

The Man on the Seal

State Historian **Marshall Trimble** sheds light on George Warren, whose likeness is reproduced on Arizona's state seal.

MOST ARIZONANS ARE familiar with our state seal. Along with the mountains, reservoir, Theodore Roosevelt Dam, and our famous sunsets, the key enterprises—the historic five Cs: cotton, citrus, cattle, climate, and copper—are symbolized on the face. Standing in front of the entrance to a mine is the only human figure on the seal: a miner standing with his pick and shovel. Few Arizonans are aware that the miner on the seal is the likeness of a real-life prospector named George Warren.

George's early years were rough. His mother died when he was an infant, and his father was killed by raiding Apache. The youngster was taken captive by the war party and raised by them until one day they traded him to a party of prospectors for a 20-pound sack of sugar. Young George might have been better off remaining with the Apache. Growing up with the rough-and-tumble miners caused him to become something of a reprobate, and soon he could drink whiskey with the best of them. It's been said George was a hard worker, but if he had any other virtues, they've been lost to history.

George's rendezvous with history began in a roundabout way. In 1877, a cavalry troop on patrol was camped at the south end of the Mule Mountains in southeast Arizona. While searching for water in a narrow canyon, known today as Tombstone Canyon, Army scout Jack Dunn found some rich outcroppings of ore. Dunn shared his findings with his commanding officer, whose name was Lt. John Rucker, and packer Ted Byrne. Dunn filed the claims and named the mine The Rucker. Soon after, Lt. Rucker drowned while crossing a swollen stream in a canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains that today bears his name.

Dunn, Rucker, and Byrne had planned to stake their claims but were too busy chasing Apache at the time, so at Fort Bowie, they had enlisted the help of George. It turned out to be a bad business decision. They grubstaked 42-year-old George Warren with supplies and a map to the location where Dunn had found the rich outcroppings. However, on the way to stake the claims, he stopped at a saloon, fell into some bad company, got drunk, and gambled away his grubstake.

George eventually arrived in Tombstone Canyon and staked out claims but unscrupulously omitted the names of the men who made the discovery. Jack Dunn, John Rucker, and Teddy Byrne never received any of the wealth that was to come. The ore was indeed rich, and the town of Bisbee was born on the site of the discovery.

On the Fourth of July, 1880, George was in his cups by grace of ol' Tangle Leg Whiskey when he decided to bet that on foot, he could outrun a man on horseback up Brewery Gulch. While



George Warren

living with the Apache, he'd become a fast runner, and he was so convinced he could win the race that he bet his share of the claim on the outcome. For a moment or two he was in the lead, but soon, the horse left him in the dust and with it his share of the Copper Queen Mine, one of the richest strikes in the Old West. Soon after he lost the bet, Warren's share sold for a cool one and a quarter-million dollars.

After that, George remained drunk most of the time. He lived out his remaining years in Bisbee doing odd jobs and subsisting off a small pension given him by the Copper Queen. He died alone and penniless and was buried in a pauper's grave. Years later, however, the citizens of Bisbee dug him up and reburied him with a headstone honoring him as Father of the Camp. They even gave the name Warren in his honor to a town adjacent to Bisbee.

Sometime earlier, a photographer had taken a picture of George standing with his pick and shovel. It was hung in the lobby of the Bank of Bisbee, later the Bank of Arizona and today the Bank of America. When Arizona was preparing for statehood in 1911, a group of men were busy designing a new state seal. They wanted something that epitomized the new state. William Brophy, a wealthy mine owner, was in the Bisbee bank one day when he noticed George's photo and thought the image would be the perfect addition to round out the seal.

It's rather ironic (or not) that, when one considers Arizona's colorful history, one of its most notorious reprobates would wind up standing tall on the face of our sacred state seal.

