

## PRESCOTT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# A Short History Of Prescott Valley, Arizona

Learn About The History of the Area Which Is Now Prescott Valley and The Town of Prescott Valley Itself

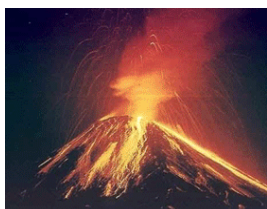
Lyle Johnston  
For the Prescott Valley Historical Society  
5/1/2012



## *A Short History Prescott Valley*

By Lyle Johnston  
For the Prescott Valley Historical Society  
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Prescott Valley has a history going back 10-12-million years or more with the volcano era. This can be seen by looking at Glassford Hill, an extinct volcano, a landmark of the town.



*Active Volcano*



*Glassford Hill Today*

By the 1880's Glassford Hill was a signal location for soldiers to use mirrors called heliographs to move messages from one high point to another across Southwest America.



*Soldiers using Heliographs*

Prehistorical times included woolly mammoths roaming the area.



A woolly mammoth bone was found in the Agua Fria wash in Prescott Valley in 1985.

The American Indian group, called the Prescott Culture: hunters and gatherers, inhabited the area about a 1,000 years ago and left behind what today is known as the Fitzmaurice Ruin. It was named after a white family who lived and owned property in the area. The ruin is located in the Fain Park area.

During the latter 19th century gold was found along Lynx Creek. The gold was both panned and water hydraulically mined. Mills and smelters were built to process the ore in Humboldt and Mayer.



*Thomas Barlow-Massicks*

The surviving structure is the "castle" home, built in 1890 and owned by Englishman Thomas Barlow-Massicks. Barlow-Massicks came to Arizona in 1885. The Victorian mansion is today a private residence on the southeast edge of Fain Park.

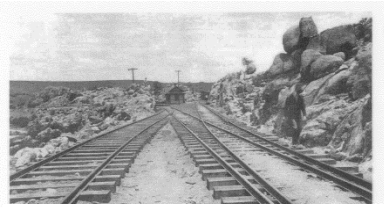


*Barlow-Massicks Home*



*Sharlot Hall*

Early 20th century state historian Sharlot Hall lived on a homestead, called Orchard Ranch, between present-day Prescott Valley and Dewey. The Hall family, came from Kansas in 1882 and settled here. The Prescott downtown museum is named after the museum she established.



*Prescott & Eastern Railroad*

The Prescott & Eastern Railroad was constructed in the 1880s from Prescott and was built past Orchard Ranch to Mayer and Crown King. Today the train's railroad bed is the Iron King Trail.<sup>1</sup>

Our history has a ranching background in what became known as Lonesome Valley. "Lonesome Valley" was named by a Fort Whipple soldier who said "there is hardly a soul in that lonesome land between Fort Whipple and Fort Verde."<sup>2</sup>

The Fain family, Dan, Norman, Bill and families, go back to the World War I era. Dan's father settled in the Verde Valley in 1874. By the 20th century their 50,000-acre Rafter 11 ranch located between the Mingus and Bradshaw Mountain ranges east of Prescott had been purchased. Other properties included the Barlow-Massicks estate, the Fitzmaurice ruin and state historian Sharlot Hall's Orchard Ranch. Such facilities as Prescott's airport, residential and recreational areas: Prescott Valley, the Prescott Country Club and Quailwood Greens golf clubs were developed from the Fain ranch properties. As biographer Dean Smith said, "Prescott Valley has been Bill's crowning achievement."<sup>3</sup>

Norman's son, Bill, had a vision of establishing a town west of Dewey. Phoenix real estate developer Ed Dudley had tried to sell property lots on the ranch property but didn't succeed. However, another fellow named Ned Warren appeared on the scene with "big plans", "chitzpa and energy", plus a "shady past" and got the ball rolling. It was Warren who suggested "Prescott Valley" as the new community's name.<sup>4</sup>

Warren, who originally was named Nat Waxman, had served time for fraud in the East. He was investigated by the *Prescott Courier* newspaper editor who found the above information. Warren had placed an ad in the newspaper to get the development going. He bought, at \$400 or less an acre, three and a half sections of grazing land from Norman Fain and later, at \$500 an acre, two more sections.

Robert Loos and Leonard Hoffman, Warren's sons-in law, and Warren founded the land development named "Prescott Valley, Inc." in 1966. With Loos and Hoffman in charge, Warren faded from the Prescott Valley scene.<sup>5</sup>

Loos, Hoffman, and sales manager, Norman Romero, used telephone solicitations and newspaper ads to lure buyers. Lots, at a third of an acre, sold for \$1,500 each. Many times, prospective buyers bought several lots. Today, lots are priced at \$25,000 or more. Prospective buyers were housed at the Prescott Valley Motel and fed at a nearby restaurant while they looked at property. The first residents were retired sisters, Vida Anderson and Evelyn Myers of Goodyear, Arizona. Their first residence was a mobile home placed on their property on August 12, 1967. By the summer of 1969, 80 families were living on Prescott Valley land.<sup>5</sup>

Norman and Bill Fain, once they found out about Warren's reputation, kept a close eye on what was happening and helped keep the operation "legitimate."<sup>6</sup>



*Early Prescott Valley*

The first postmistress was Shirley Sellers, who along with her husband, Rollie, were one of the first property buyers and residents. She also served as first librarian and contributor to the community's first newsletter: *Fringe Benefit*.

It reported the first baby born: a son to Lee and Lonnie Anderson in July 1969 and later, the first wedding: Tom Newman and Sandra Griffin.<sup>7</sup>

Republic Pictures filmed *Mountain Men*, a Western movie by building a fort in town.<sup>8</sup>

In 1970, the Prescott Valley Community Association was incorporated by Al Schippmann, Charles Craig, Carl Fensterman, Lucile Felch, and Barbara O'Brien. By the mid-1970s, residents were talking incorporation, but due to some opposition, the first election did not happen until August 1978.

In May 1979 the residents elected their first mayor: Richard Addis with Marilyn Horne as vice mayor. Charles Robinson, Raymond Sandberg, Art King, Paul Pollard, and Richard McGinnis were elected the first town council.<sup>9</sup> Population was 1,521. The town's size was seven square miles.

The first church established in town was the Open Door non-denominational in 1970.

The first bank in town was the Great Western now the location of Today's Realty Company on east highway 69.

The Humboldt School District began with 243 students in 1970, built its first elementary building in 1972, the high school in 1976 and by the 1989-1990 school year enrollment was 2601.

From 1974 to 1989, a houseboat home filled the landscape at the corner of Florentine and Yavapai Road. After the owner died, it was dismantled and a car wash occupies the lot today. A side note to the carwash was having a bull getting a bath by its owner but a date was not published concerning this story.<sup>10</sup>

Another legend is a resident who had her driver's license taken away because of too many DUI's. So, she began riding her horse to and from a local liquor store.<sup>11</sup>



*Safeway*

Safeway Grocery built its building in 1978. Two other stores, Fry's and Albertson's have since joined the food distribution scene.

The council approved bringing natural gas into Prescott Valley in November 1979.

The first new zoning code was approved in 1980: restrictions on storage space, minimum house per lot size, aesthetic requirements, and a seven-point scheme concerning contrasting appearance to town houses.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s town citizens complained of speeding, dusty streets, and weeds.

In 1980, the Roberts family started the town's newspaper, *The Prescott Valley Tribune*, a weekly still published today and owned by the *Prescott Daily Courier*.

In 1981, Better Bilt Aluminum Company built a plant that eventually employed 350; a four-man police force was organized; and nearly five acres of state land was annexed, increasing the town's limits 50%.<sup>13</sup>

A year later, the town's population was listed at 3,410.

From 1984 to 1987, state highway 69 was widened to four lanes. The dedication of the new Prescott Valley Business Park was held in November 1984. Mayor Carm Staker presided over the ribbon cutting.

1985's population was 5,465 residents.

The town purchased the Shamrock Water Company.

With a growth rate of 18% per year, the town council approved in 1989 an "attempt to implement the town plan for orderly and prioritized development of the town."

Also, that year 16 miles of road chip sealing was approved by the town council.

The Fain family donated 20 acres where the town hall, police department, and library now sit.



*Police Department*

ACE Hardware constructed a 412,000-square foot warehouse/ distribution center in 1990.



*ACE Hardware*

The town's 1990 population had reached 8,858.

Printpak, Inc., a plastic wrap company, opened its doors in late 1991.

In 1992, KMart opened in a 108,000-square foot store.

By 1993, the town was increasing its population with an average of one family moving into town each day.

The wastewater treatment plant was finished in 1993. It was then the state's largest treatment project.

By the end of 1994, traffic lights were installed on state highway 69 at Navajo Drive, Wingsong Drive, and Lake Valley Road.

1995's census totaled 15,983.

The town's public library circulation had grown to 7,000 in 1995. The building was located on the present site of the Circle K on Robert Road.

A 100-acre parcel of land valued at over \$1 million, now the city park west of town, was donated to the town by the Fain family. The parcel now includes the city park, small lake and dam, the Fitzmaurice Ruins and in 2002 the chapel of the valley. The property had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.

In 1996, a 474-parcel project north of state highway 89A was annexed bringing the town limits to 26-square miles.



The new civic center (town hall) was constructed and dedicated in 1999 on the 20-acres mentioned above. The hall included the town's



*Civic Center*

administrative offices, magistrate court, and library at 7501 E. Civic Center Circle between Glassford Hill Road and Wingsong Drive. The grassed property is used for various community events such as an arts festival and battle of the bands.

The town's historical society was organized in 1997 and is housed in a two-room office on the city hall's first floor.

The 2000 census showed a population of 23,535.

Harkins Theaters built a new theaters complex in the town's downtown entertainment section in 2000 and opened in 2001.



*Harkins Theater*

In 2000, actor Patrick Swayze caused a stir when he made an emergency landing in his personal Cessna 414a, jet plane on Glassford Hill Road. A malfunction in the plane's pressurization caused Swayze to suffer hypoxia, a lack of oxygen.<sup>14</sup>



*Yavapai County Fairgrounds*

By the beginning of 2001, the new Yavapai County Fairgrounds and race track were being built east of the town on highway 89A. The famous "World's Oldest Rodeo" was held here for several years but Prescott wanted it back and the rodeo,

which began in 1888, returned to Prescott by the middle of the decade. The fairgrounds and race track were closed in 2010 because

of bankruptcy proceedings. The 2011 county fair was held in Tim's Toyota Center.

The town celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2003.

The 250-bed Yavapai Regional Hospital East was constructed and opened in 2005.

A \$35 million 5,000-seat entertainment auditorium, Tim's Toyota Center, financed partially by the car dealer, was built in 2006 between Glassford Hill Road and Lake Valley Road on Florentine Road. It is the home to the Arizona Sundogs hockey team.

Lockheed-Martin aeronautics Corp. opened an office employing some 200 in 2007.



*Prescott Valley Library*

In 2008, a new two-story library was constructed west of the town hall. The complex also includes offices and classrooms for Northern Arizona University and Yavapai College.

Our town's first pictorial history titled "*Prescott Valley*" was published in 2008 and authored by Jean Cross. The book is still in print.

The town's population for 2010 totaled 40,400.

In 2012, Arizona celebrated its centennial as a state. A county-wide celebration was held in Tim's Toyota Center attended by 800 county residents, other dignitaries and entertained by several entertainers.



*Tim's Toyota Center*

Prescott Valley has so many businesses that to try to list them all in this short history would be impossible.

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- <sup>1</sup>(Prescott Valley Historical Society Power Point n.d.).
- <sup>2</sup>(Smith, Dean. *The Fains of Lonesome Valley*. Prescott Valley: Lonesome Valley Press, 1998), 44; (Ijams, Bert. *A Brief History of Prescott Valley*. Privately Printed, 2003), 12.
- <sup>3</sup> (Smith 1998), 4.
- <sup>4</sup> (Smith 1998), 132.
- <sup>5</sup> (Smith 1998), 134.
- <sup>6</sup> (Smith 1998), 135.
- <sup>7</sup> (Smith 1998), 135.
- <sup>8</sup>(Cross, Jean. *Prescott Valley*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 56.
- <sup>9</sup>(Smith 1998), 136-137.
- <sup>10</sup>.(Tissot, Michelle. "Little Known Fact to laugh and Learn From." *Prescott Valley Tribune*, August 22, 2003).
- <sup>11</sup> (Tissot 2003).
- <sup>12</sup> (Ijams 2003), 20.
- <sup>13</sup> (Ijams 2003), 21.
- <sup>14</sup>(Swayze, Patrick and Niemi, Lisa. *The Time of My Life*. New York: Atria Books, 2009), 211-214.

Prescott Valley Historical Society  
Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\$12 A Year

Family \$25  
(2 Adults With Children Under 18)

\$50 Business Members

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