

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1115 Manatee Avenue West

N/A  not for publication

city or town Bradenton

N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Manatee code 081 zip code 34205

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 4/30/98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	4	structures
1	2	objects
2	7	total

Name of related multiple property listings  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
roof Tar & Gravel  
other Terra Cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1913-1927

Significant Dates

1913

1927

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

McGucken & Hyer (Architects)

Falls City Construction (Builders)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	3 4 4 6 0 0	3 0 4 2 0 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy Slusser, Supervisor, Manatee County/Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 1998

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Manatee County Board of County Commissioners

street & number P.O. Box 1000 telephone (941) 745-3700

city or town Bradenton state Florida zip code 34206

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida

Physical Description

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**Summary**

The historic Manatee County Courthouse is a large Neoclassical Revival style building erected in 1913. It is constructed of buff colored brick and sits on an entire city block facing Manatee Avenue in downtown Bradenton, Florida. The building features Doric columns, terra cotta cornices and porticos on all four elevations. The north and south sides include pediments over the porticos. Major alterations made to the building in 1927 included the removal the dome, construction of a south extension, and expansion of the east and west porticos. The south wing was further extended in 1966. The 1927 and 1966 additions utilized construction materials and design features similar to those employed on the 1913 structure. A major restoration of the cornices and pediments, completed in 1984, left the building structurally sound, while retaining much of the its architectural integrity.

**Setting**

The building lies between the east and west bound routes of State Road 64 in downtown Bradenton, a city with a population of approximately 50,000 persons located in western Florida about 45 miles south of the Tampa-St. Petersburg metropolitan area. The courthouse is found near the center of the downtown business district. Most of the buildings currently around the courthouse were constructed either during the 1920s real estate boom period or in the modern era. Many of the buildings to the west of the courthouse date from the 1920s. These include the Singletary-Cummings Building (1922) and the United Abstract Building (1925). East of the courthouse is the Bradenton Bank and Trust Company Building (now the Professional Building) which was built in 1926.<sup>1</sup>

Upon completion of the courthouse in 1913, only a few buildings surrounded it.<sup>2</sup> Of these, three still exist today. One is a garage and machine shop owned by Whitney Curry, which sits to the southwest across Main Street. This building no longer retains its original appearance, due to the remodeling of its facade. The Iron Block Building, built in 1896, now faces the entrance of the courthouse on the west side. In 1913, however, it rested half a block to the south. To the northwest of the courthouse, the Fuller Block, built in 1905, still stands on its original site.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Downtown Bradenton Walking Tour; Bradenton City Directories, 1922: 265, 323; 1923: 178, 281; 1926: 285, 439-40; 1928: 276; 1929: 265, 373; Sanborn Maps, 1922, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Map of Bradenton, Florida, July, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Bradenton Survey Committee, A Walking Tour: Downtown Bradenton's Historic District, n.d.; Bradenton City Directory, (Florida Piedmont Directory Co., 1918), 246, 291.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida

Physical Description

Today, the courthouse faces a new glass fronted county administration building, and a large modern public safety complex flanks its east side. Local organizations have erected several monuments to war veterans and law enforcement officers on the north side of the courthouse. Except for the Vietnam War monument located near the north (main facade) of the building, these are relatively small in size and low in scale and do not hinder the public view of the courthouse.

Exterior

The original courthouse was rectangular in shape and symmetrical in layout (Photos 1-5). In 1927, an addition to the south retained the rectangular shape, but added another fifty percent of space (Photo 6). At the same time, expansion of the east and west porticoes caused the sides to protrude slightly.<sup>4</sup> A terra cotta cornice encircles the building (Photo 7). Each of the four sides features a central portico utilizing Doric columns (Photos 8-11) and a ceramic bas relief panel with the words "Manatee County" (Photo 12). A simple pediment tops the porticos on the north and south sides. Original plans called for concrete steps, but a change order issued during construction called for covering the steps with terrazzo.<sup>5</sup> The original wooden sash windows were one over one lights. The flat roof allowed for a slight slope to promote the drainage of rainwater. When first constructed, an octagonal dome made of buff colored brick with a wood shingled roof crowned the courthouse.<sup>6</sup> A flagpole stood at its pinnacle. When the courthouse was enlarged in 1927, county officials worried that the dome presented a fire hazard authorized its removal.

Other changes to the exterior of the courthouse occurred over the years, but the basic design remained the same. In 1966, the size of the courthouse was again increased when a "T" shaped wing was added to the south elevation of the building (Photo 13). This addition provided space for a growing county government; however, county officials made a commitment to maintain the original look. The building specifications for the addition called for the brick to match the original and included a reproduction of the original south portico, with the exception of omitting the words "Manatee County." Workers even removed a portion of the cornice and sent it to be copied.<sup>7</sup> Other than size, the only design change to the exterior of the building was the windows. In 1966, modern metal six-pane Cline-brand windows replaced the wood framed ones. In 1984, engineers designed new structural supports to add to the original courthouse frame, replacing the original steel frame that had rusted

<sup>4</sup> Sanborn Map, 1915.

<sup>5</sup> Manatee County Board of County Commission, Minute Book 6, 169.

<sup>6</sup> Manatee County Historical Society Photograph Collection, Eaton Room, Manatee County Central Library, Courthouses, 1926.

<sup>7</sup> Sidney R. Wilkerson, AIA, Specifications: Addition to Manatee County Court House, 1965.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 3

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida

Physical Description

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due to water intrusion. Tiles removed in order to finish the work were either reused or reproduced, and repairs to the structure did not affect the exterior finish of the building.<sup>8</sup>

**Interior**

Eighty-five years of use brought about many changes to the courthouse interior. When it was constructed in 1913, the building was designed to house all county offices, courtrooms, meeting rooms and the county jail. Even as early as 1914, county officials complained about the building's inadequacies.<sup>9</sup> The basic plan of the courthouse interior revolved around a central well that opened up to the dome. After removal of the dome, this space was gradually enclosed. The installation of an elevator in this central core in 1927 effectively completed the enclosure of this entire space. As space allocations and needs varied over the years, offices were rebuilt and relocated (Photos 14-17). The interior layout originally included a large two-story courtroom that occupied the two upper floors. The courtroom was remodeled in the 1966 renovation, which included the installation of a dropped acoustical tile ceiling and air conditioning ducts that effectively halved the 25' height of the space (Photo 18).

In 1983, Manatee County built a new public safety complex to house the sheriff's office and jail.<sup>10</sup> The year 1987 saw the opening of a county administration building, constructed immediately east of the courthouse, which freed additional space in the historic building, but the ever growing clerk of the circuit court's office claimed the newly available area. Today, the courthouse contains the offices of the clerk of the circuit court, judges' offices, the law library and courtrooms for county, juvenile and civil courts.

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<sup>8</sup> Miriam Widman, "Rain, time ravage courthouse," Bradenton Herald, June 19, 1984, Section B, page 1; Sylvia Reed, "Courthouse Isn't Younger, But It's Going to Be Safer," Sarasota Herald Tribune, Manatee AM, page 1.

<sup>9</sup> Minute Book 6:431.

<sup>10</sup> Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Manatee County Sheriff's Office 1855-1993, (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company, 1993), page 39.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 4

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida**

**Physical Description**

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**Site Features**

There are a number of historical markers and features that have been added to the site over the years. (See Attachment #1.) An obelisk (No. 1) erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1924 is a contributing feature of the property (Photos 19-20). There are also a number of more recent additions to the courthouse grounds. While not contributing historical elements, these varied monuments embody and promote the ongoing public use of the site. As part of a cancer drive in 1950, Phi Beta Psi constructed a rock-covered wishing well (No. 2) on the north side of the courthouse<sup>1</sup> (Photos 21-22). This wishing well still operates today. Manatee County also established its "Walk of Fame" (No. 3) in 1956, where every year small concrete slabs bearing the impression of the footprints of Manatee County's Citizen of the Year are installed along Manatee Avenue on the north side of the courthouse (Photo 25). Located immediately west of the "Walk of Fame" is the Courthouse Square historical marker (No. 4) erected in the 1970s (Photo 25). The Vietnam Honor Roll Memorial (No. 5) was placed on the site in 1973 (Photo 26). Nearby is the DeSoto Trail marker (No. 6), a large block of unfinished stone bearing a bronze plaque marking the route that Hernando DeSoto took on his exploration of Florida during 1539-1540 (Photo 26). The Law Enforcement Memorial (No. 7) is the latest addition to the site, being completed in 1993 (Photo 27).

In 1986, the Manatee County Transit Authority constructed a bus stop on the west side of the courthouse (Photo 28). The City of Bradenton Architectural Review Board required that the design of this bus stop match the courthouse architecture. Utilizing white Doric columns and yellow brick, the building blends in with the courthouse.

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<sup>1</sup> Minute Book 13, 297, 313.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 1

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida  
Statement of Significance

**Summary**

The Manatee County Courthouse is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Politics and Government. Many important functions dealing with the political, judicial and economic development of Manatee County have taken place within its walls, and many notable civic functions have taken place in the building and on the grounds. The building has been in continuous use as a courthouse and county governmental center since its construction in 1913. The building was designed by the Tampa architectural firm of McGucken and Hyer and constructed by the Falls City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Since its establishment by legislative action signed January 9, 1855, three different county seats and eight different courthouses have served Manatee County. The present-day courthouse, the last to be built, dates from 1913. Originally, Manatee County extended from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Okeechobee. The sprawling 5,000 square mile county was first governed from a small wood frame courthouse built in the Village of Manatee in 1860 on land donated by Josiah and Mary Gates, the first permanent settlers of the Village of Manatee.<sup>1</sup> This first courthouse cost \$700 and served as the seat of county government for six years.<sup>2</sup> Today, the original courthouse building is located in Manatee Village Historical Park and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In an effort to make the county seat more centrally located, the State Legislature had it moved in 1866 to the community of Pine Level, near the present-day city Arcadia. It remained at this location until 1887 when DeSoto County was split off from Manatee County, leaving Pine Level in the newly created county. The altered boundaries of Manatee County then encompassed what is now Manatee and Sarasota Counties.<sup>3</sup> For a year, the county government operated out of Patten's Store, located in Manatee. During this time, the communities of Palmetto, Bradenton, Manatee and Sarasota all competed for the privilege of becoming the county seat. An election was held in 1888 to settle the matter and, the tiny town of Bradenton (at the time spelled "Braidentown") won.<sup>4</sup>

The settlement of Bradenton began in 1842. Upon formally accepting ownership of Florida from the Spanish in 1821, the United States government began a program to encourage the settlement of Florida by

<sup>1</sup> Joe Warner, The Singing River (Bradenton, Florida: Self Published), 79; Janet Snyder Matthews, Edge of Wilderness (Sarasota, Florida: Coastal Press), 211-14.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Book 1, 4-5; Manatee County, Deed Book A, 149.

<sup>3</sup> Lillie B. McDuffie, The Lures of Manatee, second edition (Atlanta, Georgia: Foot and Davis, Inc., 1961), 276-283.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 2

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida  
Statement of Significance

American citizens. Attracted by the offer of 160 acres of free land to homestead, pioneers began arriving in the Manatee River region in the early 1840s. The first pioneer to settle in the area was John Gates, who sailed six miles up the Manatee River until he came to a site on the south side of the river, near what today is 15th Street East in the city of Bradenton. Gates chose to homestead this area in 1841, bringing his family to join him a year later and establishing the Village of Manatee.<sup>5</sup>

Other settlers followed Gates to the area, including several planters from North Florida who had lost their heavily indebted plantations in the Financial Panic of 1837 and the subsequent collapse of the Union Bank in Tallahassee. Among these was Joseph Addison Braden and his brother, Hector, who left Tallahassee in 1842 and traveled to the Manatee region. The brothers set up temporary housing on the south bank of the Manatee River five miles from its mouth. Hector Braden drowned in 1846, but by 1848, Joseph owned 1,147 acres of land near the confluence of the Manatee and Braden Rivers. Braden constructed a pier near the mouth of the Braden River to serve the boats that brought supplies to his nearby plantation, which was linked to the waterfront by a dirt road. Braden constructed a 300 foot square stockade near the pier to protect supplies, products and employees from Indian attack. The seeds of the founding of the city of Bradenton can be found in this pier and stockade known as "Fort Braden."<sup>6</sup>

As had been the case when he was in Tallahassee, Braden was plagued by financial difficulties. Deeply in debt, he was forced to sell his plantation and stockade in 1857 to Daniel Ladd, another arrival from Tallahassee, who held onto it until 1867, when he in turn sold it to Mary E. Pelot, a resident of the Village of Manatee.<sup>7</sup> While the Village of Manatee and the nearby communities of Fogartyville, Palma Sola, and Palmetto thrived and grew, Braden's former holdings remained largely undeveloped.

In 1877, Major William I. Turner purchased seven acres of the former Braden property from Mary Pelot. He subdivided the property into nineteen lots located on both sides of a street he labeled "Main." The subdivision quickly sold, and on May 9, 1878, the new town of "Bradentown" received a U.S. Post Office. A misspelling in the original petition for the post office resulted in the name of "Braidentown." That name remained official until February 1, 1905 when the correct name of Bradentown was restored to the community.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Warner, 41, 75.

<sup>6</sup> Warner, 41-42.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Warner, 42-43.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida  
Statement of Significance

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**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

When Braidentown was named county seat in 1888, the board of county commissioners purchased two acres of land located on the southeast corner of Manatee Avenue and Main Street (now 12th Street West) as the site on which to build a new courthouse.<sup>9</sup> This site in the heart of downtown Bradenton was known as Pelot's Addition to Braidentown, with the filing of a plat on March 28, 1890.<sup>10</sup> Block 6 was set aside for a courthouse square, a 200 X 400 foot area bounded on the east by Court Street, the west by Main Street, the south by Broad Street and the north by Manatee Avenue. Courthouse activities were held in a variety of locations until a two-story, wood frame courthouse was completed in the spring of 1894. Painted white, with a tall bell tower or steeple on one side, the courthouse took up the northeast side of the block. (See Attachment #2.) The community erected a bandstand on the corner of Main Street and Manatee Avenue, and the clerk of the court occupied a small one-story building on the west side of the block. A wire fence surrounded the entire complex in order to keep cattle and other animals away from the courthouse.<sup>11</sup>

The turn of the century brought progress to Braidentown in the form of electricity, trolley cars, railroads, automobiles and the telegraph and telephone. The small wood frame courthouse was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the Manatee County government, nor did it fit the image the residents of Braidentown had of their community. In 1912, the county commissioners began planning a new courthouse to be built on the central portion of the courthouse square. On May 24, 1912, the board of county commissioners authorized a notice of intention to build a new courthouse and jail. The commission invited the submission of architectural proposals on May 27 and, a week later, appointed a committee consisting of several commissioners to visit other county courthouses for ideas and designs. On June 15, the committee postponed the examination of plans and proposals due to the lack of time. Finally, on June 22 and July 3, they allowed the architects one hour each to present their proposals.<sup>12</sup>

On July 8, 1912, the county commission selected the designs and plans for the new courthouse submitted by the Tampa architectural firm of McGucken and Hyer; however, there were delays in choosing a contractor because a group of local citizens filed an injunction to halt the process. They were unhappy with the plans provided by the architects, which they claimed were inadequate and lacking in appropriate and clear specifications. The group took their complaints to court, which ruled in favor of the county commission in

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<sup>9</sup> Deed Book 1, 484.

<sup>10</sup> Manatee County, Plat Book 1, page 80.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Schofield, Yesterday's Bradenton (Bradenton, Florida: Lindsey Curtis Publishing, 1975), 48; MCHS Photograph Collection, Courthouses.

<sup>12</sup> Minute Book 5, 376, 384, 388, 394-5, 408, 416.

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**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida  
Statement of Significance

November of the same year. After the ruling of the court, the commissioners hired Falls City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky, to be the contractor for the project.<sup>13</sup>

Work on the courthouse began early in 1913 and was deemed complete on February 2, 1914, when members of the board of county commissioners made their final walk-through and accepted the building.<sup>14</sup> Upon completion of the new courthouse, the old wooden courthouse was torn down and county offices moved into the new building.<sup>15</sup> The courthouse housed the county jail on the fourth floor, the courtroom and judges' offices on the third floor and the clerk of circuit court, county commission, and other elected officials on the second floor. Other county agencies were placed in the basement.<sup>16</sup> (See Attachment #3.)

In the early 1920s, Manatee County and the rest of Florida experienced a tremendous period of rapid growth. Within the first five years of the decade, the county's population more than tripled.<sup>17</sup> During this time of growth, residents stated that "Bradentown will always be a small town until we take the 'w' out!"<sup>18</sup> The Board of Trade petitioned the State Legislature to make the change and on December 1, 1924, Bradentown officially became Bradenton. Over \$2,000,000 was spent in the city that year, resulting in eighty-seven new residences, as well as many new business buildings under construction.<sup>19</sup>

The courthouse itself underwent a transformation. The eleven year old building began to look shabby. In 1925, the county commission began planning for replacement of the roof and removal of the dome, which was, by then, considered a fire hazard. Further work involved the construction of an addition to the south end of the building and expansion of the east and west porticos. The interior of the building was also redesigned to allow for more offices and expansion of the jail. On September 9, 1925, the commission hired architect J.H. Johnson to provide plans for the project, and on September 25, 1926, they employed contractor Robert G. Cregan to carry out the work.<sup>20</sup> This work increased the size of the courthouse by fifty percent but retained the original rectangular shape. The east and west porticos no longer matched those of the south and north. The triangular pediments were removed, and the number of columns were increased from four to the current number of nine on both elevations.<sup>21</sup> (See Attachment #4.)

<sup>13</sup> Minute Book 5, 416, 441, 467-74, 498, 501-2, 508-23, 531-2, 550.

<sup>14</sup> Minute Book 5, 528, 587; Minute Book 6, 2, 15, 36, 69, 87-91, 105, 109, 143-47, 187.

<sup>15</sup> Minute Book 6, 243.

<sup>16</sup> Minute Book 7, 301.

<sup>17</sup> Population Statistics for Manatee County, Manatee County Central Library, Eaton Room.

<sup>18</sup> Warner, 50.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Minute Book 9, 99, 136, 165-66, 177.

<sup>21</sup> Sanborn Maps, 1929; Manatee County Historical Society Photograph Collection.

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Section number 8 Page 5

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida**

**Statement of Significance**

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The first beautification projects for the courthouse grounds also took place during this decade. In 1924, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a granite obelisk on the north side of the courthouse as a memorial to Confederate soldiers.<sup>22</sup> Walkways were installed in 1928 and nurseryman Egbert Reasoner offered to provide a landscaping plan.<sup>23</sup>

Along with the rest of Florida, Manatee County saw its boom go bust with the Real Estate Crash of 1926. While Manatee County's agricultural base continued to provide a livelihood for many of its residents, local government officials tightened their belts to wait out the financial crisis that simply got rougher with the onset of the Great Depression three years later. Only minimum maintenance work on the courthouse took place during this time. Window and elevator repairs, and the addition of hand rails on the steps, were among the small tasks taking place during the first part of the 1930s.<sup>24</sup> In fact, board of county commission minutes indicate that the commission undertook no work, other than routine maintenance, during the last half of the decade.

Prosperity returned to Manatee County and Bradenton in the 1940s, particularly after the end of World War II when Manatee County's population began to increase rapidly with the growth of the tourist industry throughout Florida. In addition to fulfilling its governmental function, the courthouse served as a community center and as a site to honor local citizens. In the 1940s, the Bradenton Kiwanis Club used space in the basement for a clinic for underprivileged children, and the county hospital board erected a small building on the northwest corner of the property to use in a hospital fund raising effort.<sup>25</sup> A concession stand opened in the courthouse, with the proceeds supporting services for the blind.

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<sup>22</sup> Minute Book 8, 562.

<sup>23</sup> Minute Book 8, 441.

<sup>24</sup> Minute Book 10, 29, 482.

<sup>25</sup> Minute Book 12, 180, 505, 511.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   9   Page   2  

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida

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**Major Bibliographical References**

Manatee County, Florida. Deed Books. Clerk of the Circuit Court. Manatee County Historical Records Library, Bradenton, Florida.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida**

**Verbal Boundary Description & Justification**

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Manatee County Courthouse is located on Block 6 of Pelot's Subdivision in the City of Bradenton, Florida. It is bounded on the south by Sixth Avenue West (also known as State Road 64 Eastbound), on the east by an alley that divides the property from the Public Safety Complex, on the north by Manatee Avenue (also known as State Road 64 Westbound), and on the west by 12th Street West (also known as Old Main Street).

**Boundary Justification**

These boundaries were selected because they encompass the original property purchased in 1888 and include the entire block 6 of the subdivision.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

**Manatee County Courthouse**  
Manatee County, Florida  
Photographs

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1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1913
5. Manatee Historical Society, Manatee Central Library
6. South and East Entrances, Camera Facing Northwest
7. Photo 1 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1913
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. South and West Entrances, Camera Facing Northeast
7. Photo 2 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1913-1926
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. North Entrance, Camera Facing South
7. Photo 3 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1926
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. West Entrance and North Lawn, Camera Facing East
7. Photo 4 of 28

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida**

**Photographs**

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1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1926
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. Roof and Dome, Camera Facing Northeast
7. Photo 5 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1940
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. South Entrance, Camera Facing Northeast
7. Photo 6 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse
2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida
3. Cathy Slusser
4. November 1996
5. Manatee County Historical Records Library
6. Detail of Cornice, Camera Facing Southeast
7. Photo 7 of 28

Numbers 1-5 are the same for all the remaining photographs unless otherwise indicated.

6. 12th Street West Entrance, Camera Facing Northeast
7. Photo 8 of 28

6. 12th Street West Entrance, Camera Facing Southeast
7. Photo 9 of 28

6. 6th Avenue West Entrance, Camera Facing Northeast
7. Photo 10 of 28

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida**

**Photographs**

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6. East Entrance, Camera Facing Southwest

7. Photo 11 of 28

6. Detail of North Pediment, Camera Facing South

7. Photo 12 of 28

1. Manatee County Courthouse

2. 1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton (Manatee County), Florida

3. Unknown

4. 1966

5. Manatee County Historical Records Library

6. Roof and South Addition, Camera Facing Southwest

7. Photo 13 of 28

6. Interior, Lobby and Security Station, 12th Street Entrance, Camera Facing Northeast

7. Photo 14 of 28

6. Interior, Fourth Floor, Bailiff's Office and Judges' Offices Hallway, Camera Facing South

7. Photo 15 of 28

6. Interior, Second Floor, Recording Department, Camera Facing South

7. Photo 16 of 28.

6. Interior, Basement, Finance Department, Camera Facing Southeast

7. Photo 17 of 28

6. Interior, Second Floor, South End, Juvenile Courtroom, Camera Facing East

7. Photo 18 of 28

6. Manatee Avenue Entrance, Camera Facing South

7. Photo 19 of 28

6. Manatee Avenue Entrance, Camera Facing Southwest

7. Photo 20 of 28

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 4

**Manatee County Courthouse  
Manatee County, Florida  
Photographs**

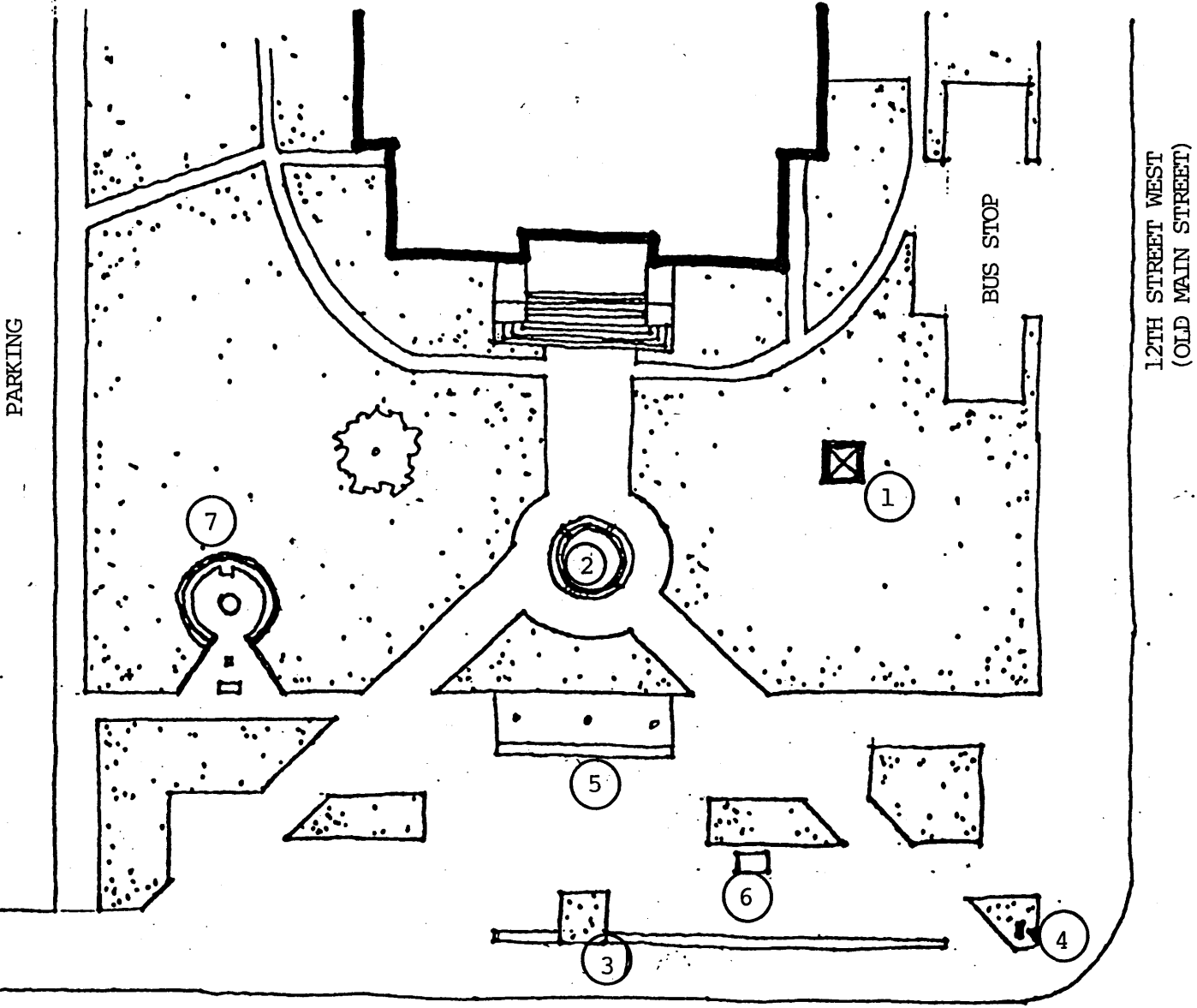
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- 6. Confederate Memorial, North Lawn, Camera Facing North
- 7. Photo 21 of 28
  
- 6. Confederate Memorial, North Lawn, Camera Facing South
- 7. Photo 22 of 28
  
- 6. Wishing Well & Back of Veterans' Memorial, North Lawn, Camera Facing Northeast
- 7. Photo 23 of 28
  
- 6. Wishing Well, North Lawn, Camera Facing South
- 7. Photo 24 of 28
  
- 6. Manatee County Citizen of the Year Footprints, Sidewalk, North Lawn, Camera Facing West.
- 7. Photo 25 of 28
  
- 6. Veterans' Memorial and DeSoto Trail Rock, Camera Facing Southeast
- 7. Photo 26 of 28
  
- 6. Law Enforcement Memorial, North Lawn, Camera Facing South
- 7. Photo 27 of 28
  
- 6. Bus Stop, 12th Street Side, Camera Facing East
- 7. Photo 28 of 28

MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON (MANATEE COUNTY), FLORIDA  
ATTACHMENT #1

KEY TO MAP

1. Confederate Memorial Obelisk
2. Wishing Well
3. Walk of Fame
4. Courthouse Square Marker
5. Vietnam Honor Roll Memorial
6. DeSoto Trail Marker
7. Law Enforcement Memorial

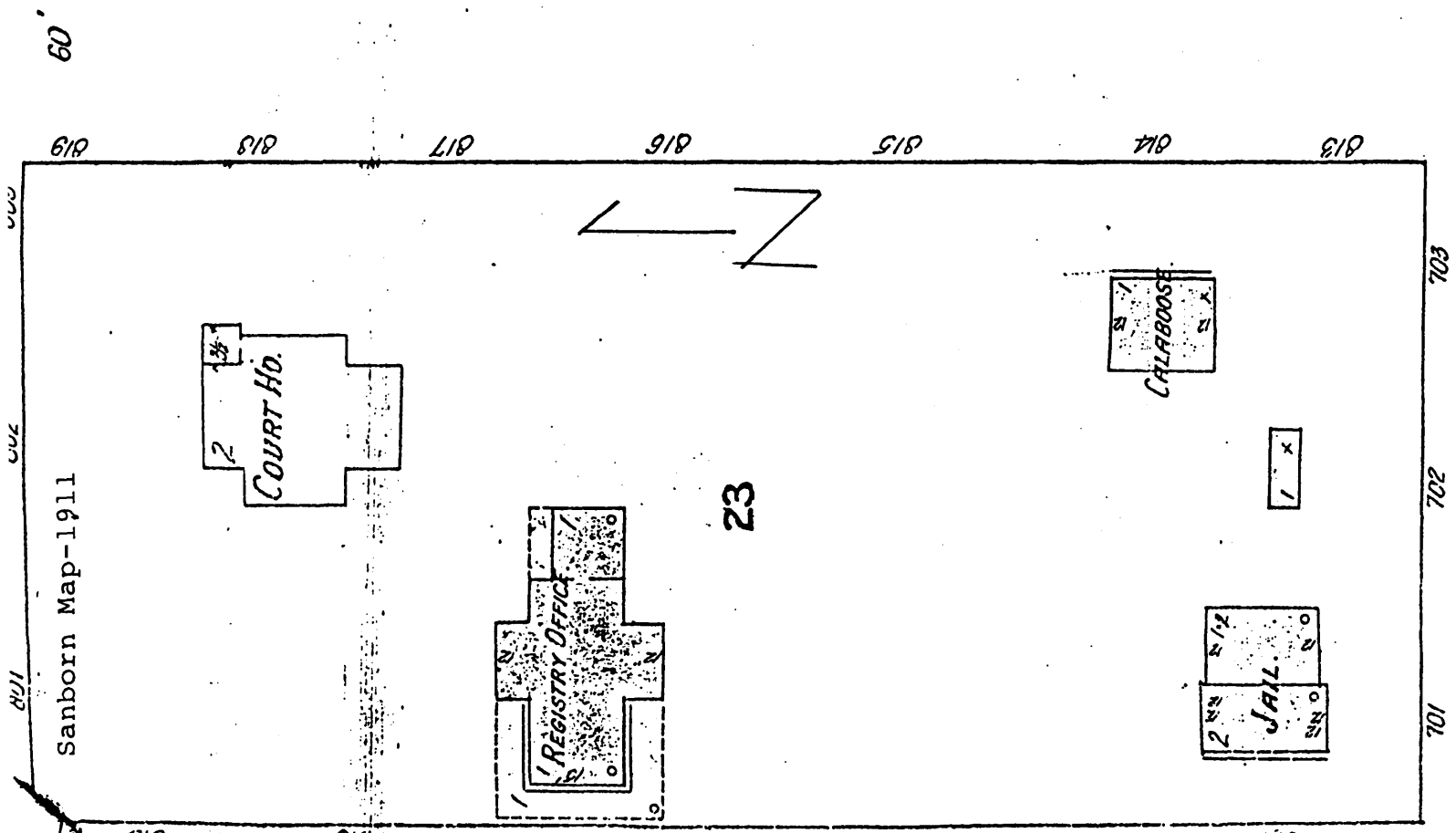
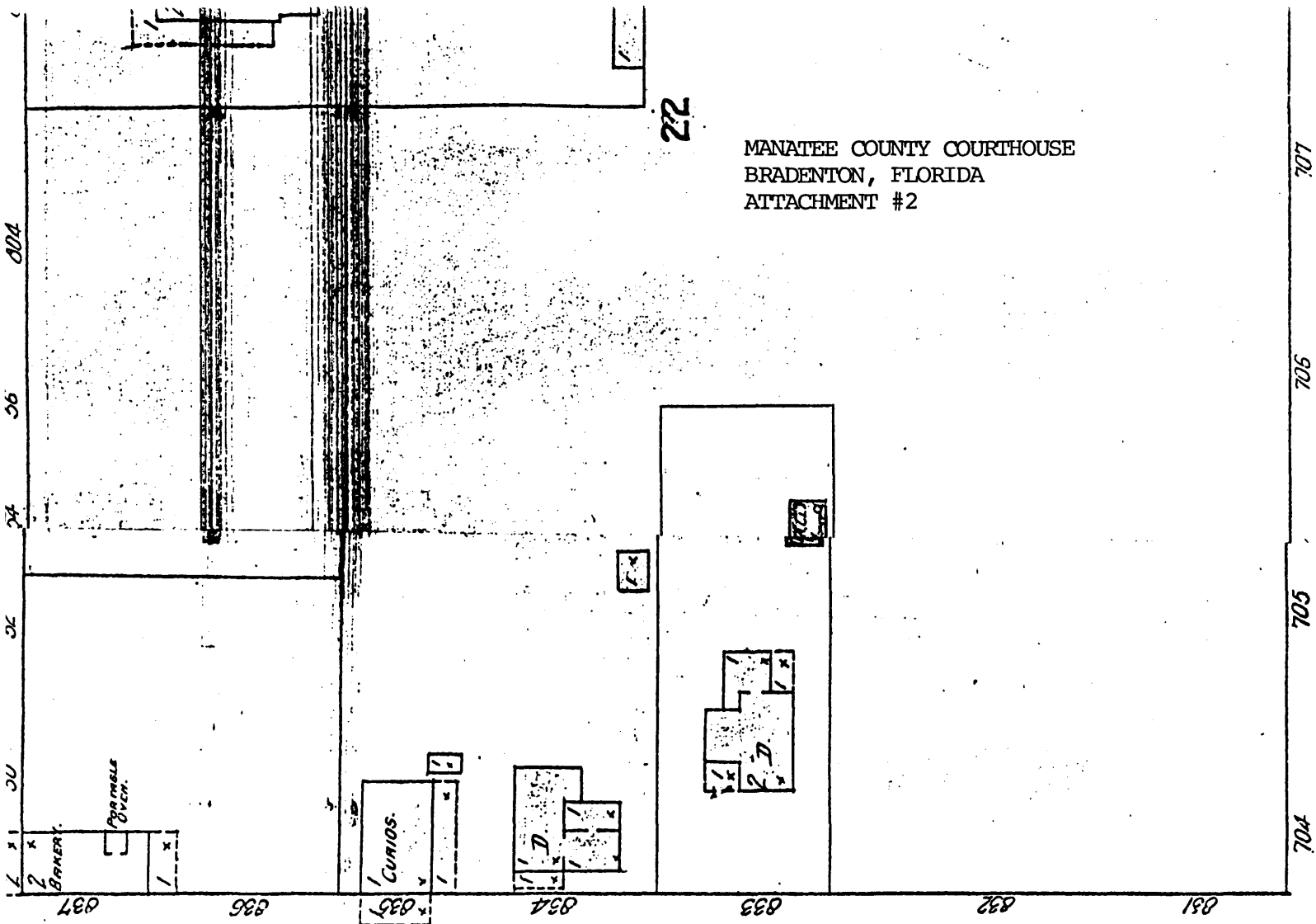


NOT TO SCALE

MANATEE AVENUE WEST

12TH STREET WEST  
(OLD MAIN STREET)

MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA  
ATTACHMENT #2



Sanborn Map-1911

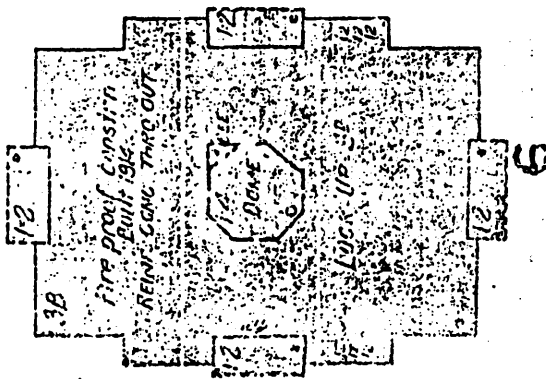
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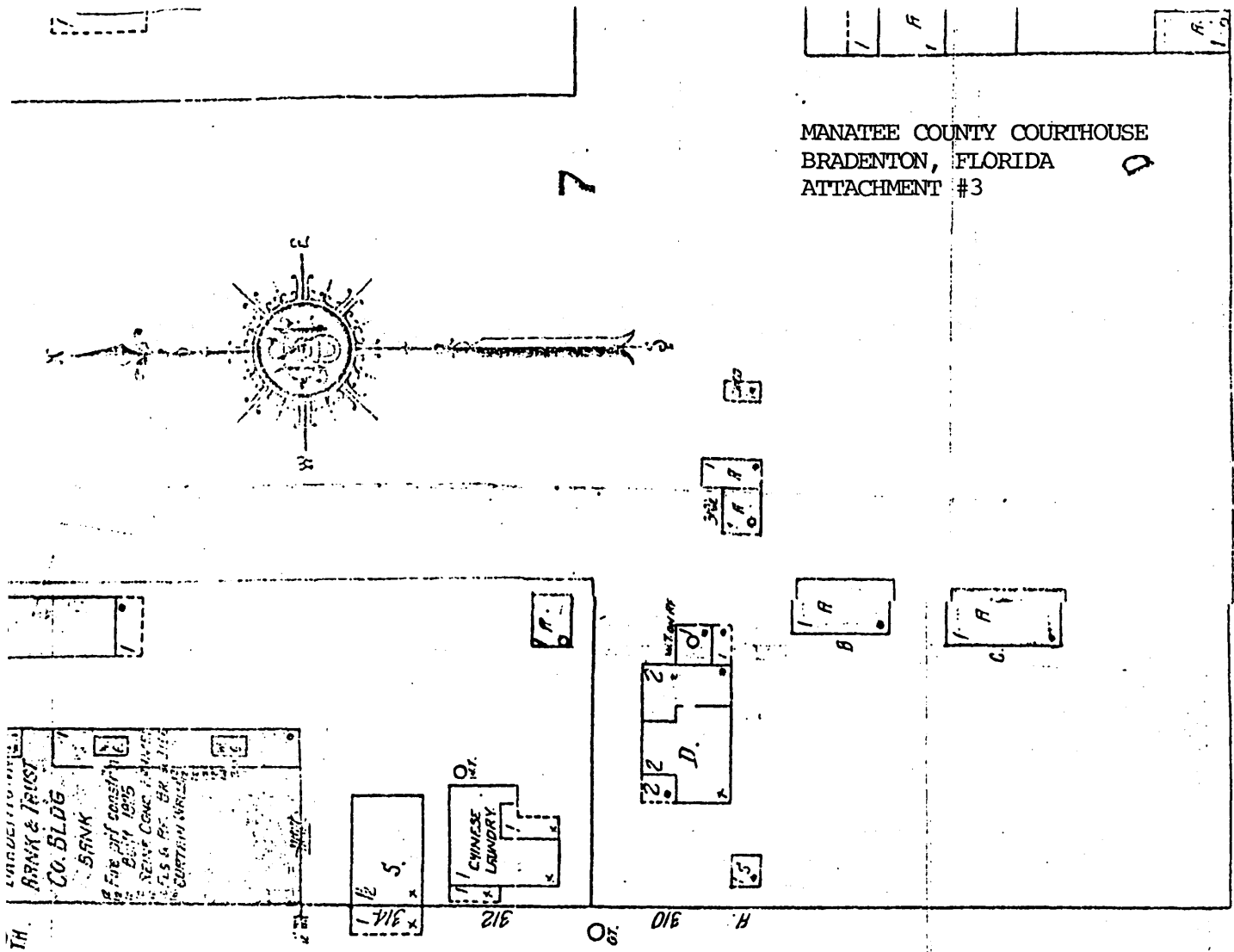
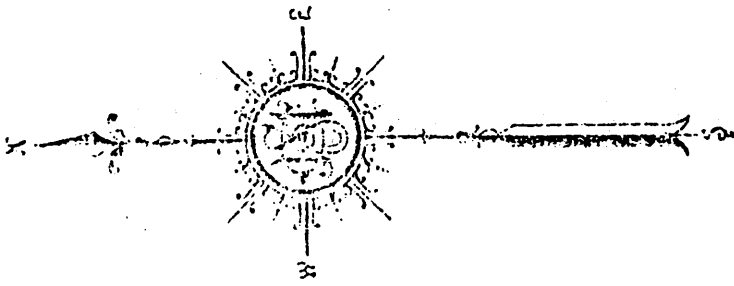
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MANATEE COUNTY COURT HO.



MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA  
ATTACHMENT #3



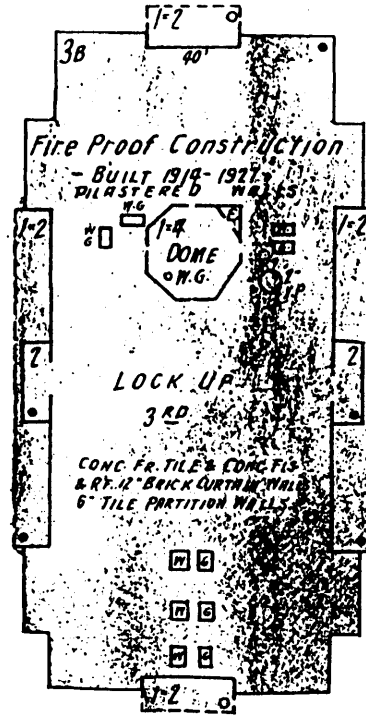
E. WASHINGTON

*6th 100*

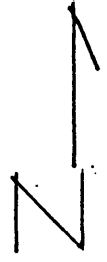
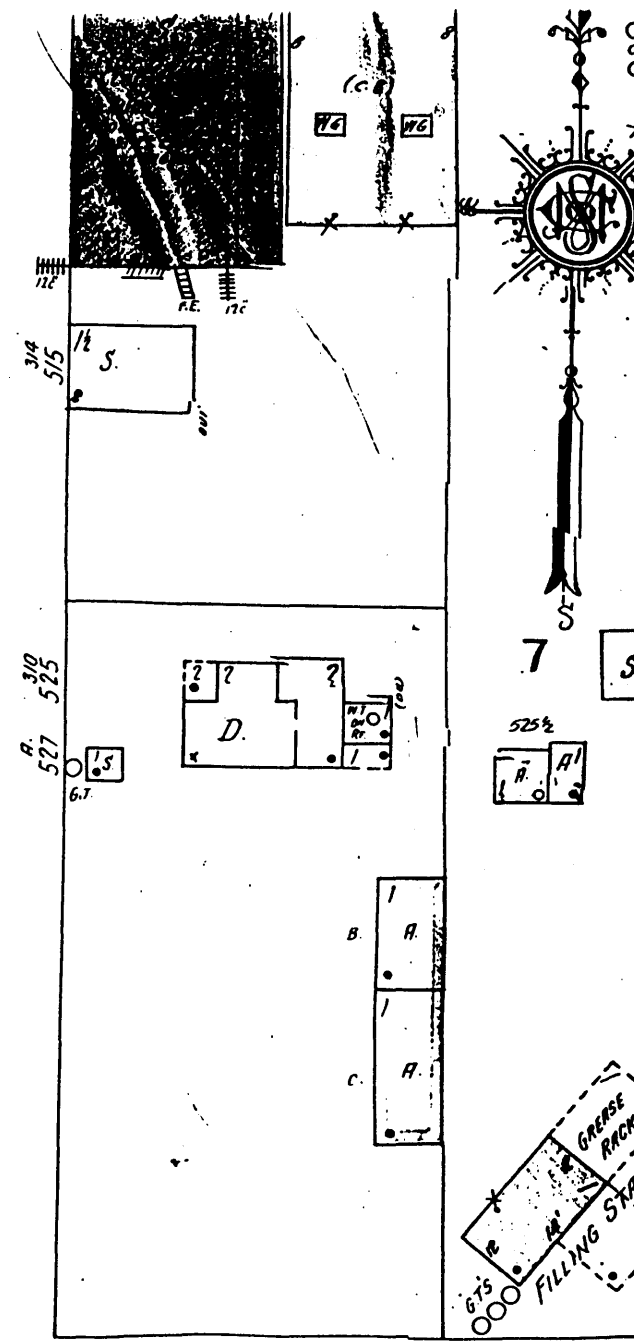
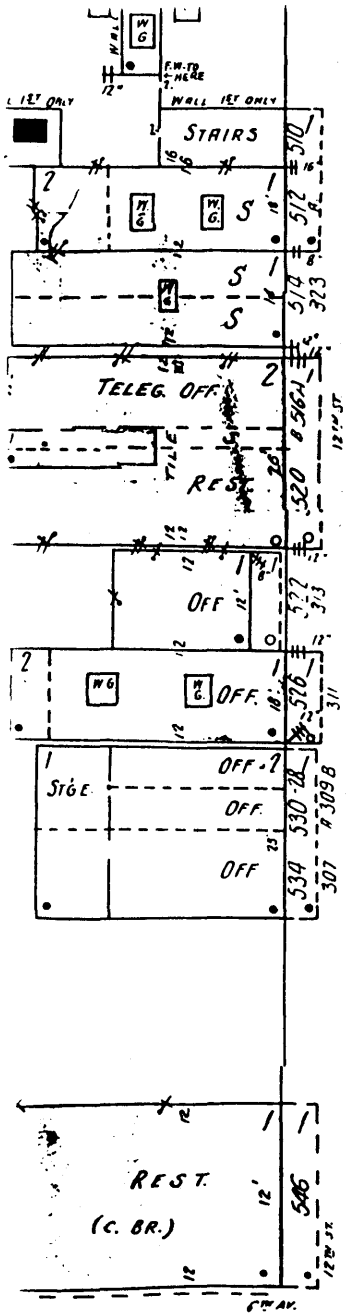
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Sanborn Map-1929

MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA  
ATTACHMENT #4



MANATEE COUNTY  
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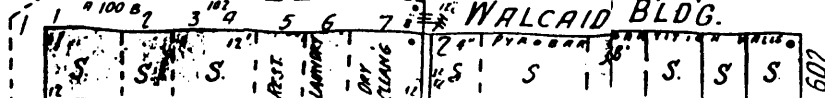
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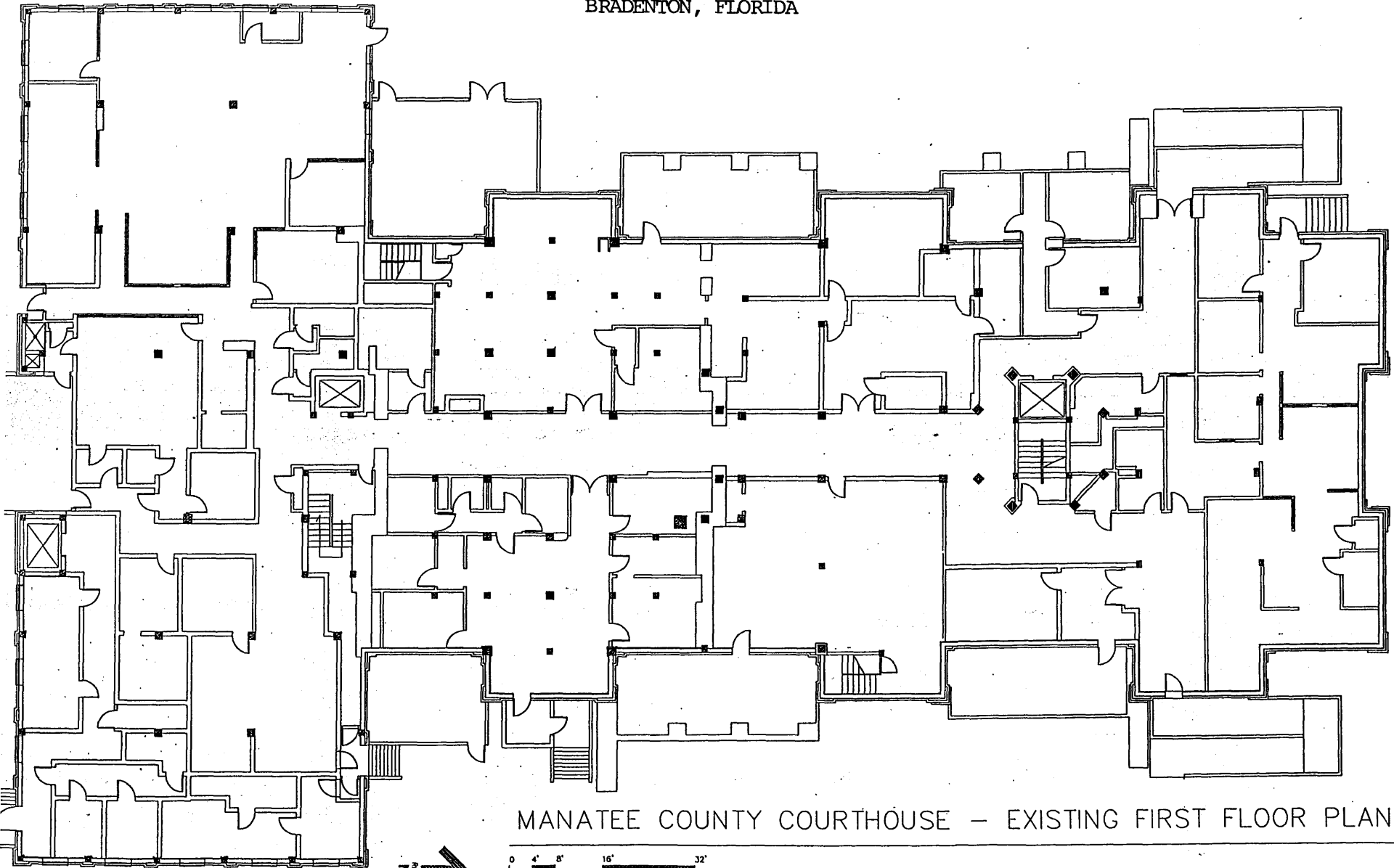
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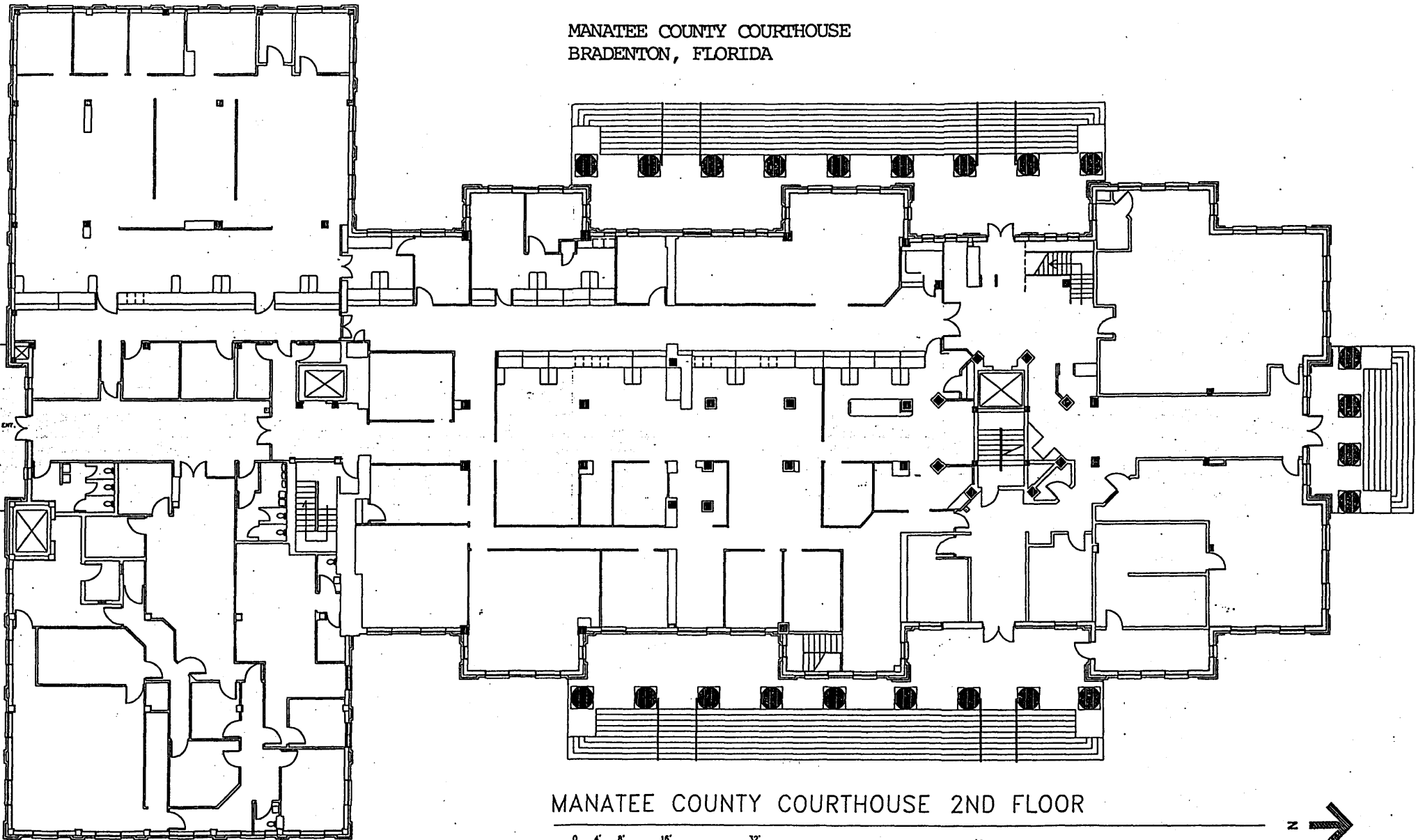


MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA

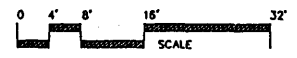


MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

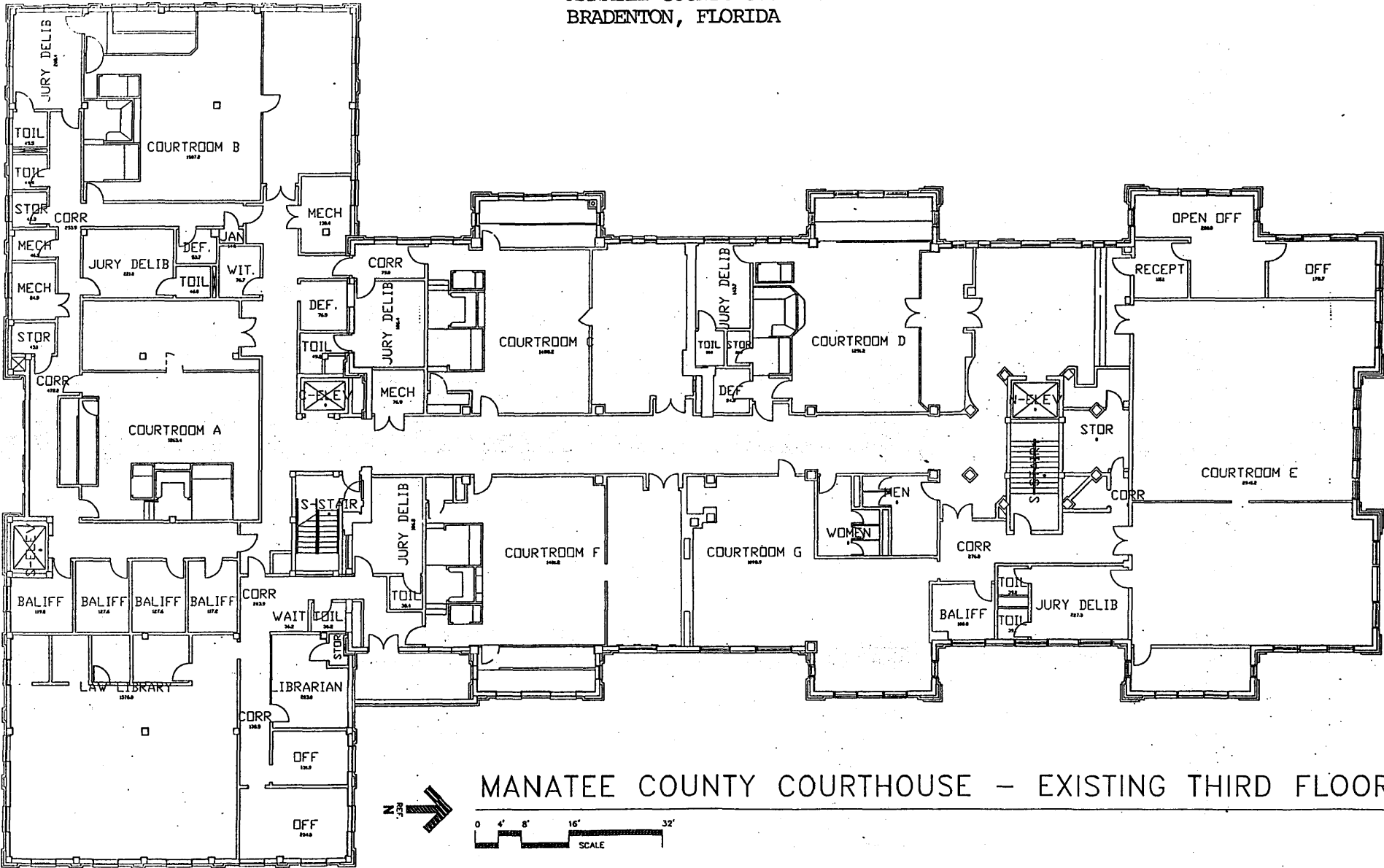
MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA



MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE 2ND FLOOR

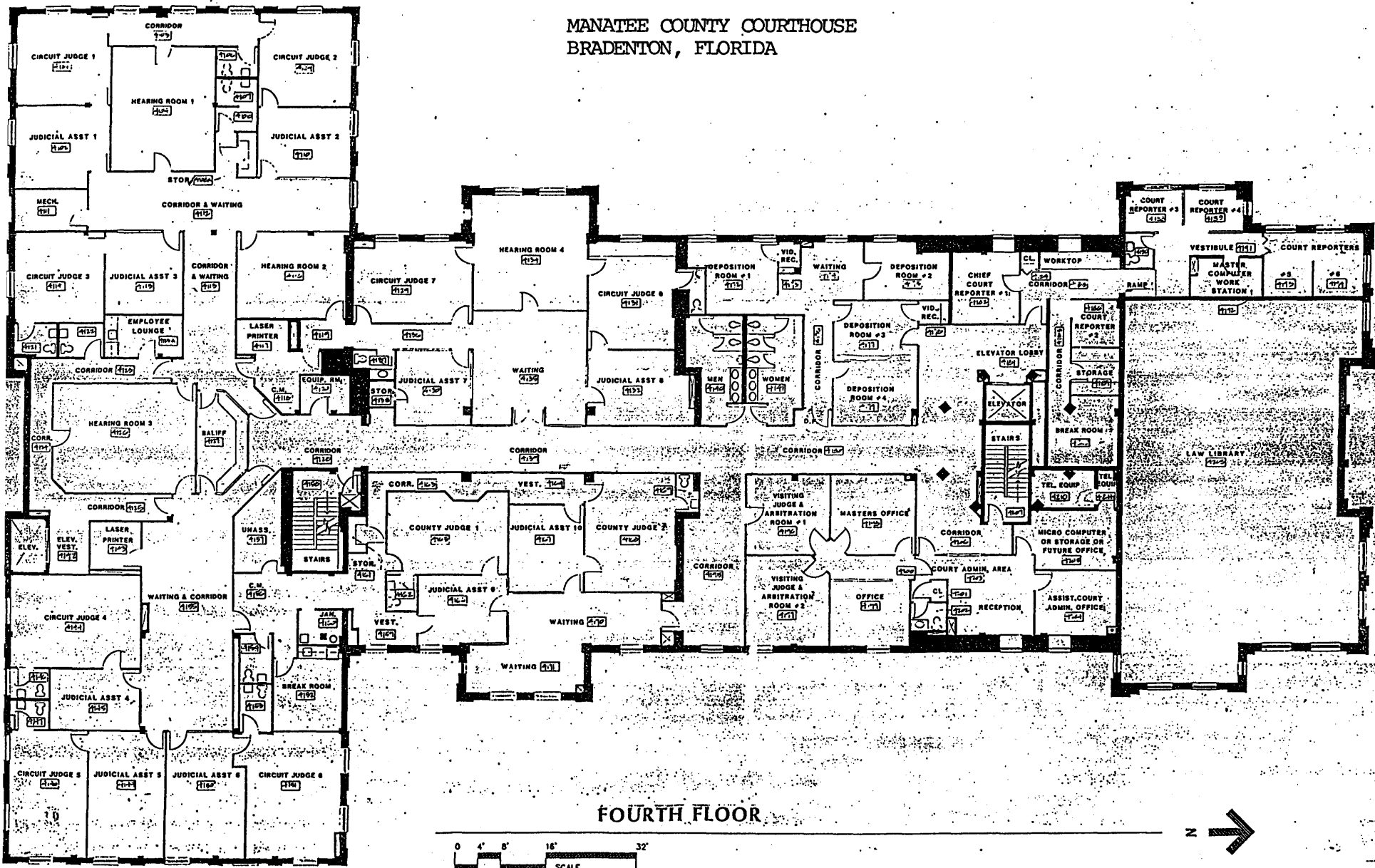


MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA



MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - EXISTING THIRD FLOOR

MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
BRADENTON, FLORIDA



FOURTH FLOOR



MANATEE COUNTY FACILITIES MANAGEMENT  
DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES

FOURTH FLOOR RENOVATIONS  
MANATEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
1115 MANATEE AVE. WEST BRADENTON, FLORIDA 33507

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