
Signs of Sun City's Past by Ed Allen

It almost looks like a tombstone, but this plaque commemorating the Historic Site of Marinette, Arizona, is not in Sunland Cemetery. It's found along 105th just south of Grand.

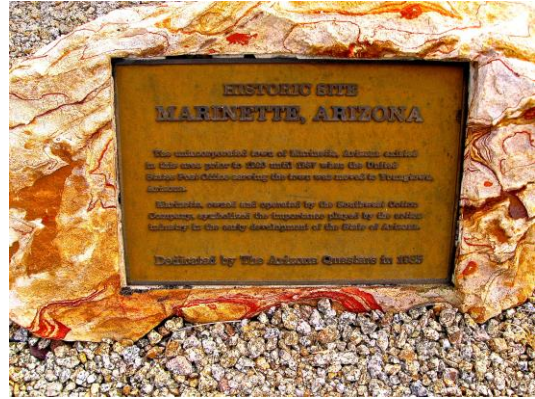
The plaque reads:

*Historic Site
Marinette Arizona*

The unincorporated town of Marinette, Arizona existed in this area prior to 1957 when the United States Post Office serving the town was moved to Youngtown, Arizona.

Marinette, owned and operated by the Southwest Cotton Company, symbolized the importance played by the cotton industry in the early development of the State of Arizona.

Dedicated by the Arizona Questers in 1985

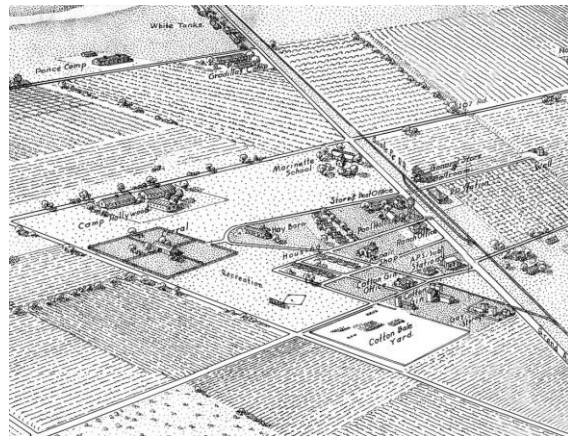


Local history began in the 1890s when a wealthy lumberman and his chief engineer acquired adjoining 640-acre parcels from the government. This was at the same time that a railroad was being extended from Prescott to Phoenix. It crossed their land and a deal was struck for a water stop. The men named it “Marinette” for their hometown in Wisconsin.

A land speculator later bought up their parcels along with others in the area, and sold them to the cotton business of Goodyear Tire in the 1920s. When cotton became a less important ingredient for them, the Marinette Ranch was sold to the Boswell Company – America’s largest farming operation.

Learning of the Webb Corp’s plan to build an active adult community, Jim Boswell II flew to Phoenix to offer the 10,000-acre Boswell Ranch for the development. He and Webb formed a joint venture, DEVCO, which developed Sun City and Sun City West.

This map shows Marinette in the late 1950s. Grand Ave. cuts diagonally across today’s 111th (top), 107th, and 103rd. The Boswell offices were located on 103rd about where Menke Funeral Home sits today. The cotton gin was across the street on land now occupied by Sun Valley Lodge. Stores, post office and pool hall were clustered around 105th and Grand, which is where today’s marker is located. A grade school sat where Fry’s is today. Camp Hollywood on the left side of the map was one of the sites where field workers lived. It had a number of attractive women, hence its name. Other camps were spread throughout the cotton fields, generally located at well sites for a convenient source of water.



There’s much more to the story! Visit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum a block west of Fry’s on Oakmont, or pick up a copy of JUBILEE – the story of Sun City’s first 25 years.