



Articles dated 1970-1979



February 1, 1976
The Arizona Republic

Home for pioneers survives as retreat for elderly in state

By KEN WAYMAN

PRESCOTT --- Providing care for pioneers was unheard of when the idea for the Pioneers Home in Prescott was conceived shortly after the turn of the century.

While there have been building additions and admission requirement changes since then, the purpose of the home remains unchanged: To provide shelter and health care for those who pioneered the settlement and growth of the Prescott area.

It is now a state-supported and operated institution, but when the legislation was passed authorizing the construction of the home, it was for the pioneers of the Arizona Territory.

That legislation was passed by the 25th Territorial Legislature and signed into law on March 11, 1909, three years before Arizona became a state.

An earlier attempt to provide funds for the home was unanimously approved by the 24th Legislature in 1907, but it was rejected by the governor because funding the project would raise the territorial tax beyond the legal limit.

That funding, which was approved in 1909, included \$25,000 to construct the home and another \$30,000 for maintaining the institution during 1909 and 1910.

The home was opened on Feb. 1, 1911, with accommodations for 40 persons, all male.

While territorial records catalogue the legislative acts in establishing the home, just who should get credit for the original idea is not so clear.

Dr. Ernest Siegfried, director of the home, and most others, agree that the idea was the work of Major A.J. Doran, Frank M. Murphy and Johnny Duke.

All were prominent territorial residents with strong ties in Prescott. Murphy ended up donating the 4 ½ acres on which the home is situated.

Doran became the first superintendent of the institution. Duke, a Prescott businessman, was never that closely affiliated with the home, but his daughter, Mamie Duke, 86, is now a guest there.

Miss Duke, who was born in Prescott, almost matches the average of the 150 guests --- 84.5 years, according to Siegfried.

