



Sharlot Hall Museum Archives.

On April 19, 1974, the Bashford house was escorted on rollers down Gurley Street to its present location at Sharlot Hall Museum.

By Elisabeth F. Ruffner

In 1878 William Coles Bashford, a son of a Prescott pioneer, Coles Bashford, purchased a simple, two-story frame house on the corner of East Gurley and South Pleasant Streets for his bride, Mary Louise Evans, also of a pioneer family.

The Bashfords soon set about creating a magnificent Victorian home to take its place among the other distinguished residences lining Gurley, Prescott's main street. They joined the social and business community of the town and remained in the house until they moved to California in 1904.

Over time, the Bashford house was converted to apartments and finally was sold to the Delbert Pierce family. In 1973, the owner informed this writer

that he had run out of time to give title to the land beneath the building to the Ralston Purina company, owner of the Jack-in-the-Box drive-through restaurant franchise. Pierce agreed to give a group of Prescott citizens three months to move the building off the site to avoid the historic home's demolition.

A committee was formed under the guidance of Kenneth Kimsey, who had recently taken the position as director of Sharlot Hall Museum, and the museum board enthusiastically supported a capital campaign to fund moving the house. They also succeeded in acquiring the corner of West Gurley Street and South McCormick Street as the new location for the transient home.

Funds were raised by many groups and from generous individuals: Jack-in-the-Box graciously contributed \$2,000;

a federal bi-centennial grant of \$5,000 made up the difference in the \$25,000 goal, and on April 19, 1974, the Bashford House was escorted on rollers five blocks along Gurley Street to its new location.

A complete interior and exterior restoration was carried out by the museum staff. The Alta Vista Garden Club designed the landscaping to replicate historic landscaping, complementing the Victorian style of the house. Prescott High School Future Farmers of America excavated the grounds for a sidewalk, and built a picket fence replicating the 1896 original.

On May 15, 1976 the dedication of the new addition to Sharlot Hall Museum opened the third annual Folk Arts Festival with all the ceremony due an Arizona American Revolution Bi-Centennial Project. The Prescott Bi-Centennial Committee heartily supported the grant proposal.

A part of the grant to Prescott also supported the first historic preservation survey in the state, and the formation of Yavapai Heritage Foundation, a citizens' group that recognized the need for systematic, long-range planning in order to avoid another expensive crash program to save an historic building.

As a final renovation project, paint studies were conducted on the Bashford House, revealing eleven distinct layers of paint, the last being white. To capture the flavor of the 19th century past, the original colors of forest green with accents of antique white and a rust red trim, were applied and are maintained as near to the original as possible with today's paint palettes.

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Marge, who received the revered Gail Gardner Award at the Cowboy Poets Gathering in 2007, has volumes of poetry in her repertoire.

Her favorite among the many she has written is "The Woes of a Cowwoman." "Everybody loves it," she said. "It's funny. I try to get humor in all of them." The 14-verse poem laments:

**Sometimes I wish I was  
different.  
Had the amenities  
of a man.  
Who has no problem when  
nature calls.  
All he has to do is stand.**

**It is a problem out  
on the range.  
When you can't find a tree.  
When the rest of the crew  
is all men  
And there's one woman  
— Me.**

Nevertheless, "I was a cowboy," Marge said, "not a cowgirl. I rode like a man for many years."



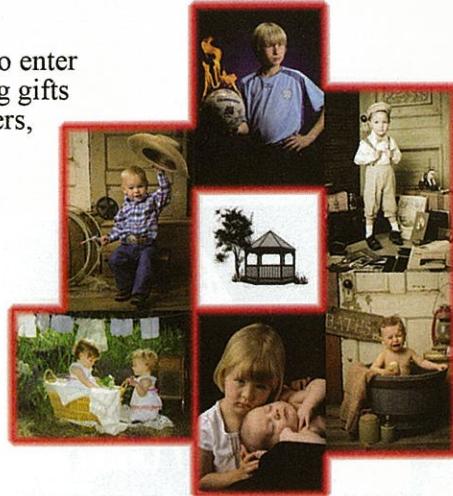
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