

January 2019 - Picket Post Mansion, Superior, AZ

Picket Post Mansion was built in the 1920s by William Boyce Thompson on top of a rock formation with 360 degree views, to Picket Post Mtn and White Canyon, to Apache Leap and Superior, and to the Superstition Mountains.



View from the mansion towards the Superstition Mountains

Thompson was a mining engineer who made his money from copper mines, first in Morenci, AZ (Shannon Copper Company) and, after some other mining ventures, in Superior, AZ (Magna mine) and in Miami, AZ (Inspiration Copper Company). He also created the Newmont Mining Corporation, still in existence today. He reminds me of one of Ayn Rand's characters for his energy and wide industrial ventures, from railroads to tobacco and sugar, to life insurance. He built the mansion for guests and had his own winter quarters on the right with its own elevator. This structure, the 'Cliff House' burned down.



The house, with eagle's nest on the right (picture from [here](#))



Remnants of the Cliff House

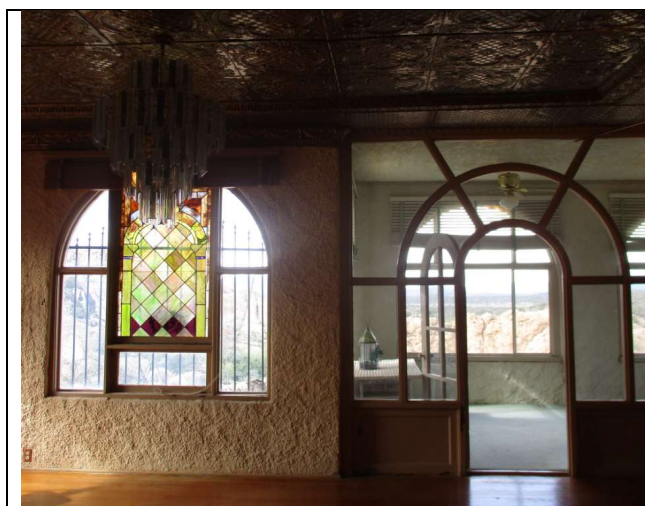
The upper floor of the mansion has a ballroom, dining room, bedrooms, and a wrap-around gallery whose windows could be opened: see below arrow. The lower level of the mansion housed the servants' bedrooms and a kitchen.



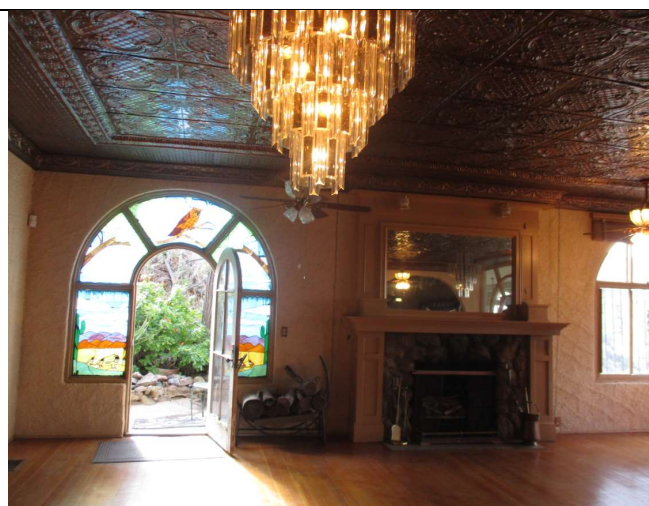
The upper and lower levels of the main house



I had seen this house from the outside for years and years but had no idea how big it was and how it had views to all directions!



Ballroom with entrance to the gallery



From the ballroom, access to eagle's nest

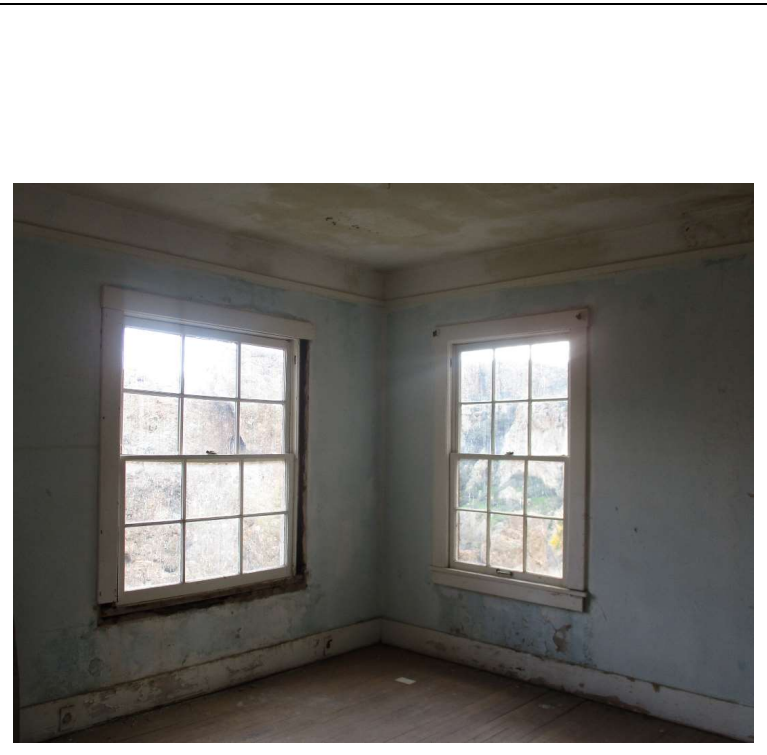
Thompson was married and had a daughter and grandchildren. His wife, Gertrude, didn't like Arizona very much although he built her a wonderful separate house and his daughter wouldn't come unless there was a ballroom which he added. Thompson rebuilt a homesteader's house as a playhouse for his grandchildren but his daughter wouldn't allow them to come out to the (wild) west!



Gertrude's house



Views to Apache Leap



In 1920, Thompson founded the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research because he was concerned with world hunger. In 1924, he founded the arboretum that bears his name and that is right next to Picket Post Mansion. This is the largest and oldest in Arizona with 2600 plant species.

After Thompson died in 1930, the house became part of the arboretum but, since it was expensive to maintain, it was sold in 1946 and became a bed and breakfast. After a few other owners, the arboretum acquired it again in 2008 and opens it to visitors two weekends in the spring.

The current interior decorating and furniture inside and out is a mixture of ugly and kitschy but there is no telling what the inside looked like in Thompson's time. There must be pictures left and those would be fun to look at.



Eagle's nest



Wrap-around porch





The downstairs kitchen



The downstairs entrance



All in all, a wonderful look into another era! The day had started with some rain and the cloud formations remained interesting throughout the day.



Driving back west

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Boyce_Thompson

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boyce_Thompson_Arboretum_State_Park