
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MS 0972
ARIZONA WONDER CIRCUIT TOURS
Prospectus, 1924

DESCRIPTION

This collection consists of one prospectus which describes tours of Arizona, offered to customers, in a converted Dodge truck called the Wonderbus.

Oversized 43 x 55 cm.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The visual splendor of Arizona has long been a treasure for visitors to our state. Two brothers, Phoenix businessmen Warren McArthur, Jr. (1885-1961) and Charles H. McArthur (1890-1972), enabled tourists through their Wonderbus Tours, to enjoy the beauty and pleasant climate of Arizona.

Charles arrived in Arizona in 1910; Warren joined him three years later. Bold boosters of Arizona, the brothers founded Dodge and Jeffery automobile dealerships in several Arizona towns. The hotel company that they formed in 1918 would eventually build the beautiful Arizona Biltmore Resort hotel. They also established the 37th radio station in the United States, KFAD (Kan't Fool a Dodge) in Phoenix in 1922.

Inspired by Dr. George W. Jones' book, Arizona the Wonderland, the two brothers wanted tourists to visit the Grand Canyon State. To promote tourism, they designed and built their own "hotel on wheels...with all the comforts of a first class hostelry." They converted a Dodge truck into a customized "Wonderbus."

Painted in dark grey with green and gold stripes, the Wonderbus had a driver's compartment, living room, kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping quarters. The living room was furnished with several large windows fitted with copper screens, closets, writing tables, four green wicker chairs covered in gray leather, a radio, electric fans, and sundry other gadgets such as a grade gauge and a speedometer. A rear passageway led from the living room to the kitchen which was equipped with a refrigerator, stove, oven, china and various electric appliances. A rear door allowed the cook access to the kitchen without disturbing the guests. A lavatory was also located off the living room and contained all necessary facilities including a shower. Four sleeping berths, two on each side, were folded out from the sides of the bus. Each compartment had a reading light and allowed direct access to the living room. An escorting supply car carried the additional luggage and spare parts required for a comfortable and safe trip. The Wonderbus began touring Arizona in 1924.

ACQUISITION

Purchased by the Arizona Heritage Center Museum around 1983.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection of the Arizona Wonder Circuit Tours consists of one oversized prospectus. This prospectus described tours of Arizona offered to customers of Arizona Wonder Circuit Tours in the 1920s.

Written in the flowery verbiage of an earlier era, this prospectus consists of three parts: a promotional introduction of the two tours (p. 1-4), an account of the first Northland Tour (p. 5-8), and a description of the Wonderbus with selected photographs of the Northland Tour (p. 9-19).

Viewed from the carpeted and cushioned interior of the Wonderbus, the tours visited sites in Northern and Southern Arizona. The Arizona Wonder Circuit Tours offered two long loops on seasonal schedules. From May to October, the Northland Tour departed Phoenix for a leisurely drive to Springerville, Chinle, Grand Canyon, Prescott and back to Phoenix. From November to April, the southern route carried traffic from Phoenix to Rice, Safford, Clifton, Douglas, Nogales, Tucson, Casa Grande and back to Phoenix. Included on the tours were a guide, a driver, a cook, and a supply car. Rates from the tours were given on page twelve.

The photos included in this prospectus have been copied, and the copies transferred to the Research Library Photography Section.