



Articles dated 1960-1969



May 9, 1963, Prescott Courier

Building Funds In Works For Pioneer Home

A subcommittee today recommended to the senate appropriations committee that \$2.5 million be allocated for enlargement of the Pioneers' Home in Prescott.

The report, submitted by Senators Robert Morrow, D-Mohave, and Fed Udine, D-Coconino, recommended that half of the appropriation be made available for 1963-64 and the other half for 1964-65.

The report said the institution had reached its limit of 197 guests and that there were 208 on the waiting list when the two senators visited the home May 2.

The report also suggested that a joint committee be appointed to study the possibility of changing the requirements for admission to the home. It said, "we feel that more stress should be placed on need rather than adhering solely to the basic requirements."



May 15, 1963, Prescott Courier

Not Much Growth Since 1911

Despite Arizona's boom and the growth of other of the state's institutions, the local Pioneers' Home, in comparison, is not much more than it was when it opened in 1911.

Since that time new wings have been added to the original core making space for what might be considered a nominal number of people. The latest wing was built in 1954, which made room for 23 (illegible) more people. This was built over a dining room and guest

rooms that were added in 1929. Two other wings with rooms for guests were built in 1916 and 1919 and the home's infirmary was constructed in 1926.

With its oldtimers living in the home now, the building is holding its full capacity with the facilities it has available. The figure 195 includes the 40 beds that are available in the infirmary.

Ninety-four of the rooms accommodate two people. The remaining 10 of the total 104 are for only one person. As for lavatory facilities, in the new wings there are toilet facilities provided between each two rooms, but in the older wings, there is a tub or shower for about each 10 people and a lavatory in each room.

Figures provided by Carolyn Kinney, superintendent, and Frank Gerten, her assistant, show that the average length of stay of each of the pioneers is about five years. The average age of the 195 guests is about 85.

Overcrowdedness is felt particularly in the infirmary section and in the dining room. Because the people are older, there is a constant shuffle between the guest rooms and infirmary. While a guest is in the hospital section, his room must be kept for him.

The dining room now seats 149 persons. The overcrowded condition is relieved somewhat because the 40 in the hospital are fed on trays and because six others who are not able to leave their rooms are also fed on trays.

The 40-bed infirmary does not provide hospital facilities. It is merely for convalescents who need nursing care or for aged bed patients. Those who suffer broken bones or are in need of surgery, laboratory tests or X-Rays are sent to Community Hospital and often when they return from the hospital, they remain in the infirmary a certain period of time.

In addition to the guest rooms, the infirmary and dining room, the guests also have a lobby in which they sit and talk or otherwise while away their time. For entertainment, a movie is shown for the oldtimers every Tuesday during the winter months and a billiards room and a ladies parlor are also provided for guests' use.

The home employs 71 people. Just seven of these are registered nurses and the remainder is made up of kitchen and dining room help, janitors and two secretaries.

The legislative appropriation for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1962, was \$248,188. This must cover everything to run the home, including salaries, food, medicines, all supplies such as linen and laundry and current expenditures, to name a few.

For this current fiscal year, the appropriation was increased slightly to raise salaries. No increases, whatsoever were made for the fiscal year to begin July 1, 1963, so that the home will be operating on a budget identical to the one this year.

Since the home is entirely a state-supported institution, individual guests do not pay a cent. Infrequently, a guest will bequeath a small amount of money to the home.

Local officials of the home have no idea how long the waiting list is. Persons interested in living there first make applications through the Superior Court of their counties and final admittance is handled out of the governor's office.

The home is inspected regularly by the State Board of Pharmacy and the State Department of Health. By a recent mandate of the Board of Pharmacy and because the home dispenses medicine, a pharmacy will have to be installed as soon as possible. This will not be a new addition, but space will have to be made for it from existing facilities.



During Long Tenure Numerous Innovations Witnessed by Resident

By MAE GIBSON

What's in a name?

For Frank Gerten, who just retired as Assistant Superintendent of the Arizona Pioneers Home, the word "Tucson" held mystery.

As a child in a Chicago classroom, he tasted the word with anticipatory wonder, vowing silently that some day he would see Arizona. Strangely, he had been in Arizona some time before visiting the southern city which had held such fascination for him.

He has lived in Prescott for 30 years, 27 of which have been spent working for the Pioneers Home.

John F. Sills, appointed by Governor Sidney P. Osborn, first interviewed Gerten.

Through the ensuing years, he has served under five other superintendents and has seen various changes in the physical structure and guest enrollment at the Home.

The first summer guests, he recalls, were taken to the Wild Rose Fishing Camp at Mormon Lake for a month as they desired. The Fishing Camp had been started with a \$1,000 donation by George Mauk. Other interested citizens also contributed.

The Pioneers Reunion was an outstanding event in those days. Guests were taken to Phoenix to attend the reunion by private car, and later the state car and employees' cars were utilized. One year interested residents donated a chartered bus.

Each guest was a welfare case and received \$5.00 per month spending money, made possible by W.H. Patterson at the time he served as a legislator.

In 1941 the Home received an appropriation of \$55,000 per year; guest enrollment reached around 140. the payroll showed 25

employees, including the superintendent, Mr. Sills, and Dr. Allen. Employees lived in the Home and received full maintenance, plus a minimum salary of \$50 per month.

The enrollment today is around 170, with approximately 80 employees. Operating cost for the past several years, according to Gerten, has reached nearly one-half million dollars, almost half of which is received from revenue derived from the state lands set up in the Enabling Act for the Pioneers Home maintenance. The balance of the funds are appropriated each year by the state legislature.

Sills was again appointed by Governor Dan Garvey. Other appointments during Gerten's employment at the home were: James B. Griswold, by Governor Howard Pyle; David M. Goss, by Governor Ernest McFarland; William J. Gerard, by Governor Paul Fannin; Carolyn Kinney, by Governor Paul Fannin; Merle L. Farmer, by Governor Sam Godard; and Carolyn Kinney, by Governor Jack Williams.

Gerten recalls that the Pioneers Home was in a very rundown condition in 1941. The nation was just beginning to recover from the 1933 depression when President Franklin Roosevelt closed all banks for three days to stop bank failures which had started to sweep the country.

Sills started a clean-up, paint-up and improvement program. He also started the covering of all floors with inlaid linoleum to reduce maintenance cost of painted floors and had the entrance road paved. Other superintendents followed with various programs.

Among those changes were the installation of electric ranges and automatically fired steam boilers. A new refrigerating unit was installed for the cook's ice box. A new addition was built over the dining room to accommodate 23 additional guests. The oldest tier of three

bathrooms was replaced; the lobby was remodeled, and movies were shown once a week. A television set was donated. Two pillars in the lobby were removed and acoustic tile installed in the dining room and other areas. A passenger elevator was installed and program of planting tree, bushes and flowers was set up for the grounds of the home. The kitchen was completely remodeled into a modern utility with all new equipment and tiled floors and walls. The most recent improvement involved replacing of the front original wooden porch with one of cinder blocks and concrete.

In 1916 a wing was added to the Home to accommodate lady guests. In 1941 there were some 40 women and 100 men guests. Today there are 75 men and 100 women guests.

Gerten's immediate plans for retirement include gardening, working with shop tools, and – perhaps in the spring – some travel through New Mexico and Colorado.

