



GENERAL JOHN J. “BLACKJACK” PERSHING VISITS GLENDALE

General Pershing, a huge WWI hero, came to Glendale by rail on Friday, January 30, 1920 arriving at 8:05 AM. Glendale was the first Arizona city to welcome the General. Glendale Mayor C.H. Tinker and one of the largest crowds ever assembled in Glendale, including elementary and high school children, who were given recess from school to meet Pershing at the Santa Fe Depot. W.J. Galbraith, head of the Commercial Club introduced the General. Pershing gave a 10 minute speech talking about the necessity for broad education of children. He lauded Arizona’s contribution of troops to WWI. However, Pershing explained “We cannot exist long with an illiterate people. A democracy conducted by ignorant fathers soon finds itself in the hands of ignorant and irresponsible people, and is soon drafted into anarchy. The safeguard of our country today is the education of these little boys and girls in their duties as citizens. The state has no higher responsibility than to educate the children...” When the Selective Service Act, “Draft Act” was passed into law in 1917 the military found that 30% of those drafted were illiterate. General Pershing’s trip by train continued on to Phoenix. America was given a formal chance to thank General Pershing for victory.