Safronia Artincy Phillips was born in Lineville, Iowa, on August 8, 1876. Her father died when she was four years old, so her mother supported “Frona” and her five siblings by giving piano lessons. After graduating from high school, Frona worked as an assistant postmaster and as a telegraph operator for the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.

Frona met widower William A. Parr of Winslow when traveling home by train from New Mexico. They soon married in Lineville, and Frona moved to Arizona Territory in 1904. Frona helped raise her two stepdaughters with Parr, a successful contractor, mortician, judge, and member of the Arizona Territorial Legislature.

A fire in 1917 destroyed their home and three rental properties, which were all uninsured because the insurance salesman had failed to file their policies. The traumatic event inspired Frona to become an insurance agent: “I knew others were as careless as we had been before the fire, and I wanted to be a useful person in my community. I felt I would be helping others in a way they would someday appreciate.” Frona began selling building and household insurance in 1923 and soon expanded into automobile coverage.

Parr died in 1922, and nine years later Frona married John Braun (J.B.) Drumm, a barber and Winslow’s Justice of the Peace. They opened an auto court in 1937 that she managed in addition to her rental properties and insurance business. They operated the twenty-unit motel until 1944.

Frona was also very active in community organizations including the Democratic Women’s Club, First Methodist Church, Order of the Eastern Star (Worthy Grand Matron of Arizona, 1919), Rebekah Lodge, Winslow Business and Professional Women’s Club, and Winslow Women’s Club. She was listed in Who’s Who of Arizona in 1958. Frona also excelled at crochet, knitting, needlepoint, and hatmaking, winning many ribbons at state and county fairs and donating much of her work to charity.

Frona remodeled her home at age 96, though some of her friends laughed at the project. “But I said, ‘Well, as long as I live, I want my house to look its best. If I really enjoy it for a month or so after it is put back together the way I want, why, that’s my business’ And believe me, I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.”

Frona played a notable role in the transformation of Winslow from a dusty little railroad stop of 1,500 people to one of the busiest towns along Arizona’s stretch of US Route 66. She died at age 97 on August 7, 1974, and was buried at Desert View Cemetery in Winslow.

Frona Phillips Parr Drumm
(born 1876, died 1974)

“It’s a great little town, even when the wind blows. We don’t pay it any attention. There’s no other town I’d rather live in.” – Frona on Winslow

Frona Parr Drumm was one of Winslow’s earliest and most influential citizens as well as the town’s first female insurance agent.