

# 17TH ANNUAL WESTERN HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

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THE SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM AND  
THE PRESCOTT CORRAL OF WESTERNERS INTERNATIONAL

**SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM EDUCATION CENTER  
NOVEMBER 7, 2020**

## Murder & Mayhem in Prescott

**Speaker: Bradly Courtney & Drew Desmond**

**Time: 10:00 AM**

When Prescott lost its status as the capitol of Arizona Territory in 1867, the young town went into a tailspin. Lawlessness ensued. The Diana Saloon surfaced in 1868 on the corner of Montezuma and Gurley streets and became the go-to spot of Prescott. Brad Courtney will share two tragic episodes that transpired there, one of which resulted in Prescott's first jailbreak. Drew Desmond will relate three true crime stories involving conspiracies to commit murder. Included will be the account of the first homicidal carjacking in Prescott history; a murder attempt on JS Acker; and two nurses who conspired to poison a resident of the Pioneers' Home.

**Brad Courtney** was a teacher on the Navajo Reservation for 12 years, and in inner city Phoenix for 19 years. He gave trips down the Colorado River for six years. Brad has a masters degree in history, and is the author of *Prescott's Original Whiskey Row* and *The Whiskey Row Fire of 1900*.

**Drew Desmond** is Secretary of the Prescott Western Heritage Foundation. His "#PrescottAZHistory" blog features more than 220 articles and has welcomed nearly a half-million reads from all over the world. His first book, co-authored with Brad Courtney, is due to be released this past September and is titled: "Murder & Mayhem in Prescott."

## Exploring Arizona

**Speaker: Michael Woodcock**

**Time: 11:00 AM**

Arizona was nicknamed the "Baby State" for 47 years until Alaska received statehood. She was a separate territory for 49 years before that. For the previous 15 years, much of the area had been a part of the Territory of New Mexico. From the first time, it was explored and settled by the Spanish until the present, Arizona has remained sparsely populated. Her topography and mineral riches have both helped and hindered settlement. For many of the early years, the central mountain region was ignored by these non-indigenous explorers, whether Spanish conquistadors, American trappers or Army surveyors. It took a war and a lust for gold to finally bring Anglo settlers to this area. This is that story.

**Mick Woodcock** is a native of Tucson and graduate of the University of Arizona. He has worked in Curatorial Services at Sharlot Hall Museum since 1979 and is currently the Chief Curator. He is also the curator of the Fort Whipple Museum, which he helped organize. He has written extensively on Museum related subjects and Arizona history. He is co-author of *Chevrons of the United States Army, 1861-1897*, an associate editor of *Nomenclature 3.0 for Museum Cataloging*, a contributor to *The Living History Anthology: Perspectives From the ALHFAM*, as well as a contributing author of numerous articles for the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums' *Proceedings*, the *Sharlot Hall Gazette*, as well as more than 60 articles in "Days Past" – a historical series published in the *Prescott Daily Courier*.

# Western History Symposium – Nov. 7, 2020

## Shakespeare on the 1890s Arizona Stage: The Thrilling Productions of Louis James

**Speaker: Dr. Thomas Collins & Karen Churchill**

**Time: 1:00 PM**

Shakespeare and the classics in the Arizona Territory? You bet! Louis James (fl. 1880-1910) toured the western states and territories during the golden age of the Arizona theater, staging *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, and Robert Montgomery Bird's *The Gladiator* to wildly enthusiastic applause. His impressive stature, his rumbling baritone, and his larger-than-life acting style made him a western legend. A boyish prankster at heart, he was also legendary among his fellow actors for his outrageous attempts to crack them up on stage. The lavishly illustrated presentation by Collins brings this titanic tragedian back to life and examines four of his famous productions.

**Tom Collins** is professor *emeritus* of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville where he taught theatre and staged plays for 31 years, and co-founded the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival. Since moving to Prescott in 2001, Tom has volunteered at the Sharlot Hall Museum and written books about the theatre in the Arizona Territory. He has given numerous readers theatre presentations in seven Arizona communities.

**Karen Churchill** teaches Communications, English, and Humanities at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Yavapai College, with academic interests in technology and human values, popular culture, art history, photography, literature, and ethics. She has acted in various community theatre productions in Prescott and Prescott Valley.

## Arizona: a History of Snake Oil Salesmen, Scams, and Hoaxes

**Speaker: H. Christine Reid**, *sponsored by Arizona Humanities*

**Time: 2:00 PM**

From earliest days, Arizonans have been visited by entrepreneurs offering assorted get-rich-quick schemes. Benefitting from tales of abundant resources in the territory, limited law enforcement and communication, a scoundrel could offer promises of riches and success without much oversight. Newspapers often fanned the hysteria only to later denounce and expose the schemes. People from across America came west to seek a better life. When that better life proved too slow in materializing, they often fell prey to a quick and easy alternative being offered by the schemer. Sometimes even the well-educated and worldly could not resist the lure. This program illustrates some of the most famous and some of the lesser known embarrassing scams and hoaxes that have found the gullible in Arizona.

**Christine Reid** is intrigued by Arizona's diverse and rich western heritage as a writer and researcher for the Pinal County Historical Society and Community Scholar for the ASU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She continues that deep interest while serving on many of the town of Florence's heritage projects and agencies. She has been a speaker with the Arizona Humanities Arizona Speaks programs since 2008. Committed to sharing history in a lively manner, she presents the sometimes hidden or forgotten aspects of Arizona's characters and history.