

CHRONICLES

The mission of the Greenlee County Historical Society shall be: to collect, preserve, interpret and disseminate relevant and historically significant materials pertaining to Greenlee County and Arizona and to develop and maintain ethical, effective and efficient professional standards in carrying out these endeavors for the benefit of present and future generations.

Arizona Copper Company Building (aka Elks Lodge Hall)

Article and photo contributed by B. Waddell Reyes.

This massive two-story brick building is one of Clifton’s oldest commercial buildings. The Arizona Copper Company (ACC), a mining company of Edinburgh, Scotland operating in the Clifton-Morenci area from 1882 to 1921, found it necessary to build several buildings to support their copper operations in the Clifton-Morenci area.

In February of 1904, the ACC announced to the town that they would be constructing a general office building and it would be a two-story ornament for the town.

The building’s original plan, designed in the Renaissance Revival architectural style, was that of an elongated rectangle with one front projection on each end. **Emil Schumann** designed and oversaw the buildings construction.



In the first week of April 1904, ground was broken and foundation work began on the northern portion of this building.

During an elaborate ceremony on June 5, 1904, **James Colquhoun**, ACC President and General Manager laid the building’s cornerstone. Company officials placed newspapers and a short history of the ACC behind the stone. Phelps Dodge Mining used this portion of the building for their offices after purchasing ACC assets.

In 1910 the southern portion of the building was added to house the Arizona-New Mexico Railroad offices, an ACC subsidiary. This addition was constructed to exactly match the northern half of the building.

In 1922, Phelps Dodge sold the Railroad thus freeing the southern end of the building for other business use. In February of 1922, The Gila Valley Bank & Trust Company (later merging with Valley National Bank) occupied the southern portion of the building until December 1985.

The Elks Lodge later acquired the building and added an enclosed staircase to reach the upper floor and the one-story social area.

Through the years this building has also been home to the Copper Era, the Greenlee County Alternative School, and the Blake Foundation

Additional buildings constructed by the ACC during this historic mining period include:

- ACC Power House 1897
- ACC Mercantile (American Legion) 1893-1901
- Train Depot 1913

These and other area buildings are part of the **Clifton Townsite Historic District** and are listed in National Register of Historical Places, Registry #90000339.

Resources for this article:
U of A Library, Special Collections
Library of Congress Historic American Building Survey
Copper Era
Arizona Geological Survey

Clifton Townsite Historic District description:

Location	Confluence of Chase Creek and the San Francisco River
Area	37 acres (15 ha)
Architectural style	Prairie School, Late Victorian, Mission/Spanish Revival

From the GCHS President

Dear members,

It has been a very active time.

First I would like to thank all of our volunteers and the members that work tirelessly to keep the museum going. We have had a very good upsurge of the local school systems in teaching local Greenlee County History. Myself and the docents that sit at the museum have welcomed some of the 8th grade and all of the 3rd grade from the Morenci School District. Parents from some of the home schoolers have also brought their children to visit the museum. Some of the children have returned with their parents to teach the parents about what they had learned.

The GCHS now has an active web site which is greenleehistory.org. I hope members will go to it and see all of the pictures and history there. We also have a face book page. Thanks to our membership and The Valley of the Sun United Way Program we have the ability to be in the modern age.

REMEMBER, IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, WE NEED TO KNOW OUR HISTORY. This is why I am so excited the young people are starting to take an interest in our history.

Education on the move at the Greenlee County Historical Society

We are grateful for the support of the Morenci Unified School District for partnering with our organization to provide valuable information on our local history.

In October we welcomed all 3rd grade classes to participate in exploring the museum's collection. Student's listened to excerpts from the Al Fernandez short stories collection and participated in a scavenger hunt, searching through the historical exhibits to complete their challenge. Students also toured the Ranch House and were asked to identify items and their uses.

Additionally, our facility often receives visitors from local homeschooled students and we are happy to report that some of the children have returned with their parents to visit and pass on what they have learned.

Finally, with the recent development of the Greenlee County Historical Society's website at greenleehistory.org, it is our vision that this additional resource will become an educational tool for students who may be researching local history.

Our sincere thanks to the teachers and parents who support our continued mission to disseminate relevant and historically relevant information to our youth.





Trapped Miners Saved - July, 1938



One of the unfortunate realities of mining are cave-ins. Throughout the history of the county, there were numerous such events, taking many lives. Although the Duncan district was more known for farming and livestock, there were numerous mines in the area. One such mine was the silver and gold Veta Mine, about 11 miles west of Duncan at Ash Peak. In July 1938, the Shamrock shaft of this mine collapsed, trapping five men. They endured a 34-hour ordeal, surviving on water and soup which was sent 700 feet to their location through pipes driven through the rock. Here, four of the men are pictured after the ordeal. Left to right are: **D. H. Grisshom, Alfred Gillingwater, E.V. Wright,** and

E.C. Robinson. Grisshom is holding part of the pipe used. The fifth man, **Alfred Carlson,** is not pictured. The men also used the pipe to communicate with the surface, which confirmed the men were receiving enough air and were not injured. Gladly, this cave-in ended with positive results.

Make It a Large? A Small Slice of Old Morenci

by Mark Vinson

Before it was abandoned and excavated, the old Morenci townsite was an outpost of civilization in a remote and rugged landscape. Through the competitive, and sometimes cooperative, efforts of the Arizona Copper Company and Phelps, Dodge & Company, the community evolved from a rough-and-tumble mining camp into an island of urbanity.

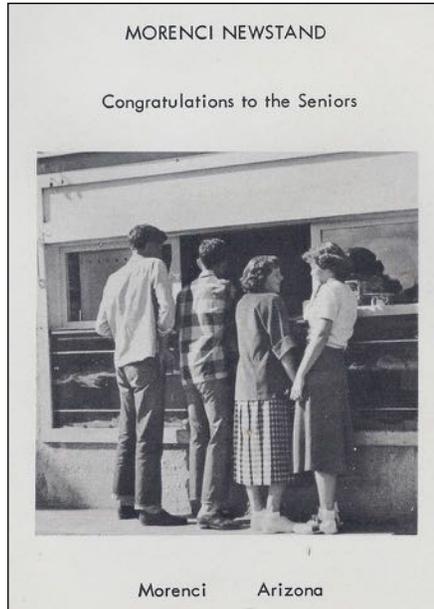
In the early days, there were no roads whatsoever in Morenci, only burro trails by which both man and beast would move from place to place. The Morenci Southern Railroad established its terminus in the center of town on December 31, 1901, connecting the community with the outside world for the first time. Not until the late 1920s did actual roads begin to appear, the first of which was appropriately named "Burro Alley." Even these were rudimentary.

As the population increased during the “Roaring Twenties,” so did demand for newspapers and such. An enterprising man by the name of **Morley Roberts** obtained permission to enclose a little-used stairwell on the small, elevated plaza between the side of Hotel Morenci, an exquisite 3-story design by famed architect **Henry Trost** of Tucson and El Paso, and the back of the Phelps Dodge Mercantile, a solid 4-story stone-and-steel structure by **Peter Delancey** of Minneapolis.

Roberts sold newspapers to passers-by on their way to the post office, which was located in the lower level of the hotel. Since there was no home delivery of newspapers (or mail, for that matter), owing to the dearth of roads, business was brisk. Roberts sold the business to **Burt Scott** who expanded into a small building (or large shed, depending on one’s point of view) adjacent to the stairwell. Scott increased the reading selection with magazines and added a confectionary selling ice cream and other treats. By the late twenties, he had further enlarged the building and expanded his offerings with small gift items and drug sundries.

With the onset of the Great Depression following the stock market crash of October 1929, Morenci became a near ghost town when the mine and reduction works were shut down in 1932. The newsstand managed to stay open, although business suffered greatly. Scott opened a service station in Clifton, leaving his young employee, **Thomas Cuthbertson “Cuthbert” Hearn**, a native of England, in charge of the newsstand, albeit at a low rate of pay. When Hearn threatened to leave and join the Civilian Conservation Corps, Scott offered to sell the business to him. It took everything Hearn could scrape together, including a loan from his mother, but he was

finally able to swing the deal. (It should be noted that Morenci native **Jack Cuthbertson**, who would become Phelps Dodge Morenci’s Chief Accountant, was a cousin to Hearn and left a legacy of rich memories, many of which appear in this small slice of Old Morenci.)



By working long hours, Hearn was able to survive. The mine reopened in 1937, ushering in a new wave of community building and population growth. By this time, Cuthbert had taken a bride, **Irene Killip**. The new couple saw their business increase rapidly. They even included slot machines for a time, until outlawed by the state.

Cuthbert ran the business while Irene made and wrapped sandwiches at home, delivering them to the newsstand each morning for lunchtime sales. Soda jerks were employed,

including a pair named **Howard Cooper** and **Gene Vinson**. Cooper was said to have vexed Cuthbert by consuming most of any profit he might have generated, while Vinson was a favorite of Irene’s. Hearn instructed his jerks to always ask, when anyone ordered a fountain drink, “*Make it a large?*” correctly surmising that most customers would agree, thereby increasing revenues.

During the building boom of the 1940s, roads were graded and a new shopping center constructed. The post office moved to the new center and newspapers could now be delivered directly to most locations. Estes Drug, also in the new center, opened a soda fountain. By the mid-fifties business at the newsstand had declined substantially, leading the Hearn’s to close-up shop and relocate to Irene’s home state of California. Some time after Cuthbert’s passing in 1990, Irene returned to Arizona, residing in Tempe until her death in 2010 at the age of 97.

New GCHS Website!

We have officially joined the computer age at www.greenleehistory.org. Please visit our website at your earliest convenience to request copies of files and photos (ARCHIVES), view our VIDEOS and slide show (HOME), donate to the museum or make a Memorial Gift (DONATION IN MEMORY OF OR IN HONOR OF), and *tell us what you think* (CONTACT US).

The GCHS Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers and relies on the support of private individuals, corporations, and foundations. All donations are 100% tax deductible.



New Archivist

In November 2019, **Victoria Zubia-Harriman** was appointed Archivist for the GCHS Museum. Prior to her appointment she had been contracted to archive the Museum’s inventory under the United Way Grant. Her duties (amongst others) will be to assess, collect, organize, preserve and maintain control over, and provide access to records and archives.

What Is It?

Put your knowledge to the test! Can you identify this month’s “What is it”

Visit www.greenleehistory.org on the HOME page at www.greenleehistory.org after March 25 for the answer.



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Museum & Gift Shop Hours

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
12:00pm - 4:00pm

And by appointment:
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Or any Board of Directors Member

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The Greenlee County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID #86-0311425

www.greenleehistory.org