

THE HISTORY OF THE

Weatherford HOTEL

AS SEEN ON
GHOST
ADVENTURES

&
THE
DEAD FILES

"A SMALL, BULLET-SCARRED PLACE
FREQUENTED BY CATTLEMEN AND SHEEPMEN."

— 1920S VERSION OF YELP

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Introduction

On behalf of the Weatherford staff, I want to thank you for your interest in our building! Please note that many of the areas listed in this booklet have restricted hours, and some are unavailable outside of guided tours. Where possible, pictures of these areas are included. This booklet aims to cover our building's history interspersed with sidebars containing related anecdotes, but this is no substitute for an official Guided History Tour led by a knowledgeable Weatherford team member. To get more information about our tours or to make a booking, please visit our website. Also, our YouTube channel frequently adds videos about different topics related to the hotel, some of which are alluded to in this booklet. To view those videos, please use this QR code:



manager

ca. 1900

— Drew Purcell,

1979



2021



The Early Years

In 1859, John Wesley Weatherford was born in Fort Worth, Texas and raised in the neighboring town of Weatherford, which was named after his father. As a young man, J.W. moved west and spent his early years as a cowboy, lawman, and merchant, settling in Flagstaff in 1886.

When he arrived, a series of catastrophic fires had rocked the original townsite, causing the center of town to move from the side of Mars Hill (Old Town or La Plaza Vieja) to what is now Downtown Flagstaff. With this change, laws were passed requiring new buildings to be constructed of brick and stone. Multiple sawmills, the railroad, and starting in 1899, the school that would become Northern Arizona University, drew thousands to this area, and with these new residents came the need for stores to serve them.

Weatherford set up his mercantile shop near what is now Route 66, and in 1897, he began constructing a building to house his business as well as living quarters for his family, which included wife Margaret and son Hugh. It's unclear how long Weatherford operated his mercantile in this configuration (unfortunately, no photos seem to exist), but within two years, he had changed his focus from retail to capitalizing on tourism, and with additions made to the building, it re-opened officially as the Weatherford Hotel on New Years' Day, 1900.



John & Margaret Weatherford
on Leroux St. in front of hotel, ca. 1910

Upon opening, the exterior looked much as it does today, as evidenced by this picture from 1908 compared with one from 2021. While it is easy to assume that fine workmanship kept the building in this state for so long, in fact the current owners, Henry Taylor and Pamela "Sam" Green, have spent the last forty-five years restoring it to its original grandeur. The interior of the building is quite complicated, and its history has been patched together from many sources to tell the story of its development, decline, and resurrection.

J. W. Weatherford

Among those men who have been tireless in their efforts and unsparing of their time and resources in bringing about the property development of Flagstaff, and none have done more than Mr. J. W. Weatherford, a long time resident of Flagstaff and one of the best known men in the entire state.

Mr. Weatherford built the Weatherford Hotel of this city. This is one of the handsomest and most substantial buildings in Northern Arizona and is constructed of Arizona sandstone. He also owns the Majestic Theatre building as well as other valuable property in the city. Mr.

Weatherford has for years been identified with the great cattle industry of Northern Arizona and has other interests throughout the state, among which may be mentioned one of the finest ranches in the Salt River valley.

Few men in Arizona have earned so well established a reputation for a high sense of personal honor and integrity of motive and acts, both in public and private life, as has Mr. Weatherford. He is a man of exceptionally broad grasp of affairs. A thorough business man and in public affairs of extraordinary 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.

CHEERFUL CHIRPS

(By "DEL.")

Mostly nonsense, except in those rare intervals when a real idea comes along and is grabbed off.

John Weatherford tells on himself the reason he left his dad's farm, a few miles from the little settlement of Weatherford, Texas. He had just returned home one morning when his mother told him that the county sheriff had been there a short time before, asking for him. John at once packed a bundle, jumped on his pony, went to the nearest railroad station and took a train to the end of the railroad, which was then building west-

ward, and extended only a short distance into this state.

It was three years before John took a chance on writing back home to his mother. He asked her what it was the sheriff wanted of him.

She answered that the sheriff said that as John was a husky chap and a good rider, he had thought of appointing him deputy sheriff.

1922

AUTO GOES OVER BANK ON PEAKS BOULEVARD

John Weatherford, builder of the Peaks Boulevard, and Carl Mayhew, the picture artist, had a narrow escape while on a view-taking trip up the new highway Monday afternoon.

Mr. Weatherford desired some snow scenes along the route of the boulevard and the two gentlemen, in the Weatherford car, attempted to go to the end of the grade, but found over two feet of snow on the level at an altitude of about 10,000 feet, and the car finally stalled in a deep drift.

They took their equipment and walked on a couple of miles, securing the pictures they desired, and walked back to the car. In attempting to turn the car around in the snow Mr. Weatherford shot out over the grade and down the precipice, landing about 150 feet below in a clump of small timber, doing considerable damage to the car, but luckily escaping with a few scratches and a bad shaking up of body and nerves.

The two men had the pleasure of a fifteen mile walk back to Flagstaff, but Carl says the pictures will be good.

Mr. Weatherford went out the next day with horses to make an attempt to put the auto back onto the highway, but it is quite probable that it will remain where it is until spring.

1930

RUN OFF HIGHWAY

FLAGSTAFF.—Colonel John W. Weatherford and Al Beasley of this city and another, an employee of Colonel Weatherford, had a fortunate escape from serious injury or death last week when something went wrong with the brakes of the Weatherford car and it dropped off a switchback and crumpled up, the men imprisoned inside.

1934

Death Takes Noted Pioneer Of Flagstaff

John W. Weatherford, Builder, Merchant, Succumbs Here

JOHN W. WEATHERFORD, pioneer Flagstaff contractor, merchant and builder of the scenic San Francisco Peaks highway, died in St. Joseph's hospital here yesterday after a brief illness. He was 74 years old.

The body will be sent today to Flagstaff, where Mr. Weatherford had the first cement sidewalk, constructed one of its largest hotels, built the opera house and was instrumental in having established there the Arizona State Teachers college.

Visiting at the home here of H. H. Harrington, 121 North Tenth avenue, Mr. Weatherford was stricken ill and removed to the hospital early this week.

Outstanding Citizen

His passing took from Coconino county one of its outstanding citizens, a man whose 40 years' residence in the Flagstaff district was closely interwoven with its progress.

Funeral services will be conducted by the Elks lodge at 2 o'clock Friday afternoon at the Federated church in Flagstaff, according to Mrs. Flora Finney, a sister, who came to Phoenix last night. Friends of Mr. Weatherford have asked Mayor Dan Williams to issue a proclamation urging all business places to close during the services.

Born in Fort Worth, Tex., reared in a community which later became the town of Weatherford, Tex., he came to Arizona at the age of 19 and became a supply agent for mining camps. Going to Mexico in 1884, he continued that business for two years. Returning to Arizona, he spent four months in Phoenix and then went to Flagstaff to become a resident.

Builds Road To Summit
Inspired by a trip to the top of towering San Francisco peaks in 1895, Mr. Weatherford labored for a quarter century before obtaining
(Continued On Page 2, Col. 1)

1934

Weatherford Will Is Filed

(Exclusive Republic Dispatch)

FLAGSTAFF, Jan. 23.—Property and money with an aggregate value of slightly less than \$25,000 was left by Col. John Weatherford, Arizona pioneer who died recently in Phoenix, according to the will filed today for probate.

Aside from the amount required for a few minor bequests, the trustees named by the will are directed to pay the income from the estate to the widow.

Colonel Weatherford requested that a mosque "not exceeding \$5,000 in cost" be erected at a point on San Francisco Mountain boulevard at a point 3 1/4 miles from the toll gate.

At the death of the widow the estate would be divided equally among six persons who are the son, Hugh M. Weatherford; two sisters, Flora Finney, Beaver Creek and Virginia Calloway, Los Angeles; a granddaughter, Janie Weatherford, and two brothers, P. R., and Felix Weatherford.

A. W. Carson, G. T. Midgley and Karl Mangum, the latter the Coconino county attorney, were named trustees.

The bulk of the estate consists of the real estate.

J.W. Weatherford
In the News

The Lobby

The original hotel lobby was where our restaurant currently sits, and J.W. Weatherford's mercantile extended from what is now the lobby all the way through the Charly's bar area. Weatherford ran this business with several partners, and then divided the area into the current lobby and a separate space where Charly's bar is now. In the 1910s, it was briefly a furniture store run by Flagstaff's prominent Babbitt family, followed by the Lyric Theatre, and then a billiards hall. In 1920, the pool tables were moved downstairs to make way for hotel rooms on the main floor.

As the hotel declined in popularity toward the end of the 1920s, the business model shifted from quality to quantity, and many parts of the hotel were divided into increasingly smaller rooms.

from the Arizona Daily Sun 1956



Lobby Postcard, ca. 1962



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE — Saturday noon is deadline for Flagstaff Community Concert Assn. season membership ticket-sale drive. Here, at ticket-sale headquarters at Weatherford Hotel, are (from left) Mrs. Frank Schloss, publicity chairman; Mrs. Ralph Holly; Mrs. Henry Glitsch, campaign secretary-treasurer, and Mrs. Chris Stridde, volunteer campaign worker. Goal of drive is for sale of 1,000 memberships to the Assn. Concert season opens later this year. Tickets go on sale at 1 p.m. Assn. officers and board of directors meet at office of C. B. Wilcox to select artists for season. (SUNDAY)

Death of a Pioneer

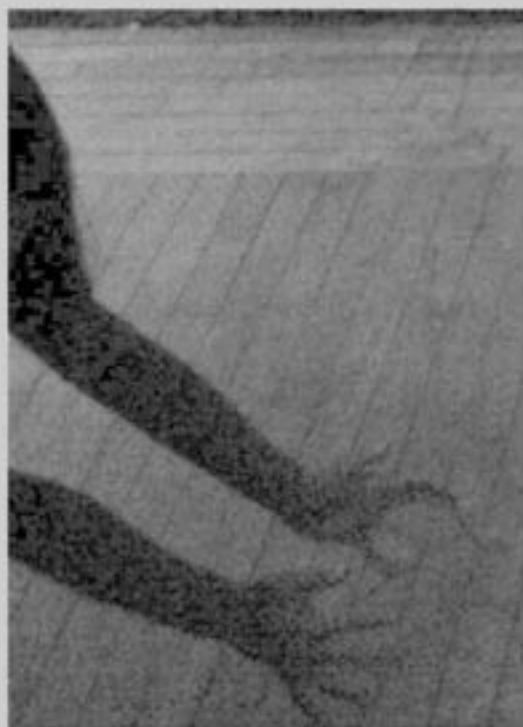
When John Weatherford died in 1934, he was lauded as an Arizona pioneer in a glowing obituary on the cover of the Arizona Republic, and his will and funeral were later covered extensively in its pages. These articles contradict the widespread belief, perpetuated by the great Flagstaff historian Platt Cline, that Weatherford died penniless due to losing the hotel and failing to complete his toll road up the San Francisco Peaks. His will left \$25,000 in assets, about half a million in today's money, to his estranged wife, and anyone with the amount of money at the height of the Great Depression was by no means penniless or any kind of financial failure.

Also interesting is the stipulation in his will to use \$5,000 to build a "mosque" on the San Francisco Peaks. Historian Platt Cline states that this was probably used as a synonym for mausoleum. In any case, it was never built.

A Wild West Shoot-Out

While the origins of any spirits in the building are uncertain, there was no shortage of violent events that took place in the early years of the hotel. Accounts from this era describe the building as "a small, bullet-scarred place frequented by cattlemen and sheepmen." The current owners have unearthed numerous bullet holes during renovations over the years, and there is one shocking account of a deadly shoot-out reported in the Coconino Sun.

Demon Hands?



This eerie image (blown up several times) is from the corner of a photo of a staff member's sister standing inside Charly's bar area. There was nothing nearby that could have caused a shadow like this.

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 Fairchild

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.

Restaurant Area



Stepping from the lobby into the restaurant, you'll see many historical pictures of the building and related memorabilia. Above the fireplace, there is a shelf containing artifacts excavated from the hotel's original parking area before it was turned into an extension of the kitchen. Among the liquor and snake oil bottles is an old-fashioned syringe and a tincture meant to treat venereal disease. Underneath, we have the original lobby fireplace, which was boarded up during the 1940s and rebuilt years later, thanks to the text of Zane Grey's western novel *The Call of the Canyon*. This bestselling novel was written while Grey was staying in the hotel, and several small scenes take place here, one of which includes a description of the lobby, circa 1920, including the fireplace:

'Downstairs in the lobby another cheerful red fire burned in the grate. How perfectly satisfying was an open fireplace! She thrust her numb hands almost into the blaze, and simply shook with the tingling pain that slowly warmed out of them. The lobby was deserted. A sign directed her to a dining room in the basement, where of the ham and eggs and strong coffee she managed to partake a little. Then she went upstairs into the lobby and out into the street.'

After Henry learned of the old fireplace, he waited for the lease to run out on the jewelry business that rented the storefront, and immediately got to work with a sledgehammer, dismantling the drywall that had been used to conceal it decades before.

The history of restaurants operating in the hotel is quite lengthy, and covers several spaces in the hotel in addition to the current dining areas. The original dining room was just behind our current restaurant, in what is now part of our expanded kitchen. In 1907, the restaurant and kitchen moved downstairs, where they operated in several incarnations, until that space was taken over by local fraternal organizations like the Elks and Rotary Club. During a massive renovation in 1920, the lobby and retail areas switched, and this part of the building was rented by outside businesses for the next half century.

By the time Henry Taylor purchased the hotel in 1975, the doors linking this room to the rest of the hotel had been boarded over. After doors were reinstalled and the space was reintegrated into the hotel operation, it became part of Charly's, a coffee shop that started in the lobby and was named as a tribute to Henry's late brother and well as a nod to his brother-in-law and then-accountant Charly Spining, who can still be found at the hotel entertaining customers on the piano. Charly's has operated out of this space ever since, although it's expanded to include the main bar area and the Exchange Pub.

1905

There has been some changes in the culinary department at the Hotel Weatherford recently. A new chef, an American, is now in charge and the menu shows great improvement. The management is pleased, the boarders are pleased and you will be pleased if you will try a meal at the Weatherford now. A trial will convince you that the Weatherford is now serving the best meal in the city.

1915

THE FACULTY CAFE

The Faculty Cafe is now open, you will find us at the Weatherford Hotel.

Skill, readiness, ease or dexterity in performance, possessed naturally rather than acquired by practice. This is our motto, try us, we know that you will be satisfied.

We make a specialty of serving a business man's lunch also Sunday dinners etc. Try us for your banquets. We assure you that we will do our best to please.

Respectfully,
Mrs. J. M. Sheppard

Weatherford Hotel

H. B. WHITE, Proprietor

FIRST CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS

Steam Heat Hot and cold water Pleasantly located

Broadway Pocket Billiard Parlor

A PLEASANT PLACE TO SPEND YOUR SPARE TIME

BEST CIGARS, TOBACCOS, CIGARETTES

WEATHERFORD BUILDING H. B. WHITE, Prop.

1941

FRANK SUFEA'S LE BRAT CAFE IN FLAGSTAFF

Right next to the

WEATHERFORD HOTEL

A Good Night's Rest Assured
Free Parking Lot in Rear

1977

***** OPENING THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH *****

Located in the historic Hotel Weatherford
(Aspen & Leroux Downtown Flagstaff)

CHARLY'S

"A Place to Relax"

— Good Coffee & Fine Pastry —

— Sandwiches & Crepes —

— Music & Occasional Entertainments —

A comfortable atmosphere for your coffee or lunch
break — something a little special in downtown
Flagstaff

Hours from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Monday through Saturday

1920



DELICIOUS DINNERS

GOOD FOOD, tastily prepared, excellently served and moderately priced, is what makes this the most popular and satisfying place to dine.

Come to our new stand in the Weatherford Hotel basement, morning, noon or night and you'll be surprised to note the number of people who eat here because they have found it cheaper than preparing food at home at present prices, and who enjoy our cooking and service.

This is a really terrific, satisfying place to eat.

Flagstaff Cafe

WEATHERFORD HOTEL BASEMENT
MISS A. E. KILLMAN, Prop.

1950

EFFECTIVE MONDAY, March 13

THE PRICE OF COFFEE
AT THE FOLLOWING

FLAGSTAFF EATING PLACES

WILL BE

10¢ PER CUP

Members of the Flagstaff Restaurant Owners Association

Star Route TONY'S STEAK HOUSE	Star Route J. H. & S. GAGE
Star Route Andrew's Coffee Shop	Star Route SNACK SHACK
Star Route HIGHWAY DINERS	Star Route TURKEY'S PIT BARBECUE
Star Route EL PATIO CAFE	Star Route BLACK CAT CAFE
Star Route Maile Vista Coffee Shop	Star Route B. & M. COFFEE SHOP
Star Route WEATHERFORD CAFE	Star Route Get West Coffee Shop
Star Route GRAND CANYON CAFE	Star Route COLLEGE INN
	Star Route SAN'S CAFE

1899

WEATHERFORD DINING ROOMS.

To Be Opened Tomorrow, December 24—
An Elegant Menu.

The Hotel Weatherford dining room will serve its first dinner tomorrow, under the management of Miss C. M. Adams and Mrs. L. E. Scheidler. Following is the menu:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1899
Dinner, 5:30 to 7:30 p. m.

Eastern Oysters, raw
Cream of Chicken, a la Reine
Baked Whitefish, a la Bordelaise
Lobster Salad, en Mayonnaise

RELISHES

Celery Lettuce French Dressing
Queen Olives Chow Chow

Boiled Oxford Ham, Pecan Sauce

ENTREES

Haricot of Mutton, a la Petite Pois
Saute of Beef, with Dumplings
Minced Turkey Giblets, on Rice
Banana Fritters, Wine Sauce

ROASTS

Stir-fry of Beef, au jus
Stuffed Young Turkey, Cranberry Sauce

VEGETABLES

Mashed and Steamed Potatoes
Sugar Corn, Asparagus

Green Apple, Mince and Pumpkin Pie
Brandy Jelly, with Whipped Cream
Boston Cream Puffs
Lemon Ice, with English Fruit Cake

ASSORTED CAKE

Nuts Raisins Cheese

Coffee

Dining
at the
Weatherford
Over the
Years

Power Struggles

After managing the hotel for its first decade, Weatherford leased it to other parties starting in 1910. Early lessees included the Babbitt Brothers (whose descendants would go on to purchase the hotel in the 1960s and eventually sell it to the Taylors) George Black, Jr. H.B. White, and Lulu Hall. Mrs. Lulu Hall was very popular in the community and elevated the status of the hotel even more, leading renovations that landlord John Weatherford paid for. While Hall intended to extend her lease on the building, a right that was guaranteed in the document, Mrs. Weatherford refused and argued that since Hall's late husband signed the initial lease, the contract was void. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Weatherford was reluctant to push out Mrs. Hall but was pressured by his wife and son. In any case, Hall had already moved on with her life by the time the courts ruled in her favor, and upon the conclusion of the case, Weatherford separated from his wife and relinquished control of the hotel to her.

Mrs. Weatherford installed her son Hugh as manager, while John continued to run the Orpheum and focus on his road-building projects until his death in 1934. Lulu Hall eventually moved back to Flagstaff and constructed the building directly across Aspen Ave. from the Weatherford which originally housed a J.C. Penney's. Her time managing the Weatherford was one of many accomplishments mentioned in her 1956 obituary.

SUPREME COURT RULING GIVES MRS. HALL CHARGE OF HOTEL WEATHERFORD

Mrs. J. W. Weatherford has taken charge of the Hotel Weatherford at Flagstaff.

Above notice from 1929,
Court accounts from 1927

The state supreme court on Monday denied the request of J. W. Weatherford for a rehearing in the Hall-Weatherford case, which it decided last month in favor of Mrs. Lulu R. Hall, reversing the decision of the local court made in October, 1925. By this denial for a rehearing Mrs. Hall is given control of Hotel Weatherford owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. John Weatherford. C. B. Wilson of this city was Mrs. Hall's attorney. E. S. Clark of Phoenix, was attorney for the Weatherfords. Frank Harrison of Flagstaff was associated in the case with Mr. Clark until appeal was taken.

This case will be published by the American Law Reports, Annotated, which publishes leading cases of the country. The Hall-Weatherford case decides three very interesting points: first, the question of estoppel; second, the question of validity of a clause in a lease granting a renewal at a rental to be agreed upon by the parties to the lease and another technical legal point.

Mrs. Hall in 1919 leased the Weatherford hotel for five years from May 7, 1920, at a rental of \$18,000, to contribute \$6,500 to improvements to the property, said improvements eventually to revert to the Weatherfords, and to keep the hotel in repair. She was also to provide all furniture required for the operation of the hotel, but this furniture was to remain her property. The lease included this clause:

"It is further agreed that the party of the second part upon the expiration of this lease shall have the option to renew the same for a like period at a price to be agreed upon, and shall have the preference right to the same at any price which may be agreed upon by the party of the first part."

Mrs. Weatherford did not sign this original lease, but was present when it was read and discussed by her husband and Mrs. Hall and was also present when they signed it.

Some months before the lease expired Mrs. Hall took up the question of renewal with Mr. and Mrs. Weatherford. Mrs. Weatherford strenuously objected to renewal. She contended that the property was community property and that since she did not sign the lease of 1919 it was void and in no manner binding on her; that Mrs. Hall was a tenant at will and could be removed from the premises at any time.

Mr. Weatherford signed the renewal of the lease for another five years, and Mrs. Hall entered upon the second rental term beginning in May, 1925.

Shortly thereafter the Weatherfords brought suit to recover possession of the hotel, on the ground that, it being community property, and the lease not having been signed by Mrs. Weatherford, the lease was valid only at the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Weatherford.

Judge J. E. Jones in superior court here in October, 1925, sustained the claims of the Weatherfords and overruled motion of Mrs. Hall's attorney, C. B. Wilson, for a new trial. Whereupon in March, 1926, the appeal was taken to the state supreme court, Attorney Wilson claiming seven points of error in connection with the trial of the case here.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Weatherford, son and daughter-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. John Weatherford, are managing the hotel. When Mrs. Hall relinquished possession under order of superior court she stored the hotel furnishings, all of which belonged to her. Soon afterward she assumed management of the Beale hotel at Kingman, where she is now. She owns and operates the Kinlani store and apartment building in this city, the stores being occupied by the J. C. Penney Co. and the Pay'n Takit grocery.

Whether Mrs. Hall will decide to take over the Weatherford hotel again is not at this time known here.

The question of damages resulting from being deprived of the hotel since being ousted, does not enter into the supreme court decisions.

SUPREME COURT ASKED TO CONSIDER REVERSING ITSELF IN HOTEL CASE

The state supreme court has been asked by E. S. Clark, attorney for Mr. and Mrs. John Weatherford of this city, to reconsider its verdict in the Weatherford-Hall case and to grant a hearing for argument by plaintiff counsel.

The supreme court recently reversed the decision of the local superior court, the latter having broken the five year renewal lease given Mrs. L. R. Hall of the Weatherford hotel by Mr. Weatherford, on Mrs. Weatherford's contention that she had not signed the lease. The supreme court unanimously decided Mrs. Hall's lease valid. In the meantime Mr. and Mrs. Weatherford have possession of the hotel.

It is believed by C. B. Wilson of this city, attorney for Mrs. Hall, that the final settlement of the case in favor of his client will not be greatly delayed by the motion for reconsideration of the verdict. It is pointed out that the supreme court very seldom reverses itself.

Mrs. Hall was here last week from Kingman, where she is in charge of the Beale hotel, for consultation with Mr. Wilson.

1910

Have Leased the Weatherford.

Babbitt Bros. have secured a five year lease on the Weatherford hotel and will place it under the management of Mr. John Shea, formerly with the El Tovar hotel at Grand Canyon.

It is understood that improvements will be made in the dining room and this hotel will be run in connection with the Commercial hotel under the same management.

Flagstaff has long needed a hotel for the accomodation of the traveling public and has been criticised for the lack of proper accomodations. It is to be hoped that the new management will put forth every effort to remedy conditions. Mr. Weatherford has purchased the J. S. Amundsen house on the hill.

1910

Hotels Change Management

Mr. Jack Shea turned over the management of the Weatherford and Commercial hotels Tuesday to Edgar A. Brown, who will take over the temporary management until a permanent settlement is effected by Babbitt Brothers. It is one of the best propositions in the southwest, and it will not be long before some expert hotel man will be glad to break into the business here. Mr. Brown expects soon to take over the Volz trading post at Canyon Diablo.

1913

Hotel Weatherford Leased

Last Saturday morning Knox & Bowman assigned their lease on the Hotel Weatherford to George Black, Jr., who took immediate possession of same. Mr. Black is running the Broadway Pool hall in the Weatherford block, and the lease of the entire building will enable him to conduct the hotel and the pool hall in connection. We have not yet been informed as to Mr. Black's intention in the matter, but during the summer the hotel will no doubt be a paying proposition.

1920

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mrs. L. R. Hall who recently leased the

Weatherford Hotel

Has assumed the management of the same.

Mrs. Hall Will Also Conduct

Lolomai Lodge

Opening This Popular Summer Resort in

OAK CREEK CANYON

JUNE 1st

This will be her fifth season in charge of Lolomai Lodge. Mrs. Hall has just arrived from Phoenix, where she finished her third season conducting Ingleside Club.

Weatherford Hotel

MRS. L. R. HALL, Manager

30 ROOMS

MODERN THROUGHOUT

1914

Weatherford Hotel Changes Management

George W. Black Jr., sold his lease and equipment of the Weatherford Hotel Tuesday to Mr. H. B. White, a former well known resident of Prescott. Mr. White took charge of the hotel and pool-room on the same day.

Mr. White has had much experience in hotel management and is a genial gentleman to meet. Mr. Black has not decided what he will do just for the present.

Changing Ownership

1937

Weatherford Hotel Changes Ownership

Fred Boyd, owner and operator of Boyd's Camp, seven miles west of the city, has terminated a realty deal whereby he disposed of the Weatherford hotel and adjoining buildings at Flagstaff to M. J. Pilkington of that city.

Mr. Pilkington took over the active management of the property on the first of the month with the transfer of deeds and title to be made on October first.

Mr. Pilkington has leased the hotel to Frank Warnica, effective October first.

1966

Weatherford Hotel Sold By Mrs. Hall

Sale of the Weatherford Hotel, one of Flagstaff's downtown landmarks, was made known today with the Spur Land and Cattle Company buying it from Mrs. Ann Bond Hall. The cattle company is part of the estate of the late Charles J. Babbitt, one of the original five Babbitt Brothers who founded the company in Flagstaff and northern Arizona.

The hotel was named for the late Colonel Weatherford for whom the road to the top of the San Francisco peaks was also named. His son Hugh Weatherford ran it for a time following his father's death.

Mrs. Perry (Alma) Stegmeir will remain at the hotel as manager and will run it for the purchasers, who will take over the operation of the hotel May 15.

1946

Monday, August 5, 1946

Albert A. Hall Now Operating Hotel Weatherford Here

Albert A. Hall, new owner and operator of the Weatherford Hotel, arrived in the city Tuesday to take over the property. Hall came to Flagstaff from New York City and was accompanied here from Denver by his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Merrill.

The new owner said that he plans construction of a garage for the use of hotel patrons as one of the improvements for the Weatherford as soon as building conditions permit.

Hall is no stranger to Arizona having been connected with lead and zinc mining in the state for many years, principally with the Tennessee-Schuykill mine near Chloride, and later with eastern interests in the development of placer gold mining properties on Antelope Creek at Rich Hill, near Octave mine in the Wickenburg district. The American Smelting and Refining Co., was operator of the Antelope Creek project.

In the hotel field, Hall and his brother, J. J. Hall, were connected with building the Hall Hotel in Denver, and after its completion the new Weatherford owner operated the Colorado property for several years.

The former owners of the Weatherford, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Robinson, and their daughter Maureen will leave soon on a vacation trip before returning to their home in Tucson for the winter months. In Tucson the daughter plans to continue her musical studies.

HELLO FLAGSTAFF..

On August 1st, I took over operation of the WEATHERFORD HOTEL, and began what I hope will be a long and mutually profitable association with this city.

Whether to a city judge that city by the type of hotel service it offers. This is true in most places. It is especially true in Flagstaff, where visitors supply such a large percentage of the business income.

In taking over operation of the WEATHERFORD HOTEL, it will be my aim to continue the high standards of hotel service established by my predecessors—to the end that my guests will obtain the best possible impression of your town... and mine.

ALBERT A. HALL, Owner and Operator

The
Weatherford Hotel

Telephone 20

Flagstaff, Arizona

1956

Hall Funeral Will Be Held Wednesday

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday at the Episcopal Church for Mrs. Lulu Hall, 82, pioneer hotel woman and prominent Flagstaff citizen, who died early Monday morning following an operation at Williams Hospital.

Mrs. Hall's life was an active and unusual one that took her to many places. Born October 15, 1873 in Utah, near Salt Lake City, she went as a bride to Prince Edward Island, Canada after her marriage to Hubert Hall.

In 1896, the Halls went to Mexico. In the midst of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1914. Mrs. Hall and her husband managed hotels in Cuernavaca, Cuautla, San Angel, and Mexico City. Called home by the illness of Mrs. Hall's father in Idaho, the Halls were not able to return to Mexico and were forced to leave their possessions there.

Shortly after the Mexican Revolution, Mrs. Hall came to this part of the country where she managed Lolomi Lodge in Oak Creek, then the Weatherford Hotel in Flagstaff.

In the 1930's, she built a half block of business property in Flagstaff which now houses the J. C. Penney Co., Sears-Roebuck, Acme Cleaners, Friends, and the Kinlani Apartments. Until her retirement several years ago, she owned the Beale Hotel in Kingman.

Mrs. Hall was active in Soroptimist International, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Woman's Club, and she was one of the women who helped build the Flagstaff Woman's Club building here.

She was the mother of eight children, five of whom preceded her in death.

She is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Charles Elmer of Kingman, and Miss Elizabeth Hall of Oak Creek and by her son Carlos Hall who is in the American Embassy at Caracas, Venezuela. She is also survived by five grandchildren.

Meet the Green-Taylors



Sam Green & Henry Taylor, 1988

Henry and Lloyd Taylor grew up in the historic El Rancho Hotel in Holbrook, Arizona, so it was no surprise when they decided to save the dilapidated Weatherford in 1975. After purchasing the hotel from the Babbitt Brothers' Spur & Land Company, which had intended to raze the old building, they continued to rent out rooms to long-term tenants while Henry, a social worker, supplemented this by housing rehab clients in part of the hotel as a sort of "half-way house." He also employed an Austrian cobbler who taught the clients how to repair boots in the basement. The storefronts that currently comprise the Charly's dining room continued to be rented by outside businesses, bringing much needed revenue to the brothers who immediately set out renovating the rundown structure.

Soon, it was determined that the stigma of housing rehabilitation clients made it difficult to return the hotel to respectability, so that aspect of the business was phased out and Henry put his career as a psychologist on hold. To utilize those small rooms, which were not to current American tastes, the Taylor Brothers followed the lead of their parents in Holbrook by getting into the burgeoning hostel business, catering to foreign tourists. Around the same time, the first iteration of Charly's was opened in the lobby, and in 1980, Pamela "Sam" Green, a young art student from Ohio, began working there before falling in love with and eventually marrying Henry. Sam joined the management team and worked to expand Charly's from a small café into a full-fledged restaurant and bar with live music. Unfortunately, tax issues in the early '80s led to the Taylors nearly losing the building, but smart legal and financial moves allowed them to retain possession and once again save it from the bulldozers.

In 1985, Henry and Sam, who had recently bought out Lloyd's portion of the business, along with infant daughter Chelsea, moved into the building so that they could speed up the renovation process. They spent the next ten years rebuilding the hotel to modern standards, frequently with the help of Sam's brothers Greg, Doug, and Curtis Green. By the time Henry, Sam, and Chelsea moved offsite in 1995, the Weatherford was in great shape and in no danger of becoming a parking lot. Since then, the Green-Taylor family has continued their renovation projects, rebuilding the wrap-around balconies with the help of state and federal grants, as well as their personal savings, just in time for the building's 100th anniversary in 1997. The family remains involved with every aspect of the operation of the hotel, which is now a world-class vacation destination with three bars, multiple event spaces, and seventeen boutique hotel rooms.

The Exchange Pub

1909

In 1909, less than ten years after the hotel opened, J.W. Weatherford built Flagstaff's first telephone exchange as an addition to the south side of the building. When phone operations moved elsewhere in the late 1920s, the building became a restaurant, first called the La Brat/La Brae Café and then the Weatherford Café, which were run by Chinese-American families for most of the 20th century and were the only dining spot in the complex from the time the last restaurant in the basement closed in the 1940s until the original Charly's opened in the lobby in the late 1970s. This part of the building had two major makeovers, with the original brick façade buried under Art Deco style stucco during the 1930s, and aluminum siding plastered over that in the '50s. The original style was restored in the mid-1990s, when the Weatherford Café was turned into an extension of Charly's and restyled "The Exchange Pub" in honor of its telephone related history.

NEW TELEPHONE OFFICE.

John W. Weatherford is building a neat addition to the Weatherford hotel which will be used as an office for the Arizona Overland Telephone company. This will be a most convenient location for the telephone company.

1924

PHONE BUILDING WILL BE BIGGER; NEW EQUIPMENT

Work has begun building an extension on the rear of the Flagstaff telephone building and improved new equipment has been ordered, which Manager H. G. Myabb believes will be in place within a couple of months.

The phone building belongs to John W. Weatherford and adjoins his hotel building on the south. The addition will be 20 by 23 feet.

With larger quarters, the present space will be occupied by the office and switchboard, the addition to be used as girls' rest room and store room.

The new equipment includes among other things a multiple magneto switch board, with positions for four girls, one handling toll and the others local calls.

There will be two distinct improvements obtained with the new equipment. For one thing, any of the girls, without moving, can answer any call and make any connection flashed for on the section in front of any of the other girls. Thus if one girl is getting more calls than she can easily handle, any of the others can, without moving from her seat, help her out. This makes for greater rapidity in answering calls and making connections.

Another improvement will be in greater distinctness, this because the insulation has become somewhat worn in the present board.

1996

Pub work leads to award

Henry Taylor and Sam Green's latest act of restoration has not gone unrewarded.

The owners of the Weatherford Hotel earned a second-place award in commercial restoration Saturday in the Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation for their work revitalizing the Exchange Pub, the building just south of the hotel on Aspen Avenue and Leroux Street.

The building takes its current name from its original use in 1909 — it was the Telephone Exchange building. Then, as now, it was a place filled with lively chatter and juicy conversations, although I suspect it sees a bit more guitar-playing and singing these days.

Taylor and Green won the award for restoring the Exchange Pub's facade to a very high degree of historical accuracy. The facade study and design plans were completed by builder Craig Baumhofer.

"It gives Sam and me great pride to be recognized like this for our efforts," Taylor said. "Downtown Flagstaff has such a colorful history, it's important to us that it not crumble away to dust."

Their plans are only getting more ambitious these days. The couple's next restoration project will bring back three stories of balconies, porches and other original features to the Weatherford.

...

An Uncanny Phenomenon

This area has some of the building's most consistent alleged supernatural activity. Visit our website to see a security video of a bottle spontaneously flying off the shelf.

1899

On the first of the month J. W. Weatherford will commence the building of a new hotel. The new building will be adjoining the elegant Weatherford building and will be three stories high and there will be in addition to the office, a dining room and kitchen, twenty rooms. The new hotel will be fitted with modern improvements and will be handsomely furnished.

1903

Roof Garden and Other Improvements.

Work was commenced yesterday refitting and refinishing the interior of the Hotel Weatherford. Baths and other improvements will be added to the rooms, new paper hung, etc. A conservatory and dance pavilion will also be added, making a complete roof garden. The east end and the south side will be enclosed with heavy glass. When the improvements are completed the Weatherford will be a first class hostelry.

1907

The Hotel Weatherford

For the past two months the Hotel Weatherford has been in the hands of carpenters and painters, and has been practically closed during that time.

The changes made in the interior of the hotel have been many and all go to make up for the comfort of the traveler. The office has been enlarged, a large and handsome fireplace added, lending an additional charm to the surroundings of the pleasant office.

The main stairway connecting with the second story leads up from the office, another wide stairway lead from the office to the dining room in the basement. The dining room having been changed from the first floor to the basement, being the same size as the former one and well lighted and pleasant room. The well arranged kitchen being in the rear of the dining room.

The walls of the halls, dining room and office have been freshly kalsomined, and every place in the hotel presents a cleanly home-like appearance.

Large and convenient sample rooms have been fitted up in the basement for the use of commercial men.

The hotel is fitted up in modern style the rooms being well furnished and lighted, with convenient bathrooms. The house is electrically lighted and heated by the hot water system, thereby adding to the comfort of its many guests. One of the attraction of the hotel is the roomy sun parlor, which always an attraction to visitors.

The hotel will be re-opened on Saturday and Landlord Weatherford will take pleasure in showing his patrons over the house and assigning them pleasant rooms, and in serving the best meals, properly prepared, that the market will afford.

1920

1920

WEATHERFORD HOTEL BEING REMODELED; CAFE MOVES

Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Kelemen moved their restaurant yesterday from the basement of the Weatherford hotel and are getting ready to re-open it as soon as possible in the house at 302 E. Aspen avenue, where they hope within a week to be ready to take care of their trade.

The work of remodeling the Weatherford has begun. Part of the basement is being made ready for the pool hall and barber shop, which will be moved from the street level corner they now occupy. The restaurant will remain in the basement, as now and Mrs. Hall, the lessee, will open it up again in a few weeks, assuming charge of it herself. The hotel lobby will be enlarged, extending across the front of the present pool hall, the back of which will be partitioned off into seven additional guest rooms. The work is being done by John Weatherford, owner of the building.

REMODELED WEATHERFORD HOTEL MUCH LARGER

The work of remodeling the Weatherford hotel is going rapidly forward. The new home of the pool room, in the north side of the basement, is nearly ready for the move from the floor above. The sidewalk along the north side of the building will be filled in from the present inside edge to the building with glass and concrete walk.

The lobby will extend, as soon as the pool tables are moved downstairs, clear across the front of the main floor. It will be handsomely fitted up and a big plate glass window put in on the north end of the lobby. There will be a mezzanine floor in the lobby, for ladies' parlor. The back of the present pool room is being partitioned into 18 additional guest rooms. There will be steam heat and running water in each room. The dining room will be in the basement.

John W. Weatherford, proprietor of the hotel, said Sunday that he will soon build a 75x42 foot addition to the rear of the hotel, four stories high. This will be divided into more than forty guest rooms and the main floor will be reserved for offices, of which there will be room for at least twelve. With the capacity of the present building much more than doubled, the hotel will to some extent solve the hotel problem, though there will remain room for a new big hotel just the same as there always has been.

1921

BIG IMPROVEMENT AT HOTEL WEATHERFORD

Mrs. L. R. Hall is doing wonders in transforming the interior of the Hotel Weatherford, of which she is lessee.

The owner of the building, John W. Weatherford, has about finished the work of remodeling, more than doubling the size of the lobby and adding 18 new guest rooms, each with bath. Mrs. Hall is having every room in the house re-decorated, all of the furniture revarnished, is putting Navajo rugs in all the new rooms and has handsome furniture and rugs all ready to go into the big lobby as soon as the painters are through, which will be next week.

On the second floor, in front, is a big room, with piano and desks for ladies' use. This is being very nicely furnished and it, with the lobby, will make the hotel one of the most cozy and comfortable in Northern Arizona.

Mrs. Hall will open a dining room in the basement about May 1. She has employed the male cook she had in Phoenix and plans to have a dining room that will soon become famous for its good food and service.

1925

Early Renovations

The Hotel Weatherford

has been remodeled and refurnished and will open for business November 22. The Hotel will be open for inspection to the citizens of Flagstaff from six to nine p. m., November twenty first.

H. M. Weatherford, Mgr.

The Main Bar

Along with the currently lobby, the main bar area was initially part of Weatherford's general store. Around 1910, it was cut off from the retail section and it became the Lyric Theatre and then a billiards hall. In 1920, the original high-ceilinged main floor was portioned into eighteen new hotel rooms over two floors. This held up until 1981 when the rooms in the lower part of this area were demolished one by one to extend the lobby/bar.

Throughout the 1980s, Charly's Pub earned its spot as the leading bar in a rapidly improving downtown district, booking high-profile national acts such as Odetta (who brought Buddy Guy as a special guest), Guy Clark, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, and the New Riders of the Purple Sage, as well as Arizona favorites like Hans Olson, S.E. Willis, Tommy Dukes, Jimmy DeBlois, and Charly Spining.

Over the last ten years, underlying structural issues resulting from the haphazard 1920 renovation have been addressed by stripping this entire area from floor to ceiling, installing new supports, and building it back much as it was before.

Monday Night Blues crazier than ever



It's just crazy, it's nuts, it's like nothing I've seen. —drummer Charlie Mosman



Guest performers such as saxophone player Mark Shrivings (left) jump up onstage all night, primarily during the third set, while blues blues guitarist

Tommy Dukes (right) is the lead man during the mid-40s set.



Sam Green decorates the bar for St. Patrick's Day (both photos from 1989, courtesy AZ Daily Sun)

The Rebirth of Downtown

By the time the Taylors took over the Weatherford, downtown Flagstaff was decades into a period of decline, as department stores that had traditionally drawn customers had moved elsewhere. This trend was accelerated by the opening of the Flagstaff Mall on the far east side of town in 1979, and numerous articles and letters to the editor of the Daily Sun lamented this seemingly irreversible trend. Lloyd and Henry Taylor, and later Sam Green, were involved with grassroots efforts to clean up downtown and gives locals and visitors a reason to return.

When Charly's Pub opened in 1981, "respectable locals" and students did not tend to patronize the famously rowdy bars north of the tracks in the downtown area, and Charly's was reportedly the first to bring them back thanks to the massively successful Monday Night Blues. By 1990, many other establishments joined Charly's in creating a vibrant yet safe downtown bar scene which persists to this day.

A Lost Silent Film



In 1923, the idea of filming a motion picture on location rather than entirely on a Hollywood set was novel enough that several newspapers took time to remark that Zane Grey's second film adaption, *The Call of the Canyon*, included footage of the Weatherford Hotel, where the book was written and partially takes place. Unfortunately, like many silent movies of this era, the film was considered "lost." While the Russian film archive, Gosfilmofond, located a few minutes of footage and gave a copy to the Library of Congress, upon review of this footage, none of the shots of the Weatherford survive. However, the Lolomai Lodge in nearby Oak Creek, which was managed by Lulu Hall at the same time she ran the Weatherford, appears in some of the remaining scenes.

Page from screenplay mentioning the hotel

The Evening Star, Washington, D.C. 1923

Natural Scenery For Picture Sets

WILL real scenery and buildings eventually replace the artificially constructed set-in motion picture production?

Will the public thirst for genuine locale result in outdoor sets becoming practically extinct except for period settings?

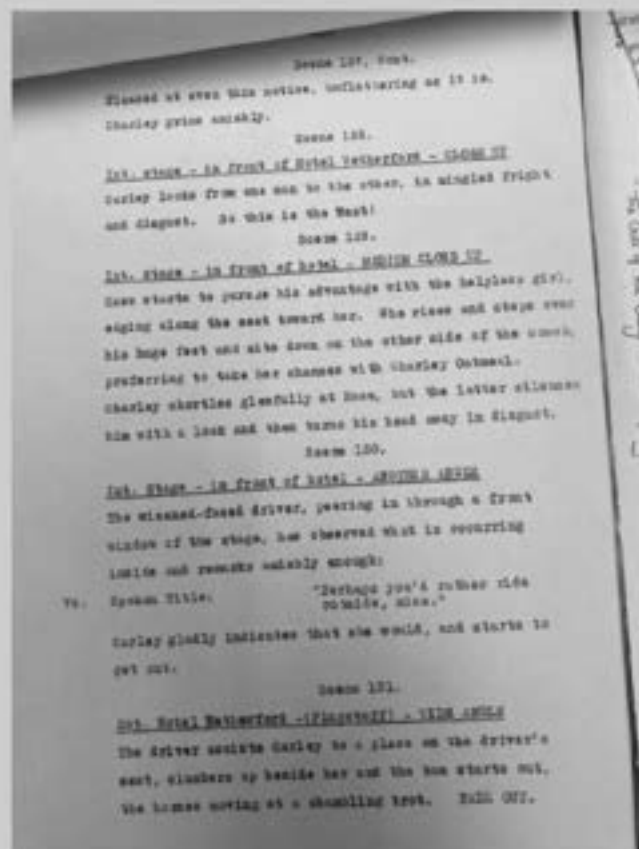
These questions are raised by the recent trend toward filming scenes in exact spots described in original stories instead of building skeleton structures and scenery as backgrounds.

Among the greatest examples recently of the desire to give audiences glimpses of the actual country and homes described in the original novel are the first two Zane Grey productions to be filmed by Paramount.

In the filming of "The Call of the Canyon," no exterior sets were built. This is one of the first pictures ever produced in which this has been the case. The railway station at Flagstaff, Ariz., the picturesque old Weatherford Hotel, where Mr. Grey lived while getting material for his story; Lolomai Lodge in the rugged Oak Creek canyon, and many other quaint corners of the Arizona mountains are shown in the picture.

Zane Grey conducted Director Victor Fleming to scenes of his story and imbued him and the cast with his own personality and his feelings about the theme of his novel.

A similar attempt was made to catch the spirit of the story in the filming of "To the Last Man," which was made in the Tonto basin, Arizona, 200 miles from a railway.



Interior shot of Lolomai Lodge



Weatherford's Theatres

As soon as the Babbitt Brothers ceased their brief lease of the hotel and moved their furniture business elsewhere, advertisements for the Lyric Theatre in the Hotel Weatherford began to show up in the Coconino Sun in 1912, but cease by the end of the year, around the same time that John Weatherford's Majestic Theatre is opened next door. That movie house famously collapsed during a blizzard in 1914, at which point Weatherford split up with his business partners, who turned one of the Babbitt Brothers' garage buildings into the Empress Theatre (today commemorated in a corner of Heritage Square) while Weatherford set up a temporary version of the Majestic in the Bank Hotel building. In 1917, he completed an entirely new, larger structure on the site of the original Majestic. This theatre, the Orpheum, still stands, not as a movie palace, but as one of Flagstaff's major live performance venues.

The Babbitts

The Babbitts are a prominent family descended from Flagstaff pioneers. They have included such influential Arizonans as former Flagstaff mayor Paul Babbitt, former Arizona governor, Secretary of the Interior under Bill Clinton, and Supreme Court nominee Bruce Babbitt, and the recently deceased businessman and historical preservation activist Jim Babbitt. The first generation of Babbitts in Flagstaff were brothers who operated the successful mercantile establishment that drove John Weatherford to pivot toward the hospitality business. Members of the family leased the Weatherford from 1910 to 1913 and owned it from 1966 through 1975.

The Basement

Those who saw the storage areas that took up the entire basement until as recently as 2013 would likely not recognize the bustling bar and music venue that has taken its place.

The basement does not seem to have been used for anything specific in the earliest years of the hotel, but a restaurant was operating there by 1907. The billiards hall moved down from the first floor in 1920, and then portions of it were used as headquarters for numerous clubs and fraternal organizations, include Flagstaff's Rotary Club, the Elks (of which John Weatherford was a founding member), the VFW, "Teen Town," the Boys Club (forerunner to the Boys & Girls Club), and Theatrikos Theatre Company. A hotel bar operated concurrently at least some of this time, and the original Gopher Hole went from a speakeasy to a legitimate bar following the end of Prohibition. At various times, the basement also housed Flagstaff's first radio station and even a cobbler shop.



The Gopher Hole Pub in the basement, 2021

I Don't Wanna Go Down to the Basement!

When visiting Flagstaff in 2021, Amy Allan, a world-renowned medium who stars on the Travel Channel's *Dead Files*, felt drawn to the basement and spoke of trapped souls who she believes still inhabit the area, but generally make themselves scarce when living people are around.

Sam has an eerie story of her own: "My dog, Mona, was always by my side as I did laundry in the basement, but she absolutely refused to cross the threshold into the area that now houses our pool tables. She would howl at me and stay put until I returned."

Sam's daughter Chelsea had similar experiences in that same area in the basement. When she was a young girl living at the hotel, she says she did not have many friends come over for playdates, as parents were apprehensive about their children playing around a rowdy bar that had the reputation of being haunted. So instead of hanging around with kids her age, Chelsea recalls playing with ghosts, which at the time she didn't give much thought to.

"I used to play a game where I sat with my dog in the basement, where the pool tables are now, and bounced a ball against the wall while talking with a spirit who called himself Algernon. Margaret Rees, who worked at the hotel for many years, overheard me one day and explained that she was a medium and that she had also picked up on Algernon, who she regarded as a negative spirit. Thankfully for me he didn't strike me that way. Margaret also mentioned a female spirit named Matilda, but I don't remember her."



Also, although not necessarily supernatural, there are two particularly creepy areas hidden very close to public areas. First, an unassuming door tucked behind the pool tables masks a small, partially excavated area that seems to be a passage into the earth. While not part of the infamous underground tunnel system, the area was once a much larger room under Leroux Street. It was filled in with gravel for safety reasons years ago but was not covered up entirely in case future owners of the building ever wish to install another entrance.

Secondly, a "stairway to nowhere" exists in a janitor's closet. While its purpose is unclear, we speculate that it either led from the original kitchen to a root cellar or was part of a passage between the hotel and J.W. Weatherford's other business, the Orpheum Theatre.

The Second Floor

The north side of the hotel was constructed with just two floors, but in 1920, a new second story was sandwiched between the main floor and the original second story, which became the third. Instead of supporting this floor with pillars from the ground up, portions hung from the ceiling. This miraculously held up for nearly a century, but was not indefinitely sustainable, and costly renovations tore out much of this addition and rebuilt it to modern safety standards in 2016. At the same time, the mezzanine that hung over the lobby was removed, restoring the original ceiling and showing just how massive the entire main floor initially was.

"What is Your Spookiest Room?" part 1

While the modern queen suites on the north hall of this floor reflect their recent construction, the south hall that runs parallel was able to be reinforced without being completely torn out, so these rooms are much older. GM Chelsea Taylor remembers as a kid building forts out of cardboard boxes all over the building, but avoiding the end of this hall outside of room 42 due to a creepy feeling. When filming her account of this in a video that can be seen on our website, the door to the room spontaneously creaks open while several orbs float around.



Left: Western Author Zane Grey
Right: Jon Bon Jovi
w/ hotel owner Sam Green



Famous Guests & Other Early Hotels

The Weatherford was the third major hotel in Flagstaff, preceded by the Bank Hotel, which ceased operation decades ago and now houses the popular McMillen bar and restaurant, and the Commercial Hotel which burned down in 1975 in the area where Flagstaff Brewing Company now sits.

Upon opening in 1900, the Weatherford superseded these earlier accommodations as the preeminent lodging spot in Flagstaff and kept this position until it was itself surpassed by the larger and more modern Monte Vista Hotel in 1927. During the years in between, we hosted numerous famous guests. A partial list includes newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, Western novelist Zane Grey, pioneering cartoonist Jimmy Swinnerton, painter Thomas Moran, and, allegedly, legendary lawman Wyatt Earp. At the time, our largest suite was located where the Zane Grey Ballroom now sits, so many if not all these people probably stayed there. President, war hero, and all-around interesting guy Teddy Roosevelt was said to have stayed here, but contemporary newspaper articles seem to indicate that he never actually stopped off for his planned trip to Flagstaff, making the claim unlikely. On the other hand, we know that William Boyd, known for portraying Hopalong Cassidy, worked as a desk clerk at the Weatherford.

While VIPs visiting Flagstaff would have mostly stayed elsewhere from 1927 through about 1990, we know that longtime Arizona Senator and presidential candidate Barry Goldwater stayed here in the 1950s, and since the Taylors have assumed operation, they've hosted former Second Lady of the U.S. Tipper Gore, Freddy Kreuger actor Robert Englund, and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member Jon Bon Jovi (granted, he actually stayed down the street at the Monte V, but he hung out in our bar one night with bandmate Richie Sambora during a motorcycle trip).

Our Most Interesting Guest?

The Weatherford Hotel has had its share of famous guests over its 120 plus years, but it's doubtful it ever hosted anyone who was more of a character than artist Jimmy Swinnerton.

In 1951, Arizona Highways magazine wrote the following about the man:

"Jimmy Swinnerton, the hard-drinking consumptive who should have died fifty years ago, is today a hearty, husky, temperate man whose twinkling eyes and quick wit belie his age." At the time of this article, Swinnerton was 76 years old and would make it another 22 years, dying just short of his 99th birthday.

Swinnerton is mainly known as the originator of the modern newspaper comic strip, creating Little Jimmy when he was just 17 years old in 1892. In addition to his cartoons, he became a celebrated landscape painter, and much of his work in both styles focuses on the terrain and people of Northern Arizona. And unlike most of the famous folks who stopped through the Weatherford over the years, Swinnerton's connection to Flagstaff lasted for a lifetime.

James Guilford Swinnerton first came to Flagstaff in 1905, as he was sent by his boss and fellow Weatherford guest William Randolph Heart to get some rest and recover from years of alcohol abuse. He was 20 years old at the time.

Swinnerton semi-recovered and returned frequently, staying in the bridal suite of the Weatherford, as well as the Commercial Hotel and various private homes. In a biography of Swinnerton, there is a description of the Weatherford at the time as a rowdy, "bullet-scarred" place.

Swinnerton is also notable for helping to start the annual Flagstaff Pow Wow, and for attempting to make the town more welcoming toward Native Americans. Articles in the Coconino Sun, Arizona Highways, and much later, Platt Cline's celebrated history of Flagstaff "Mountain Town," recounts that Navajos in particular generally avoided Flagstaff due to racism here and instead took their business to Winslow and Holbrook, and that Swinnerton tried to rectify this by organizing the first Flagstaff Pow Wow.

Although he visited Flagstaff less often after the 1920s, Swinnerton returned occasionally throughout his life, and the very last gallery exhibition of his work during his lifetime was at Flagstaff's Art Barn in 1969. While Jimmy Swinnerton is not as well-known today as he probably should be, it's apparent that his life was well lived, and that Flagstaff and the Weatherford Hotel are lucky to be parts of his interesting (and very long) story.



The Third Floor

When the hotel first opened in 1900, the guest rooms were all on the third floor. In the short period from 1897-1899 when the building was solely a mercantile operation, the Weatherford family's apartment was in the area that now hosts our laundry facilities and public bathrooms for the Zane Grey Bar.

In 1903, part of the roof on the same level as the third floor was enclosed with glass and became a beautiful sunroom, where many community activities took place. In 1920, this area was partitioned into guest rooms, and rooms 49 through 53 are much as they were since then. During that same renovation, a meeting room for ladies featuring desks and a piano was installed in the corner of what is now the Zane Grey Bar.

The former bridal suite, currently about two-thirds of the Zane Grey Ballroom, is where VIPs like Zane Grey and Jimmy Swinnerton were confirmed to have stayed for long periods of time, and it's likely that most of our other notable guests from the early years stayed there as well. This area is a hotbed of alleged supernatural activity, with reports of a small girl floating across the ballroom and disappearing into a wall, plus many photographs and videos taken there show orbs darting around the room.



The Sunroom (ca. 1905)

"What is Your Spookiest Room?" part 2

During the years 1985-1995, when the Taylor's lived in the hotel (their quarters were on the second floor), rooms 54 through 56, on the site of the original Weatherford family apartment, weren't rented out to the public and instead acted as spaces for visiting friends to sleep. One night, a former employee came to visit and stayed in room 54. "She woke up in the middle of the night and saw a couple sitting at the end of her bed," Sam remembers. "Then the couple, who were wearing what looked like a bride and groom from a long ago wedding, got up and walked right through the door without the door being opened." The rooms have since been converted into our laundry facilities.

Flagstaff's Secret Tunnel System

At the risk of partially debunking the many entertaining myths the surround the often discussed "secret underground tunnel system" that is still partially intact under downtown Flagstaff, it appears that regardless of what nefarious purposes these tunnels may or may not have been used for in later years (alleged rum-running and human trafficking), they were actually built for a surprisingly boring purpose: housing steam pipes.

From The Northern Arizona Leader, 25 June 1920: "The Flagstaff Electric light company has just begun the installation of steam mains which will distribute steam throughout the business section of town for heating purposes. After the first of next October the merchant in Flagstaff can turn on the heat as easily as he now turns on his lights and the friendly old stove that scorched your coat tails when you were not noticing, and smoked up the premises whether you noticed or not, will be a thing of the past in Flagstaff stores."

The lumber business was an important part of the Flagstaff economy for many years (hence NAU's Lumberjack mascot), and the sawmill operators devised an ingenious way to earn extra cash in a way that also served the community. They decided to burn the sawdust that was a by-product of their operations and pump the generated steam to the buildings in the downtown commercial district, which ended up being cheaper and far less dangerous than the heating methods that were used previously. This system help up from 1920 until 1966, and it featured an extra component until 1950 that used the same steam to spin turbines that created electricity.

One of the reasons that the Weatherford and many other historical buildings in downtown Flagstaff did not succumb to fire in the same way they had in the earliest days of the town is due to a surprisingly sustainable and safe heating system that lasted for close to fifty years. While it's often brought up that the lack of catastrophic fires after 1887 or so was due to a law requiring new buildings to be constructed of steel and rock as opposed to wood, the fact that the rock-built Commercial Hotel burned to the ground in 1975 shows that this story isn't so simple.

We're not saying definitively that the tunnels were never used for rum-running, opium smuggling, or similar fun activities, but it looks like their creation was much more mundane -- although it's important to remember that this nearly forgotten steam system provided safe and sustainable heating for a good chunk of Flagstaff's (and the Weatherford's) existence.

(Probably) The Oldest Piano in Flagstaff

Our 1877 Steinway upright is back in perfect working condition after recently being refurbished. It was purchased new from Steinway and Sons in New York City and shipped all the way around the southern tip of South America (this was decades before the Panama Canal) to San Francisco, where it was put on a train and delivered to Flagstaff. While the new of the original owner is lost to history, it was later purchased by Flagstaff pioneer George Hochderffer.

Hochderffer was born in Illinois in 1863 and traveled with his family to Flagstaff via covered wagon in 1897. He was a rancher, artist, botanist, local historian, military enthusiast, and world traveler and is the namesake for the Hochderffer Hills outside of Flagstaff. The piano changed hands a few more times before winding up with Weatherford Hotel owners Henry Taylor and Sam Green.

After an absence of several years, this piano has been fixed up and returned to service, thanks to the generosity of pianist and friend of the hotel S.E. Willis. It is now occasionally played by local artists like Dave Bowman and Charly Spining on special occasions.

If you know of an older piano in or around Flagstaff, please be sure to let us know!

As mentioned earlier, fire was a major concern in turn-of-the-century Flagstaff. In 1901, the Weatherford even advertised itself in the Williams News as "fireproof." Current owner Henry Taylor remarks that one reason why the hotel never completely burned is that starting it employed a heating system using heat from the local sawmills instead of more flammable methods that were used elsewhere in those days. Despite their best efforts, there was a small fire behind the building reported in 1925, and the Coconino Sun shamed the management for not keeping that area tidy. A more substantial fire occurred in 1927 that damaged a portion of the balcony. In this instance, Weatherford told the newspaper that it was the only fire in the hotel's thirty-five-year history, probably assuming no one would call him out nearly a century later for forgetting about the minor 1925 blaze. Unfortunately, a much more substantial fire in 1929 caused irreparable damage to the balconies, and despite the Flagstaff Fire Department being located directly across the street, the damage was so severe that the building would be without balconies for the next seventy years. During recent renovations, an area on the main floor that was at various times an office, part of the kitchen, and a storage room, was revealed to have major burns that had been covered up, which squares with newspaper accounts as to the source of the 1929 fire. In 1979, another fire was important enough to make the newspaper, but thankfully was not particularly destructive.

Fire!

1925

BURN YOUR RUBBISH

A small blaze in rubbish at the rear of the Weatherford hotel called out the fire department Saturday afternoon. No damage done. Fire Chief Jack M. Wilson calls attention to the failure of some property owners to heed frequent requests made by the department that they keep rubbish burned. The department makes monthly inspection trips downtown and if the recommendations made at these times were carried out there would be far less danger of fire.

1927

**FIRE AND HIGH WINDS
IMPERIL LOCAL HOTEL**

Fire of unknown origin damaged the rear of the Hotel Weatherford, Flagstaff, late last Thursday night, causing an approximate damage of \$2,000.

Fanned by a high wind, the fire which had started in a small room, broke through a window and set fire to the balcony, which is on the same floor level. Once the balcony had fired, the flames were under forced draft from the wind and in just a few seconds were leaping high into the air. The fire alarm was turned in by a resident living on the opposite side of the street at 11:45 p.m. and within a minute, according to witnesses, water was being played on the flames from two lines of hose. It took about 15 minutes to get the fire under control and the fact that it had such a good start and the wind blowing with about a 30-mile velocity made the work of the fire department seem marvelous.

No personal property was lost by any of the guests, as the fire was kept from getting into the bedrooms. The greatest damage to the building was caused by smoke and water. The material damage was the gutting of one room and the destruction of the roof of the balcony.

This is the first fire that the Hotel Weatherford has had in 35 years, according to J. W. Weatherford, owner of the property. The fire in no way hindered operations, said the management.

1929

**Hotel At Flagstaff
Damaged By Flames**

FLAGSTAFF, May 4—Fire today damaged the Hotel Weatherford to the extent of between \$10,000 and \$20,000. For a time the flames threatened an entire business block. The fire started in an incinerator, spreading to nearby woodwork.

1979

**Fire Log
Monday**

1:28 p.m. - 23 N. Leroux, Weatherford Hotel, smoke caused by burnt toast.
9:44 p.m. - 760 E. Zuni Drive, check wall outlets.