

Riordan Mansion State Historic Park

409 West Riordan Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928) 779-4395

Come visit Riordan Mansion.
*If you print this tour please
bring it with you to the park.*

Timothy and Michael Riordan were prominent pioneer Flagstaff businessmen who developed a successful logging industry 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 home's original reddish color inspired the name *Kinlichí Knoll* from the Navajo term meaning "red house."

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 and Crafts style of architecture popular from the early 1900s into the early 1920s. This type of 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 and 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.

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.



Beyond the stone circle 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.



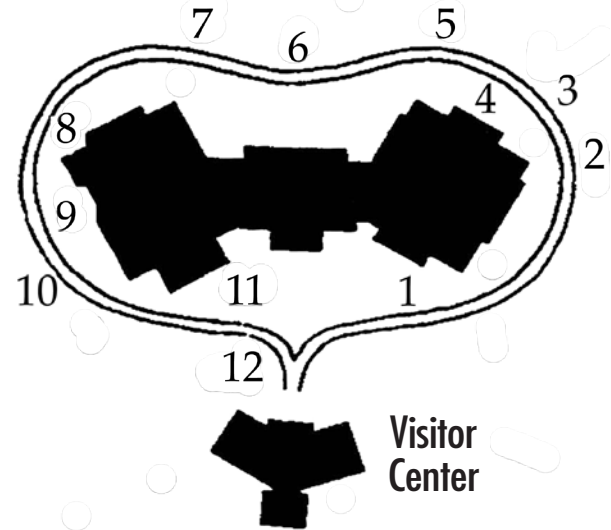
4. Gardens and landscaping were an important part of the Arts and Crafts style home. However, in Flagstaff's dry climate, it made more sense for the family to allow their estate to remain largely in its natural state. Historic photos in the visitor center show that this little knoll was mostly bare of trees when the home was built. The Riordans allowed Ponderosa pine seedlings to grow and planted a few trees of their own choosing, perhaps including the two Rocky



Mountain juniper trees in front of you. Notice the difference in color; this type of tree varies from blue-green to gray-blue. The tree on the left is male and produces pollen; the tree on the right is female and produces berries.



Self-Guided Walk of the Grounds



Your tour begins as you leave the Visitor Center and walk toward the house. Look for the first numbered post to the right at the end of the walkway.



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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.



The Colorado blue spruce were planted about ten years after the house was built.

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 pine 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.



Hidden under the inside right wall of the stone arch is a ceramic katchina tile. According to local Native American 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 Kentucky blue grass lawn.

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. 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.



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.

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.



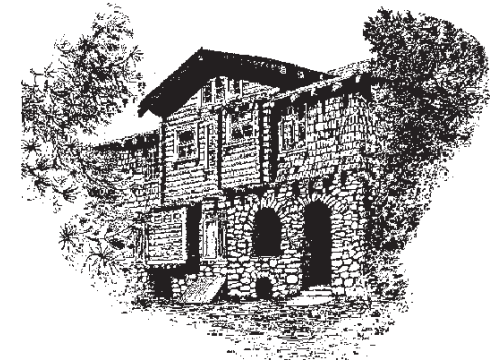
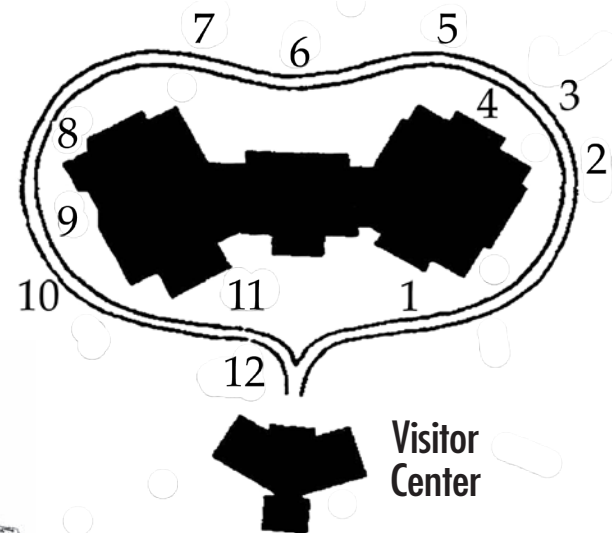
Growing in and around the low rock wall surrounding the fountain are the edible, berry producing Golden current and thorny New Mexican locust.



11. The overhead porch was added to the home in 1914.
12. The visitor center is the family's six-car garage, also constructed in 1914. The garage driveway was



Self-Guided Walk of the Grounds



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.