



**Robert B. Metcalfe (1825 – 1905)**  
**Explorer and Miner – Discover of Morenci Ore Bodies**  
**2021 Inductee from Mining's Past**

Robert Metcalfe was one of the discoverers of the Morenci copper deposits in Arizona. He was born in Kentucky and educated at West Point. In 1849 Metcalfe headed for the goldfields of California where he amassed a fortune from mining. More than a decade later he joined the Confederate Army. At the close of the Civil War, Metcalfe found his home destroyed, his wife gone, and his fortune lost. He then headed west looking for his wife and prospecting for a new future.

In 1870 while Metcalfe was scouting the area near Silver City, New Mexico in pursuit of a band of Apaches who had raided local ranches, he discovered a rich copper deposit. He returned two years later with his brother Jim and located the Longfellow claim. Metcalfe was among the original group of prospectors who organized the Copper Mountain Mining District in 1872.

The Metcalfes sold majority interest in the mine to the Lesinsky brothers but disagreements followed, so the Metcalfes sold them the remaining shares in the Longfellow Company. The Lesinskys further developed the Longfellow and in 1882, sold the mine to the Arizona Copper Company.

The town of Metcalf along Chase Creek about 8 miles from present day Clifton was named after Robert Metcalfe. Established in 1875, it became an Arizona Copper Company owned town in 1882. The town was shut down shortly after Phelps Dodge acquired it in 1921 and was eventually overtaken by the advancement of the Morenci open pit mine.

Metcalf died in 1905 at the age of 80 in his home state of Kentucky.