Miss Sharlot and the Sharlot Hall Museum

Sharlot Hall was just 12 years old in 1882, when she traveled to Prescott in the Arizona Territory with her family by covered wagon. Sharlot rode her pony all of the way, herding horses, which her father sold once they arrived.

Growing up on the family ranch, Sharlot's formal schooling was limited, but she studied a great deal at home and became fascinated with Arizona history.

After learning about the Governor's Mansion, the home of the first territorial governor, she began saving old timers' artifacts and stories. In 1909, she was appointed to serve as Arizona Territorial Historian. Through this position, she continued to learn about Arizona history by traveling and researching the entire territory. She also published poetry and articles, and edited a magazine.

Sharlot carved out a life as a writer, historian and ranch woman. She remained on the family ranch until after her parents' deaths when she negotiated a lifetime lease to live in the Governor's Mansion and to turn it into a museum. In 1928, she began receiving visitors in the mansion, which had been built in 1864.

In the 1930s, two new buildings were constructed on the Museum grounds through New Deal programs. The Sharlot Hall building opened in 1936, providing space for additional exhibits and a new apartment for Sharlot. New Deal workers also built the Ranch House to commemorate early territorial ranchers. Fort Misery, the oldest log cabin the state, was moved to the Museum in 1936.

Far left: Miss Sharlot soon after arriving in the Arizona Territory.

Above: Sharlot Hall in the Museum she established in 1928.

Left: Sharlot on the road with her Durant Star.

Below left: New York City mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and friends return to Prescott where he grew up and share stories with Sharlot in front of the Governor's Mansion she called home.

Sharlot Hall continued to operate the Museum until a few weeks before her death in 1943. In subsequent years the Museum continued to expand, adding new buildings and exhibits, including: a replica of the town's first one-room school house; the Frémont House, home of John C. Frémont, the fifth territorial governor; the Victorian Bashford House; the Transportation Building and the Lawler Building.

The Sharlot Hall Museum and its four acre campus is an educational and cultural center, carrying on Sharlot's legacy. The Museum's calendar of festivals and events throughout the year engage area residents and visitors in a lively exploration of the prehistory and history of the central highlands region.