The town of Prescott was founded in late-May 1864 and, after the territorial elections of July, Governor John Goodwin convened the first Territorial Legislature in Prescott, which was then recognized as the first Territorial Capital of Arizona.

In the span of 16 months, this undiscovered territory had become the second-largest town in Arizona, and its territorial capital – instigated by Walker’s adventure up an uncharted river.

The local indigenous people called themselves “Yavapai” – The People of the Sun – and were hunters and gatherers, about 10,000 strong scattered over 9.5 million acres when the Walker Party arrived in 1863.

Initial contact was peaceful enough, but as more miners arrived, things became tense. With an invasion of their homeland and assaults on their families, they fought back, raids on small groups of men, freight teams and isolated ranches accelerated until no one felt safe, anywhere.

As for Captain Joseph Walker, it was time to retire. He settled in a mining camp named for him, but grew disgusted with the swarm of licentious gold seekers who brawled, quarreled and murdered Indians, allegedly “in self-defense.”

With eyesight failing, he retired to his nephew’s ranch in California where he enjoyed a full life among his large family until his death in 1876.

About his fanfare for pointing the way to the settlement of this area, Cap’n Walker said, “We opened the door and held it open to civilization, and now civilization will do the rest.”