

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 25 1985
DATE ENTERED DEC 3 1985

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Prescott Post Office and Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Prescott Main Post Office and Federal Court

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

101 W. Goodwin Avenue

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Prescott

NA VICINITY OF

3

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Arizona

04

Yavapai

025

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	NA IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
X Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

United States Postal Service, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

California 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yavapai County Assessor, Yavapai County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

255 E. Gurley Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Prescott

Arizona 86301

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Prescott Territorial Buildings Multiple Resources Area

DATE

1982

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Arizona State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Phoenix

Arizona 85007

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The three-story Prescott Post Office and Courthouse is an excellent example of Beaux-Arts inspired classicism with strong Renaissance Revival influences. The structure is symmetrical with a rusticated first story and six giant order pilasters framing the windows of the top two stories of the front facade. The public lobby and the courtroom on the third floor retain much of the original woodwork and Greek Revival inspired detail painting. The building is located on the south side of the town's central square, opposite the Yavapai County Courthouse.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The subject building appears to be in excellent structural condition and both the site and building are being well maintained. It has three stories, a full basement, and is topped with a flat composition roof.

The basement is built of reinforced poured concrete; the first floor of brick faced with stone ashlar; and the second and third stories are built of coursed tan brick.

The first floor is visually the heaviest and takes the form of a piano nobile with rusticated stone ashlar. Attached giant pilasters rest on the piano nobile and support a frieze and balustrade on the roofline. Cast terra cotta panels are laid into the brick walls between the second and third story fenestration.

The architect achieved a layered effect by projecting the entrance forward from the mass of the building and by "cutting into" the corners. This articulation relieves what would otherwise be a severely two-dimensional facade.

A marble wainscoting covers the walls in the public lobby which has a terrazzo floor. A painted floral frieze decorates the walls above the wainscoting. The original round wooden lobby desks, Greek Revival hung fixtures, bronze sconces, and wooden service windows are still in place.

The courtroom on the third floor has a maple wainscoting, stained to darken the light wood; and a painted Greek Revival frieze at the ceiling. The room is in its original condition, except for the removal of several bronze sconces.

The Prescott Main Post Office has not been altered and is one of the few post offices in the southwestern United States which retains its original interior fixtures. As a result, it has an extremely high degree of functional and stylistic integrity.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES built 1931

BUILDER/ARCHITECT OSA/Wetmore

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Prescott Post Office and Courthouse is a significant example of a late Beaux-Arts post office and courthouse. It represents the end of the Beaux-Arts tradition of federal design philosophy and is one of the most monumental buildings in Prescott, second only to the Yavapai County Courthouse. The Courthouse Plaza is located immediately north of the post office across Goodwin Street. Finally, the building is the first federally constructed post office in the city and is a symbol of the federal presence in the community. As such, its construction was a major local event.

ARCHITECTURE

The rigid symmetry of the facade combined with the eclectically-derived ornamentation mark this building as an example of Beaux-Arts classicism. At the time of the building's construction this style was strongly conservative, projecting an image of a government stably founded in a long artistic and cultural tradition. Since the structure was designed to house the federal courts as well as the post office, a sense of order, reason and logic was incorporated into the design. Note that the pilasters on the front elevation serve no structural purpose, but seem visually to support the frieze and cornice and to channel the apparent load to the logical place: the piers of the first floor arcade.

The building ante-dates building activity of the Public Works Administration and was built under the Public Buildings Act of 1926. Given its date, this was one of the last post office buildings to be constructed before the changes in design and construction techniques heralded by the onset of the Depression.

Beaux-Arts classicism had essentially been abandoned nationally for all but official structures by the end of the construction of this post office. As such, the building is a rare and architecturally excellent example of the last phase of the Beaux-Arts style. It has survived years of use in essentially its original configuration and ornamentation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garret, Billy and Wilson, Marjorie H. Arizona Parks Board, "Prescott Territorial Buildings Multiple Resource Area". March 8, 1978.
Prescott Evening Courier, Various articles--1930 and 1931.
 Various floor plans, details, and elevation drawings, 1930.
 Construction progress photos. 1930-1931.
 Sanborn Map, Prescott Arizona, May 1924, p. 3.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.373 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,2</u>	<u>3,6,5</u>	<u>1,7,0</u>	<u>3,8</u>	<u>2,2</u>	<u>8,2,0</u>	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING						
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

East 4', Lot 45; all of Lots 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50 of Block 20, original Prescott Townsite (see attached map).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Paul R. Secord, VP

H. J. "Jim" Kolva

ORGANIZATION

Beland/Associates, Inc.

Institute for Urban
and Local Studies

DATE

August 1984/ August 1985

STREET & NUMBER

16 S. Oakland, Suite 204

W. 705 First Avenue

TELEPHONE

818-796-8093 509-458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Pasadena, CA 91101

Spokane, WA 99204

STATE

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Donald J. Schuber
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

James T. Cox

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

OCT 22 1985

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The construction of the Prescott Post Office and Courthouse was an event of major local significance. The building was Prescott's first federally constructed post office. The provision of the courthouse in addition to the post office signified not only the federal presence in the community, but also symbolized the importance of Prescott as a regional center. This is especially important for a city that had once been the territorial capitol. The expectations for the federal building had been long-maintained, since 1913 when a site was authorized and then purchased in 1915. This period represented a sharp decline from the boom of a decade before. By the time the long-awaited building was constructed in 1931, the city had begun a slow but steady recovery, one that seemed strengthened by the completion of the building. When the building was finally appropriated in 1929, the long awaited dream had been realized.

Local interaction, through the Chamber of Commerce, with the elected federal representatives was involved in the attempt to use local stone for the building. Although disappointment resulted when stone was delivered from Indiana and Minnesota, the citizens were, nonetheless, impressed with "their" new building. The cornerstone ceremony on a snowy February day drew 2,000 people, out of the city's population of 5,500.

The building is located opposite the Courthouse Plaza, the planned and traditional seat of county government. The Post Office and Courthouse complements this historic plaza and represents a level of government in "far off" Washington. In addition, the modern city hall is located on the corner east of the post office. Thus, the physical representations of three levels of government are located in the Plaza district (which is also a National Historic district).

LOCAL CONTEXT

Founded as Arizona's territorial capitol and presently the seat of Yavapai County, Prescott has traditionally been a primary commercial center of north central Arizona. With a 1984 population of 23,395, the city is the largest in Yavapai County and has experienced substantial growth since 1960. Mining and livestock ranching, the traditional economic activities, continue to remain important sectors of the local economy along with public employment and retail trade. Growing sectors of the economy include tourism and manufacturing.

The founding of Prescott was influenced by three events: the establishment of the Territory of Arizona on February 24, 1863; the discovery of gold five miles south of present day Prescott by Joseph Walker; and the establishment of Fort Whipple on the orders of General James Carleton on May 18, 1864 (moved from its Chino Valley loca-

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tion). Carleton convinced the newly appointed territorial governor, John Goodwin, to locate the territorial capitol in the area of Fort Whipple.

The townsite was laid out in May of 1864 and the post office established with Hiram Walter Read appointed as postmaster on June 10, 1864. It is interesting to note that Read was authorized by the Post Office Department to establish a post office in Tucson. However, he continued with the governor's party to Prescott rather than traveling to Tucson. Thus, the "Postmaster of Tucson" and the first appointed postmaster of the territory became postmaster of Prescott.

In 1866 Fort Whipple was named the military headquarters of Arizona and gold mining was at its peak. The bright prospects of the nascent community were dashed in 1867 when the legislature voted to move the capitol to Tucson. Prescott was incorporated in 1872 and continued to slowly grow in spite of the fits and starts of the mining industry. In 1890 the population reached 1,759 and then grew substantially in 1900 to 3,559. Prescott was booming at the turn of the century and for its first five years. The mining depression of 1905 severely impacted the economy and building activity slowed significantly. From a population of 5,092 in 1910, the population declined slightly to 5,010 in 1920. From 1920 the population increased slowly to 5,517 in 1940 and by 1960 had only reached 6,764. After 1960 the population increased substantially to that of the present level.

Most of Prescott's significant buildings were constructed between 1890 and 1910 with the primary concentration between 1900 and 1905. The 1900-1905 period is also marked by a strong reliance on the traditional Classical or Beaux-Arts stylistic forms. Neo-classical, Romanesque Revival, and Second Renaissance Revival forms prevailed. The Carnegie Library (1903), Palace Hotel (1901), St. Michael Hotel (1901), Bank of Arizona (1901), Prescott National Bank (1901), Levy Building (1901), Masonic Temple (1907), and the later Yavapai County Courthouse (1916) are examples of these Classically inspired modes. These buildings as well as others provide Prescott with a rich architectural heritage, one that has remained virtually intact since the period of construction.

The Prescott Post Office and Court House is located within the Court House Plaza Historic District of the Prescott Territorial Buildings Multiple Resource Area. The Neo-classical County Courthouse is located across Goodwin Street north of the post office, and several of the buildings named above are located around the courthouse square, though not in proximity to the post office. The Prescott City Hall, a modern building of recent vintage, is located to the east across Cortez Street.

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LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESCOTT MAIN POST OFFICE

The site authorization for the Prescott Post Office and Court House was provided by the Public Buildings Omnibus Act of March 4, 1913. However, no provision was made for a building. Appropriation for the site was provided on August 1, 1914 with a limit of \$7,500. The site was purchased on April 13, 1915. Building authorization was not provided until the Second Deficiency Act of March 4, 1929 under which \$25,000 of a proposed limit of \$235,000 was appropriated.

The construction period of the Prescott Post Office was covered by the Prescott Evening Courier with the activities between 1930 and 1931 summarized in the following discussion.

With the site selection having been completed years before and the appropriation for the building in hand, the attention of Prescott citizens turned to the choice of building materials for their new federal building. An article of April 3, 1930 reported that granite facing would be used for the proposed post office. Miss Grace M. Sparkes, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, had just received a letter of response to the Chamber's request that Tufa, a native local stone, be used for the post office. Congressman Lewis W. Douglas had just received word, which was forwarded to the Chamber, that Tufa was not acceptable for use in the proposed \$235,000 building. Granite was the favored stone and would be used with brick and terra cotta to adorn the building's facade. It was also reported that Postmaster Warren F. Day had received notice to have the site cleared by May 5th. The site was occupied by a battery shop under the proprietorship of Jack Blair.

Although there was optimism with respect to the eagerly awaited federal building, the news for the copper industry was dismal in April and May. On April 15th it was reported that copper prices had declined to 14 cents, the lowest since 1928. The drop in prices was attributed to a surplus in stock. This report was followed on May 12th by the news that the Humbolt Copper Smelter would close because of low copper prices.

On May 21st it was announced that bids had been called for the new post office and that they were expected by June 15th. An article of June 19th reported that the plans had been received for the new building. The new building was stated as being "imposing". In the words of the reporter: "Prescott is going to have some post office and federal courthouse. And in using the word 'some' it is hoped that it will imply a whole lot. Certainly no one will be disappointed." Later in the article the building was described as follows:

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. . . Outside dimensions are 100 feet on West Goodwin Street and 74 feet on South Cortez. The main entrance will be on Goodwin, through three massive arched doors, and reached by steps extending across about half of the front. Granite, resting on solid concrete, will be used for the first story. From that point pressed brick will be used, with terra cotta trimmings. Between the level of the second floor and the top of the third floor, on the front, will be plaster columns, with fancy stonework. Extending across the top of the building will be a balustrade, itself a thing of beauty. Rich ornamental lights, four in number, will be placed between the arched windows and doors at the front. These fixtures, like so many other features of the building, are impossible to describe with justice.

The basement and third floors would be used for offices with the post office occupying the entire first floor and the federal courtroom occupying the second floor and extending through the third.

The receipt of the construction bids was reported in the July 15th edition of the Courier. Twelve firms had submitted bids and the low bid was proffered by an El Paso firm at \$207,700 for stone and \$206,700 for terra cotta. Although it was not expected that bids would be selected for the next 60 to 90 days, the July 25th front page headlines announced "Postal Building Contract Let". Robert McKee of El Paso, Texas, the lowest of 13 bidders, was contracted to construct the post office. A month later the contractors arrived with plans in hand to initiate preparations for construction (reported August 30th). Mr. E.D. Piatt, a representative of McKee, stated that other than supervisory staff, the labor would be locally hired and available building materials would be locally procured. The McKee Company had just completed the Tucson Post Office and was also starting one in San Bernardino. "Mr. Piatt declared himself of the opinion Prescott's building will be more beautiful than many federal structures supervised by his concern."

Finally, construction had commenced. As reported in the Monday, September 15, 1930 edition of the Courier, workers were on-site and "dirt is to start flying Tuesday". As stated in the article: "It brings to reality a hope of long standing". Mr. R.E. Hatch, superintendent for McKee, commenting on the local labor situation, stated: "I notice that there apparently are about 200 men around here waiting for construction to start to get jobs on the federal building. You may say that in all probability we will not have employment for more than between 15 and 20 laborers, and probably not more than 75 men altogether, including all kinds of building trade mechanics."

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The article also stated that it was hard to predict what the building would do to improve the appearance of the south side of the plaza, but surmized that it would have "a sort of boom effect and perhaps cause some minor shift in the business district, although the change no doubt will be gradual." Finally, the report added that the new federal building was one of five major projects in Prescott that would benefit the community. These included the Bashford-Bumister Company \$100,000 improvement; the \$200,000 school program; the Miller Valley paving job; and the Grove Avenue underpass. These factors provided evidence that Prescott was "touched but lightly by the business depression that has been general in scope. ..."

On September 17th, much to the chagrin of local boosters, it was reported that native granite would not be used for the building. Instead of the native blue granite from the Yavapai Hills, Indiana limestone and Minnesota granite would be used. This created ". . . something like a minor tempest of the teapot when it became known in certain quarters that out-of-state limestone and granite are to be used instead of Yavapai granite."

The following materials had arrived at the building site: four carloads of limestone from the Bedford Stone Company and Cold Springs granite; 46,000 face bricks from Los Angeles; 371,000 common bricks from the Paul Brick Company of Phoenix; four carloads of terra cotta from Atlantic Terra Cotta; two carloads of structural steel from El Paso Bridge; and local fire clay, lumber and cement.

By November construction was well underway. Because of the cold, fires had been set around the curing concrete foundation and the federal project engineer, Fred L. Roemer, had arrived from Washington, DC (November 15th). The year's building activity was summarized on December 2nd. The local building total was \$441,952 which beat the 1929 total. According to the article, the "building activity doesn't support the hard times idea". On December 11th it was reported that Postmaster Warren F. Day's term would expire on January 7th and four or five other Republicans were vying for the position. A December 12th article reported that the stonework would begin soon.

Early in the new year of 1931, the upcoming cornerstone ceremony was reported in articles of February 19th and 21st. The ceremony was described on February 23rd. The Prescott B.P.O. Lodge laid the stone before an impressive crowd of 2,000 people (particularly when the city's population was approximately 5,500). Joseph H. Morgan provided the principal address, but when the sun turned to snow, he cut short his speech by commenting that he would deliver his speech in September when the weather was warmer. A parade two blocks in length, led by Sheriff George C. Ruffner on horseback, marched through Prescott's streets. Included were the high school band, city officials, Chamber of Commerce, veterans groups, Captain Alfred B. Law's Machine Gun Company, the Boy Scouts, and American Legion. The high school band played the national

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anthem "putting a lot of ginger into it" and the American Legion drum and bugle corps followed with a "snappy number".

Regular reports of the building's progress were provided by the Courier. An article of August 8th reported that the plastering of the walls and ceiling of the first and second floors was almost done. By September 24th, the building was nearly complete and only awaiting the arrival of equipment before opening. It was expected that the post office would move in on October 10th, preceded by the Justice Department on October 1st. However, it was not until November 10th that the Courier announced that the post office would move over the weekend and be in business the following Monday. "Old Post Office Being Deserted" was the news of November 14th. Postmaster Miss Helen A. McNutt would close the doors of the old post office, which would be retired after a quarter century of service (located on Cortez Street in the Head Block since 1899).

"New Post Office Building Open" greeted the citizens of Prescott on November 16th. "Prescott's new post office, in a way, has turned the town around. That is to say, the southeast corner of the plaza, comparatively deserted heretofore, has been converted all at once into as busy corner as there is in the city". "Prescott's new post office, it is generally agreed, is one of which to be immensely proud. It's like entering the post office of a big city."

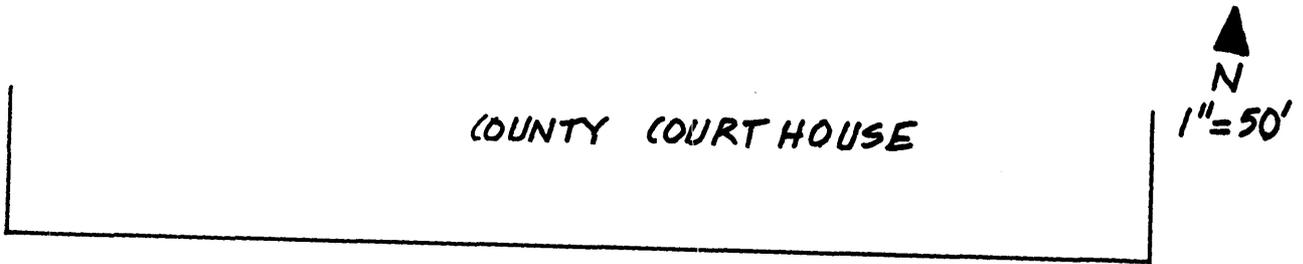
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Source: Sanborn Map, Prescott Arizona, May 1924, 1934, Page 3.



WEST GOODWIN STREET

