NPS Form 10-900
(Rev 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAR 20 1992

OHP

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: First Church of Christ, Scientist
other names/site number: Cultural Heritage Board Landmark no. 7, City of Riverside

## 2. Location

street & number: 3606 Lemon Street — [NA] not for publication
city, town: Riverside — [NA] vicinity
state: California code: CA county: Riverside code: 65 zip code: 92501

## 3. Classification

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| [X] private | [X] building(s) | 1 | 1 buildings |
| [ ] public-local | [ ] district | | sites |
| [ ] public-State | [ ] site | | structures |
| [ ] public-Federal | [ ] structure | | objects |
| | [ ] object | 1 | 1 Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date: August 11, 1992

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[X] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

9/2-/92

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th century revivals:
Mission

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Stucco
roof Galvanized Metal
other Marble

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

[X] See continuation sheet

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

| Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) | Period of Significance | Significant Dates |
|---|---|---|
| Architecture | 1901 | 1901 |

**Cultural Affiliation**
NA

**Significant Person**
NA

**Architect/Builder**
Benton, Arthur Burnett
Spaulding, F. L.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

☒ See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

[X] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [X] Local government
- [ ] University
- [X] Other

Specify repository:
First Church of Christ, Scientist
Riverside

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately one-third (1/3) of one (1) acre

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 11 | 465860 | 3760080 |
| B | | | |
| C | | | |
| D | | | |

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beginning at the northwesterly corner of Block 6, Range 4, of the city of Riverside, in the county of Riverside, State of California, travel southerly along the easterly line of Lemon St. 110 ft.; thence at right angles easterly and parallel with the southerly line of Sixth st. 125 ft.; thence at right angles northerly, and parallel with easterly line of Lemon St. 110 ft. to the southerly line of Sixth St.; thence westerly along the southerly line of Sixth St. to point of beginning.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes the property historically and currently owned by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, congregation.

[ ] See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By


name/title Vicki L. Solheid, Student Intern, City of Riverside
organization University of California, Riverside date March 13, 1992
street & number 5015 Twilight Cyn Rd - G telephone 714/782-5676
city or town Yorba Linda state CA zip code 92687

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, edifice today looks very much the same as it did when it was dedicated in February, 1901. The architectural style of the church is Mission Revival, with the influence of Mission Santa Barbara seen in the classical elements of the front facade. The church sits on the northern corner of Sixth and Lemon Streets in Riverside, California (Riverside is laid-out in a southwest to northeast orientation); the main entrance is also at this corner. A smaller, similar-looking structure sits adjacent to the church on its northeastern side, along Sixth Street. This structure is the congregation's Sunday school, built in 1955/56. Although it was designed to conform with the church building and does not detract from the integrity of the setting, the Sunday school's more recent age makes it a noncontributing element within the nominated property boundary.

The northeast elevation of the church, viewed from Sixth Street, reveals a mix of Classical and Mission Revival styles reminiscent of Mission Santa Barbara. The classical design of the Mission Santa Barbara appealed to the architects working toward a California style of architecture in the late-19th century. In architectural competitions for the California Building to be constructed for the Chicago's Columbia Exposition (1893), and as can be seen in the winning design, Richardsonian Romanesque and classical elements from Mission Santa Barbara were common. The northeast elevation of Riverside's First Church of Christ, Scientist, has been influenced by Mission Santa Barbara and no doubt by late-1800s architectural designs, such as one of the elevations of the California Building published in *American Architect and Building News* (December 15, 1894, reproduced in Weitze 1984).

The massive central portico (there is no entrance at this location, however) of the northeast elevation is made up of five unfluted Ionic columns supporting a low-pitched front gable (pediment). The roof here is composition shingle. The gable contains three round-top stained glass windows, with the center window being larger than the other two. A low wall serves as the base for the columns and encloses the inset porch. It also partially hides the first floor. There is a row of four single-hung sash rectangular windows in the first floor wall, and a row of four longer rectangular windows containing stained glass in the second floor level. These windows contain a false sash and are each topped by a curved or segmental pediment that is decorated with a raised floral pattern of plaster or concrete. On either side of the portico is a Mission style bell-tower. The one to the right of the main entrance has three main segments and the one to the left has two main segments. The second stories of both towers are functional. Originally the larger tower's second floor was the room used by Mrs. E. S. Davis, founder of Christian Science in Riverside. Grates have recently been added between the columns for safety purposes.

The northwest elevation most prominently reflects the Mission Style with its cloister and large central dome. The three-tiered Mission Style tower, detailed with small dome and a tiny decorative tier, is at the northern end of this elevation. It identifies the main entrance to the church. The entrance is through an arched doorway with steps of marble blocks. The doorway

is embellished on either side by rounded Ionic pilasters with egg and dart detailing. The pilasters are similar to the northeast elevation columns, but have more detailed decoration, such as a flower centered on each of the scrolls. Directly south of the bell tower is an inset wall that contains three small, equal-sized, curved-top stained glass windows. Interestingly, two pilasters with the decorated Ionic capitals divide the windows, but the outer sides of the windows are contained only by capitals. The pilasters here are actually on the same plane as the wall. This window-pilaster-capital motif is repeated at the other end of the northwest elevation, but with four windows instead of three, and is a play on planes that is not readily observed.

The central portion of the northwest elevation is dominated by an arcade or cloister (Arthur Benton often used this term), with a low-pitched roof covered with metal Mission Style "tiles." The original "tiles" were also metal, but were replaced in 1991 with exact reproductions (except that the ends were enclosed to keep pests out of the building). The northwest elevation roof has a two-foot eave with curved, Mission Style rafters. The cloister contains six arches supported by square columns that are bisected by decorated capitals (as above) two-thirds of the way up. A short stairway under the second to the last (southern end) arch leads up to the cloister walkway. At the northern end of the walkway is a door set at an angle that leads into the hallway near the interior auditorium entrance. The door at the southern end leads into the present-day office (historically the "reception" room). The interior wall of the cloister contains the eight original large stained glass windows. An interesting feature of the exterior cloister wall with its short base and columns is its 14 inch wide depth which replicates the look of adobe, an important ideal of the early Mission Style movement. In design, this walkway resembles a photograph of a "Mission-Moresque" corridor in Lima, Peru, that Benton published in 1896. The arched walkway, or cloister, is a very common element in mission architecture.

Above the cloister roof rises a low wall that leads to another very low-pitched roof. This, in turn, leads to another short wall that encloses the flat roof around the base of the large central dome. The dome has eight short vertical walls that hold five square stained glass windows each. The base of the roof of the dome flairs out slightly, then the roof walls curve to the top where they meet a miniature eight-sided dome. The dome is also covered with metal Mission Style tiles.

The southern elevations, facing the southeast and southwest, are more plain than the other two elevations. The southeast elevation faces the congregation's schoolhouse and is in very close proximity to it (app. 6 feet). This elevation has stained glass windows to match the northwest elevation, but is otherwise devoid of decoration and is flat; even the roof is flat here. The plainess was no doubt considered justifiable since the view of this side of the church was originally blocked by a large two-story house, which was subsequently removed and a Sunday school put in its place (the house was used as the school prior to this). The southwest elevation

is less plain than the southeast, but is considered the back of the church and was also partially blocked from view historically. The view is further blocked today by the Riverside Municipal Auditorium, also designed by Arthur Benton in 1927. The southwest elevation eaves' overhang is two feet with curved, Mission Style rafters. The back of the Municipal Auditorium sits on the property boundary along much of the lot, but from the structure to Lemon Street there is a concrete and forged steel fence which was probably erected at the time of the Auditorium construction. The concrete portion of the fence is open, arched, and modestly decorated with Mission Style curvature at the top. The forged steel used for the fencing between the arches is of a well proportioned vertical zig-zag pattern.

The church is approximately 5,750 square feet, with much of this area devoted to the auditorium (3136 sq. ft.). In the back of the auditorium (the 6th Street end) an upper gallery, or two-leveled balcony, holds seating for 75 people. The seating here is attached folding chairs of lightly stained oak that matches the pews; the seats were probably added shortly after the church was dedicated, since a newspaper reported the gallery had the capacity to hold 200 persons. The main floor of the auditorium gently slopes down to the rostrum, or altar. The pews are long and curved, made of oak and lightly stained. They seat 350 people. The rostrum is slightly raised and a pipe organ is housed behind it. A series of stained glass windows pierce the side and back walls adjacent to the balconies. There are corinthian columns and pilasters throughout the interior that rise to the ceiling. The large dome seen from the outside rises from the center of the auditorium and contains a series of five small square stained glass windows on each of its eight sides. Light bulbs hidden from view on the inside of the dome are used to illuminate the stained glass at night. The bulbs can be easily changed from the outside roof since every other window is removable.

The office (reception room) entrance from the exterior is at the southwestern end of the arcade or cloister. It can also be entered from the auditorium. At the opposite southern end of the church are rooms for the readers who perform the church services. A hallway from the reader's room gives access to the north end of the building, storage rooms, a service basement, and men's restroom. The service basement and a newspaper account indicate that the church's foundation is brick with a concrete base. The western hallway functions as space between the entrance to the church, which is at the northern end of the hallway, and the auditorium. To the left of the entrance, there is a short flight of stairs leading up to the balcony, or gallery, and a short flight going down to a social area and women's restroom. This room, below the gallery, was originally the children's educational room. There is also a nook in the hallway that was built for the display and sale of literature. The church was originally equiped with plumbing for restrooms, but some minor plumbing changes were made in 1927 by G. Stanley Wilson.

The exterior of the church retains a high level of integrity with virtually no alterations, but the interior has been altered somewhat. Some of the interior changes were done in the early period of the building's use. Most of the changes, and perhaps all, are reversible. Simple alterations

include carpeting the main entrance hallway, which contains the original but very damaged marble floor blocks (very stained and in areas overly cracked), and the addition of two tall columns to the back part of the auditorium for structural support. The new columns are distinguishable by their lack of corinthian adornment. In 1990 new seismically strengthened flooring was placed atop the old in the auditorium, and then covered by new carpeting. The auditorium and other rooms were originally covered with a green canvas carpet.

Other alterations are more important because they change the visual character of the original interior. The interior was designed in the craftsman tradition with natural or lightly stained wood throughout. Historically, the dome's eight sides were as obvious from the inside as they were from the outside, with vertical and horizontal beams exposed. In the 1950s the wood was covered and the surface painted white with blue decoration. The hanging ceiling rafters once similarly exposed were covered. The interior alterations lend a lighter and more classical appearance.

The most altered part of the interior is the area behind the rostrum. Originally, there was an inset space designed for a choir. Early on, the congregation purchased an organ and alterations were made to house it in the choir space. The earliest alterations here may have been prior to known work done by G. Stanley Wilson in 1927, who did much maintenance work on the structure. (The original work proposal which describes much of the work and alterations done by Wilson in 1927 is on file at the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Riverside.) There were originally two stained glass windows in the back wall, on either side of the rostrum. These windows were moved up in the wall sometime prior to 1968 when the paneling and organ space were altered. They have recently been moved to the Sunday school next to the church. The stained glass windows, coincidentally, were originally paid for with money raised by the children of the congregation, and were a gift of the children to the church.

The integrity of Benton's first Mission Revival design in Riverside is virtually uncompromised. The exterior of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, is in excellent condition and virtually unaltered from its original design. Much care has been taken by the congregation to maintain the exterior of the structure as originally conceived, even to the extent that new roofing was made from the same molds as the original metal mission "tiles." The property size has not changed and the view of the church is virtually the same as it was in 1901. The southern end of the interior has been altered, but the modifications were begun soon after the church was put into service, and other interior alterations only conceal still existing original features. In sum, the publicly viewed exterior of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, looks as it did when Arthur Benton designed and built it in 1900-01. It is the first structure designed by Arthur Benton in Riverside and is probably the oldest Mission Style structure still standing in the city.

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

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, is significant at the local level as representative of the Mission Revival Style of architecture in Riverside, California. The 1901 church building is located in the heart of downtown Riverside, within the historic mile square town plan (surveyed in 1870). Other extant buildings in downtown Riverside reflect the Mission Revival Style, but the First Church of Christ, Scientist, is the earliest surviving of its type. The building's architect was the gifted Arthur Burnett Benton, who was an early, major exponent of the Mission Revival Style. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, reflects Benton's interpretation of the Mission Revival Style that he expounded. The building is owned and used by an active religious organization, but should be considered eligible for the National Register, under Criteria Consideration A, because of its architectural importance within its community.

Architects and boosters alike were searching for a California image in the later 1800s. The desire for an architecture suited to California, the widespread popularity of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1884), and the first major Mission Style building displayed at the Chicago World's Exposition (1893), made for a blooming of the Mission Style in the state. The Mission Style in California thus began in the 1890s and peaked in the 1910s or 1920s, although elements of the style are still seen today in modern structures. (It should be noted that Spanish Colonial, a distinct architectural style, began in California in 1915 under different circumstances and will not be a part of the present discussion.)

The major promotional organization in California for a Mission Revival Style of architecture was the Landmarks Club, founded by Charles Fletcher Lummis and others in 1895. Noted architect Arthur Burnett Benton was also one of the founding members, and served as secretary of the organization. Lummis promoted the Landmarks Club and its ideals in *The Land of Sunshine* (which later became *Out West* ), where he was editor, describing the restoration and recording of the decaying missions. This early preservation work was done mostly by the architect Sumner P. Hunt, but Arthur Benton was also an active participant. Lummis was also responsible for bringing the Mission Revival Style into the fold of the Arts and Crafts ideal, and features of the Mission Style were published in the *Craftsman*. In fact, most Mission Style buildings actually had Craftsman detailing inside,as was true of the original interior of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Riverside.

Benton himself published articles on the virtues of the Mission Revival Style. In an 1896 article, "Architecture for the Southwest," Benton asked Southwestern readers to consider adopting an architecture that suited the environment:

> . . . when we have adapted our habits of living to our climate, and our architecture becomes the honest expression of that life, it will resemble most the renaissance types of southern Europe. In the old Mission buildings we possess invaluable examples of a development of the Spanish Renaissance. Their quiet beauty and strength harmonize

> with our solemn mountains and are in sharp contrast with the pretentious popular types of building with their flimsy construction and meretricious ornamentation (Benton 1896:129).

The "quiet beauty and strength" of the Mission Style of architecture are clearly reflected in Benton's first design in Riverside, the First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Benton was an accomplished architect and professional. He not only designed many noted buildings in California (particularly in the Los Angeles area), but was involved in professional organizations. Benton established leadership roles not long after his arrival in California in 1891. He belonged to numerous organizations, but important positions included director of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and secretary (first) of the Architects' Association of Los Angeles. Benton was thought of highly by his peers, who recognized his role in the revival of the Mission Style of architecture:

> Arthur B. Benton, one of the best known architects in Southern California, . . . . won a reputation as an authority on California Mission architecture and was an active participant in a state wide movement for the preservation of these historic landmarks. He was best known, perhaps for his work on the Riverside Mission Inn . . . (Anonymous 1927:108).

> One of the numerous treats enjoyed by the delegates to the recent convention of the American Institute of Architects . . . was the illustrated lecture on the California Mission by Architect Arthur B. Benton of Los Angeles, whose work[s] in Mission architecture . . . [are] unquestionably among the best examples of the genuine Mission type that we have in modern architecture (Editorial comment, in Benton 1911:35).

Before the boom of the 1880s, Riverside had only a few large buildings downtown. New water sources, coupled with the boom, brought many new buildings into the downtown and eastern part of Riverside. Much of the architecture in Riverside was Romanesque and Victorian at this time. Industrial agriculture was developing in the area and the Riverside Fruit Exchange, later to become the well-known Sunkist label, was established. The Southern Pacific Railroad built their train station here in 1898, which is thought to be the first Mission Style structure in Riverside (but it is no longer standing). The Glenwood Hotel was popular but it was not yet converted into the Mission Style "Mission Inn."

The Mission Revival Style became very popular in Riverside after 1900, with one author claiming that Riverside was the most prominent Mission Revival movement community in the state. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, built in 1900-1901, was one of the first Mission Revival style buildings in Riverside. Arthur Benton was chosen as the architect for the church edifice, which he designed in the style he advocated, Mission Revival. The First Church of

Christ, Scientist, was Benton's first design in Riverside. At the time of the church's dedication in February, 1901, it was highly regarded by those in Riverside:

> . . . it is not saying too much to declare the edifice the prettiest in the city. There are others larger, and some that cost more, but not one of the dozen and a half churches in the city can lay any greater claim to beauty, either inside or out, correctness of design for the purposes intended, or better or more complete workmanship (*Riverside Morning Enterprise*, February 24, 1901).

In 1969 the church was declared Landmark No. 7 by the Cultural Heritage Board of Riverside. Today, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, is thought to be the oldest surviving Mission Revival style building Riverside. Two Mission Style buildings are known to have been built before the First Church of Christ, Scientist, but are no longer standing: the Southern Pacific Railroad station (1898) and the County Hospital (1900), a structure with Mission Style elements but with wood siding.

Mr. Benton must have made contacts and friendships while supervising the church project, since after 1901 he designed numerous structures in Riverside. Most notable was his design of the National Historic Landmark, the Mission Inn, built in 1902 (only one block west of the church). Benton became friends with the owner and operater of the Inn, the very influential Frank A. Miller (founder of the Spanish Art Association in Riverside), and Benton made additions to the Inn up until his death in 1927.

Benton helped shape the look of Riverside by securing many more building contracts after the construction of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and the Mission Inn. "Of all the out-of-town architects working in Riverside, perhaps Los Angeles architect Arthur B. Benton was of the greatest importance to the city" (Klotz and Hall 1985:314). The following buildings and structures in Riverside are known to have been designed by Benton (see attached map also): First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1900-01; Mission Inn, 1902, and additions and alterations until 1927; Carnegie Libray, 1902-03; YMCA, 1910; Hole Mansion, 1912; La Atalaya, 1913 (house, since remodeled); Dormitories for the Mission Inn, 1920 and 1927; Fairmount Park Bandshell, 1920; Mt. Rubidoux Peace Tower, 1925; and, Riverside Municipal Auditorium, 1926-27. Arthur Benton's influence in Riverside, spanning almost 30 years, ended with his death in 1927.

Benton's first design in Riverside, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, may some day prove to be a significant factor in the community planning and development of the city, but for now that idea is only explored. In addition to the influence of the physical aspects of Benton's designs, the importance of the Arthur Benton-Frank Miller connection to Riverside's visual development should not be underestimated. Frank Miller was the major promoter and builder in Riverside in the first decades of this century, before a master plan was developed in 1927. Miller was considering plans for his hotel before meeting Benton, but it was Benton's Mission

Inn design and subsequent work that led to the purposeful Mission Style conversion of downtown Riverside: "Miller undertook a conscious, deliberate and strategic effort to create a Protestant version of the California mission period that could serve as an explanatory myth . . ." (Mitchell-Wilson, nd). And it was Benton who wrote *The Mission Inn* (1908), an illustrated story book (in poetic verse) about the virtues of southern California, the idealized life at the missions, and the Mission Inn. In the same year as Benton's death, 1927, the first general plan of Riverside called for all public and quasi-public buildings along 7th Street to be designed in the Mission Revival or "Hispanic Revival styles."

Although the significance of the church is based here on its architecture, the church is important in other ways that should be mentioned. Although the church itself is not the first Christian Science edifice built in southern California, since it was dedicated two months after the first one in Santa Monica, the congregation was the first established in southern California. Emma Stanton Davis came to Riverside in 1887 and began healing in the Christian Science fashion, a following developed, and the congregation became legally incorporated in 1898. Christian Science had a following of prominent Riverside citizens, including Priestly Hall, one of the first Directors on the Board, who was a citrus grower and a prominent, early real estate developer. Hall's signature is on the contract for the church's construction. Other early and prominent members were Abraham A. Sulcer, M.D., Alice Miller Richardson, sister of Frank Miller and manager of the Mission Inn, and Rolf and Emma Newman, Rolf being the nephew of Frank Miller.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, built in 1901, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and Criteria Consideration A as an outstanding example of the early Mission Revival Style of architecture in Riverside. Its designer, Arthur B. Benton, was a major and gifted exponent of the Mission Style, and was considered one of its most important architects. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was the first structure designed by Benton in Riverside, and it is the earliest surviving building of its type. The church building reflects the Mission Style of architecture that Riverside strongly embraced after 1900, and continues to contribute to the Mission Style ambience of the city.

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Map of downtown Riverside showing the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and other structures designed by Arthur B. Benton (those with dates). Old City Hall, offices, and the Pacific Electric Railroad are shown to help convey the early 20th century center of town.