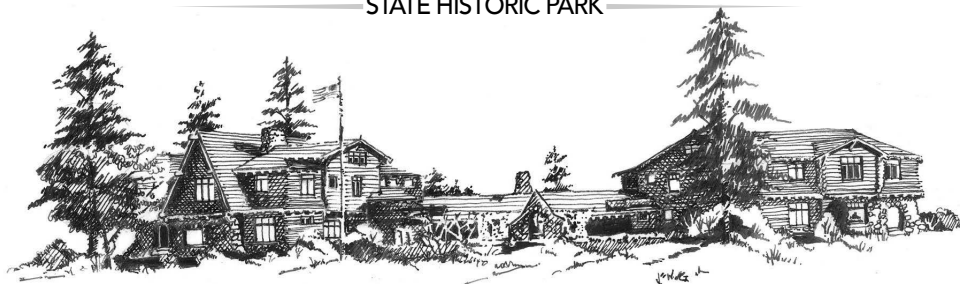




# RIORDAN MANSION

STATE HISTORIC PARK



Timothy and Michael Riordan were prominent pioneer Flagstaff businessmen who developed a successful logging operation as well as many other business ventures and community improvements. After marrying sisters, Caroline and Elizabeth Metz, and living side by side for years, the families upgraded by building this 13,000 square foot duplex home in 1904.

The home had all the technology we have in our homes today: electric lights, central heat, hot and cold running water, and telephones. The architect, Charles Whittlesey, also designed the El Tovar Hotel at the Grand Canyon. The log slabs were originally left with the bark on giving the house a reddish color which inspired the name Kinlitchi Knoll from the Navajo term meaning "red house." Over time the bark was removed and treated with linseed oil and later the reddish brown paint that is still used today.

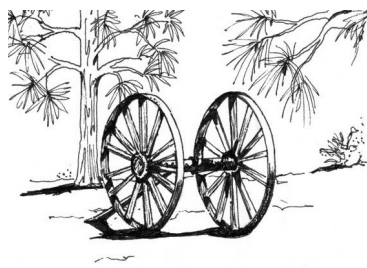
## Self-Guided Walk

1. You are looking at the back of Timothy and Caroline Riordan's home. To your far left is the home of Michael and Elizabeth Riordan. In the middle is a large, single story room shared by both families. The Riordan homes are fine examples of the American Arts & Crafts style of architecture popular from the early 1900s into the early 1920s. This architecture strives for simplicity, craftsmanship, and the celebration of nature.

The primary building material for the house is Ponderosa pine. There is an "old growth" (two hundred year old plus) Ponderosa pine to your right. This type of mature tree formed the backbone of the Riordans' lumber business.

2. Behind you is the front entrance to Tim and Caroline Riordan's home. Note the use of local, lichen covered, volcanic rock to create the beautiful rustic entrance and covered porch. Arts & Crafts style architects celebrated nature in their designs through the use of native building materials. Covered porches, such as this one, were essential because they blur the line between the inside and outside environments. Stroll down the cinder pathway through the trees to see what remains of the family tennis court. The net posts are still visible but several trees have encroached onto the playing court.

Beyond the tennis court are large, horse drawn skid wheels that were used for hauling logs. The tongue was tipped skyward in order to lower the rear of the axle down to the logs for a chain attachment. When the horses pulled the tongue down, the logs were hoisted upwards to the undercarriage of the wheels.



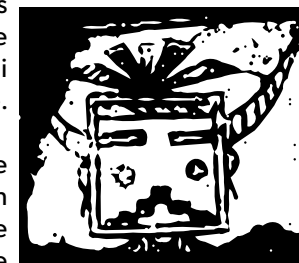
3. The stone circle before you was designed and used by the family for evening gatherings and fireside talks. It also recalls an Irish tradition that fairies could be deterred from creating mischief inside the house by providing them a place to dance through the night.

4. Gardens and landscaping were an important part of the Arts and Crafts style home. However, in Flagstaff's dry climate, it made more sense for the family to allow their estate to remain largely in its natural state. Historic photos in the visitor center show that this little knoll had only a few large trees when the home was built. The Riordans allowed Ponderosa pine seedlings to grow and planted various trees to see what would grow at this elevation, including spruce, juniper, pinyon pine, olive, and elm. Today, park staff continue to keep most of the grounds natural, encouraging native trees, grasses and wildflowers. Leaving the grounds natural also provides habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. The lawns are the only areas regularly mowed.

5. This stone path is a historic sidewalk and parallels the original driveway leading to the house. Follow it to get a closer look at the gatekeeper's cottage. As you walk to the next stop, notice the view of the San Francisco Peaks through the trees. When the home was first built it had wonderful sweeping views of the mountain. Today the Ponderosa pines have grown so tall they obscure the view.



6. The two evergreen plants are the narrow-leaf yucca and banana yucca. These plants are usually found in open sunny areas, and serve as reminders of the estate's original, less vegetated condition. Tucked under the stone arch on the right wall is a ceramic katchina tile. According to local Hopi people, this katchina or spirit will help protect the house.



The Riordans had their only water hungry indulgence here in the courtyard; flowers and a lawn. Michael Riordan wrote to their sister shortly after moving in describing the house. "The front doors of each house are on the extreme corners under the big arches, but the entrance which we use is that through the gateway shown in front. Inside the stone fence shown in the front we have a fine lawn of Kentucky blue grass, and we succeeded in raising flowers to burn in this little plot during the whole summer. The houses are situated on top of a hill, which slopes away in all directions which gives both good drainage and good air."

7. These hitching posts and mounting stones were used for tethering and mounting horses — the most common mode of transportation when the house was built.

8. This home is intended to blend into the forest environment, so the architect used rounded log slab siding nailed to the exterior of the frame structure to create the effect of a log cabin. Instead of the strictly decorative ornamentation of the Victorian era, which created fancy "gingerbread" houses, Arts and Crafts style homes were intended to be beautiful as a result of simplicity and "natural" design. Exposed structural elements, such as the eaves and protruding log ends, allowed the very structure of the building to be interesting and beautiful.

Adding decorative details of cultural significance was another aspect of this architectural style. If you look carefully at the protruding log ends on the second floor of the house you will see two carved totem faces. Michael Riordan was inspired by Native American cultural traditions of the U.S. Northwest coast.



9. Here at the front entrance to Michael and Elizabeth Riordan's home, the top of the first step displays a wolf, a bell, and a coyote. These figures are very worn but still visible.

10. The fountain was constructed of native volcanic rock. Several animals and nature images are hand carved into the stone surface. See if you can find the pelican and the owl. The grandchildren say this was one of Michael's favorite places to sit and read or write. Growing in and around the low rock wall surrounding the fountain are thorny New Mexican locust and the edible, berry producing Golden currant.

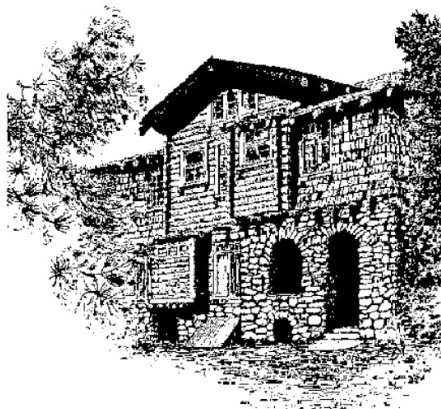
11. The overhead sleeping porch was added to the home in 1914. Sleeping porches were a great way to get fresh air to promote health, especially on warm nights. These porches were a common trend in warmer climates. It also gave more space for the larger family in the West House.

12. The visitor center is the family's six-car garage, also constructed in 1914. The garage driveway was converted into the landscaped area you see today, and the cement walkway was added. Notice the horizontal steel pipes mounted to both corners of the garage. These pipes were one end of a pair of clotheslines that ran to the two standing pipes located between here and the garage.

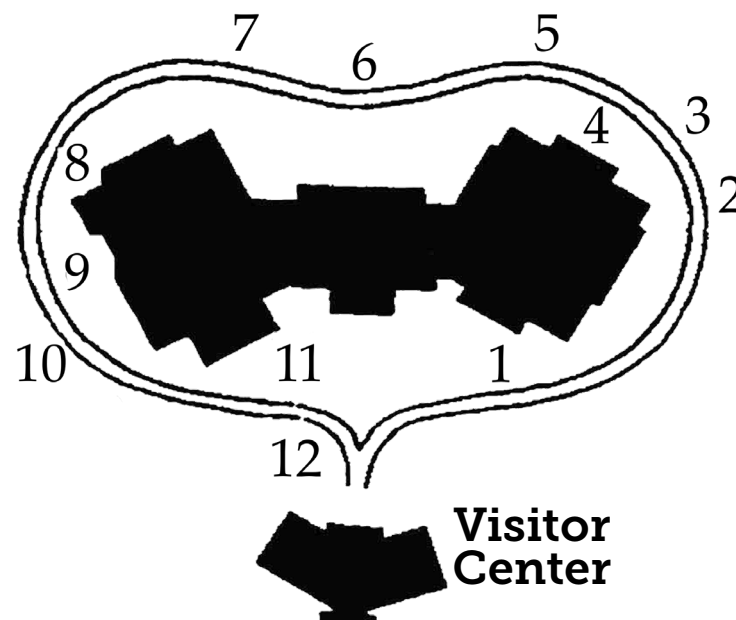
## Take the Home Tour

The park is a historic house museum. The Visitor Center, formerly the family automotive garage, has introductory interpretive exhibits on the history of the Riordan Family. Personally guided 60-minute interpretive tours of the house, featuring information on Riordan family history, and Arts and Crafts style architecture and furnishings are given daily, on the top of the hour.

The West House has exhibits on Arts & Crafts, Native American pottery & baskets, photographic window panels, Lumber & Logging, and a model of historic Flagstaff.



## Self-Guided Walk Map



Historic tours of the home are available and special events are listed on our website at [AZStateParks.com/riordan-mansion](http://AZStateParks.com/riordan-mansion)

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