotel in Flagstaff in both 1903 and 1913, would Republican (and later Bull Moose) Teddy Roosevelt have chosen to stay at a hotel owned by active Democrat J.W. Weatherford? That may not have (and should not have) factored in to a decision, but who knows?

ordinary keen perception. In politics Mr. Weatherford is a democrat, but he has many personal friends in all parties. He is high in the councils of his party and his name is persistently mentioned by his democratic friends as the logical candidate for governor on the democratic ticket.

CS, 9-19-1913

It seems like the closest the Weatherford has got to the highest office in the land is that the hotel has been visited by Sen. Barry Goldwater, who ran against LBJ in 1964, and former second lady Tipper Gore. Unless we're missing something....

Appendix: The Arizona Pioneers' Home in Prescott

Henry Rockmark was one of several contractors who worked on this unique historical relic, which is still in operation. Here is info from their website:

One of Prescott's most famous landmarks celebrated the completion of 100 years of operation February 1, 2011. Though it sits atop a bluff overlooking the heart of the city's downtown business area, you just might be surprised how almost anonymously it has gone about caring for hundreds of Arizona's citizens. Since opening in 1911, an estimated three thousand plus residents have received a "century of caring," according to registration archives.

Except for a colorful 1947 *Life* magazine article, mostly about the male residents, the Home has gone on quietly about its mission of providing a safe sanctuary for Arizona pioneers in their later years who have contributed to the state's history, be it in mining, farming, ranching, education or public service.

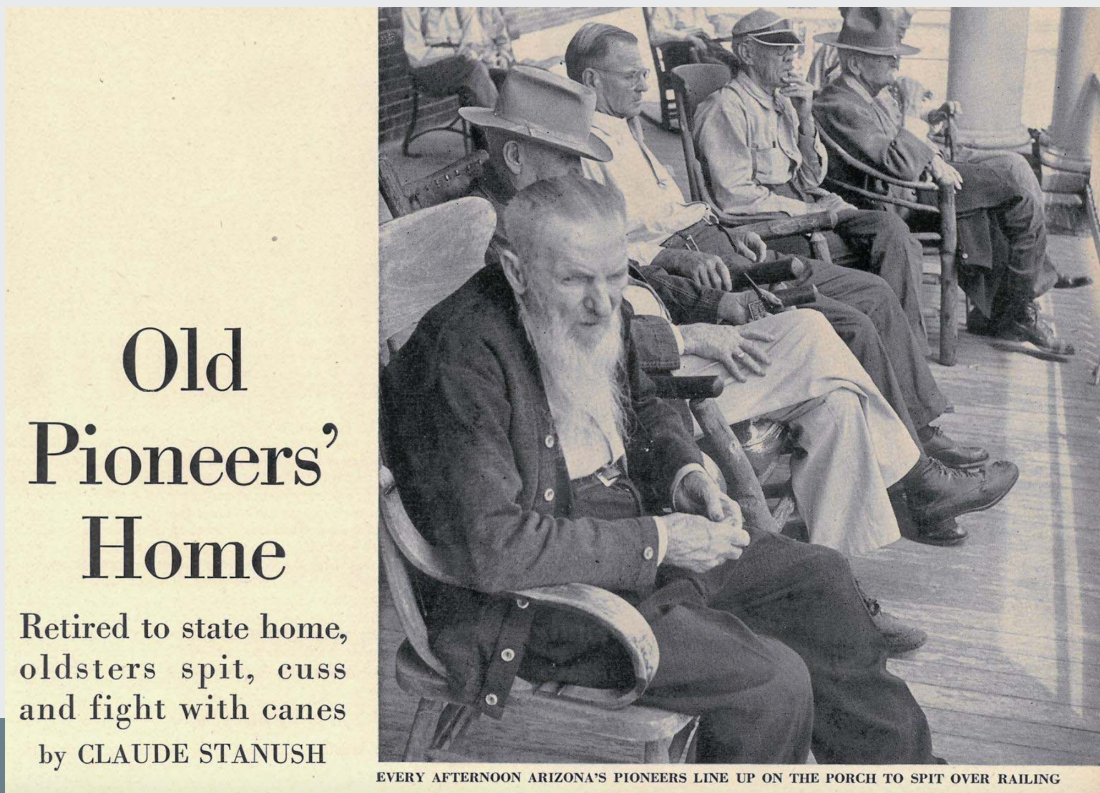
During 2010, Arizonans statewide were invited to join in the celebration as residents, staff, and supporters observed the century with Open Houses, displays marking milestones along the decades, and the telling of stories associated with the state's development.

While eligible Arizona residents continue to make application at the venerable facility, the Arizona Pioneers' Home remains unique in its eligibility requirements in the United States. (Two other state-run Homes -- one in Alaska and the other in Wyoming exist for pioneer residents, but their admission requirements are different.)

To conclude 100 years of "quiet" caring for the state's pioneers and miners, residents, staff and special invited guests helped celebrate the 100th birthday party of the Arizona Pioneers' Home and Hospital for Disabled Miners.

The Home was sanctioned by the Arizona Centennial 2012 Foundation, and formally received the "Official Centennial Event" designation. This afforded the Home advertisement in State Centennial fliers and brochures, advising that two more Open Houses would be conducted (May 21 and June 18, 2011). These were open to anyone interested in visiting the Home. Tours were offered, refreshments and an opportunity to meet some of the wonderful residents of the Pioneers' Home.

For more info about the Pioneers Home, be sure to check out *Life* magazine from November 3, 1947, which features an intriguing and often hilarious story about the elderly Arizonans residing there..



Interested in exploring more local history?

There is no shortage of unanswered questions regarding the Weatherford Hotel. Such as:

- What was the alcohol situation like in the building during Prohibition?
- What was the nature of the power struggle between Weatherford, his son, his estranged wife, and hotel manager Lulu Hall?
- Why was John W. Weatherford addressed with the honorific “Colonel” despite never having served in the military?
- Why did J.W. Weatherford leave a bequest in his will to build a mosque, and was it ever completed?
- When and why were the tunnels in the basement covered up?

If you like this type of thing, please let us know and we'll consider looking into these and other remaining questions!

Looking for help with marketing, advertising, social media, content creation, PR, etc.?

Sock Hop Studio offers all these services and more for **extremely** competitive rates. Please reach out if you're interested in a free consultation to discuss custom packages based on exactly what you need and nothing unnecessary.

Contact: Drew Purcell
(928) 606-3828
drewcpurcell@hotmail.com