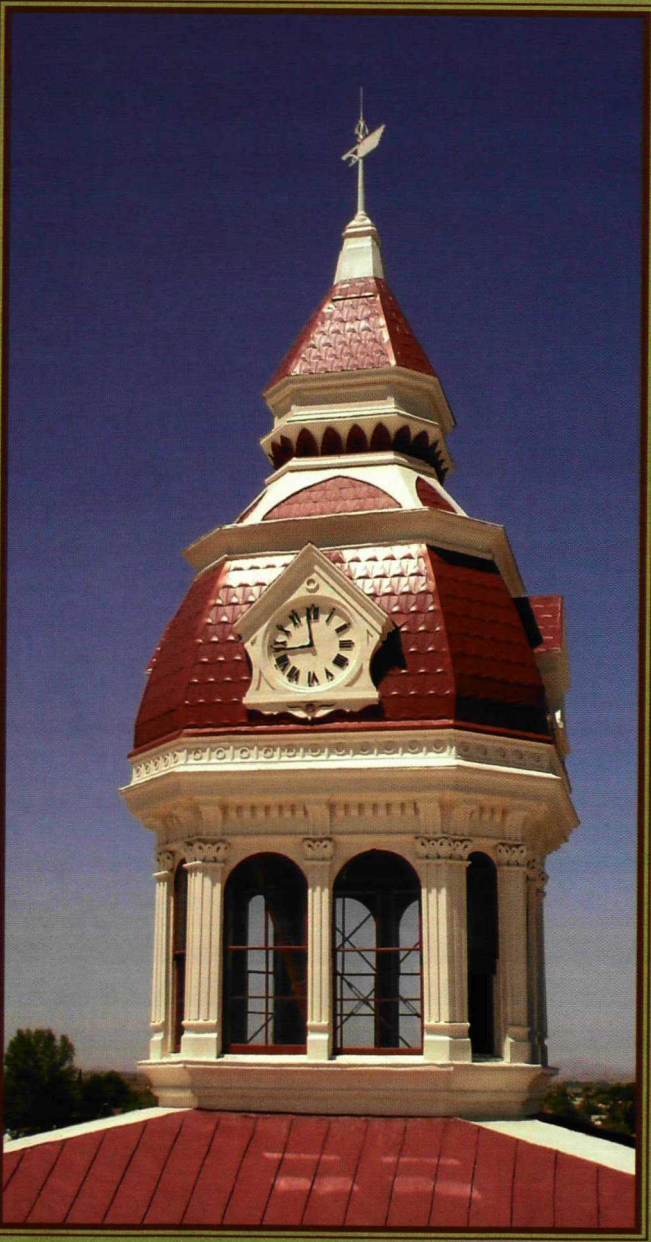
HISTORIC FLORENCE

WALKING TOUR



FLORENCE

Levi Ruggles – Founder of Florence
Civil War veteran Levi Ruggles came to Arizona Territory in 1866 as a U.S. Indian Agent. Recognizing the agricultural potential of the valley, he found an easily fordable crossing on the Gila River and surveyed a townsite here. In 1869, he built his first family home. With the aid of Governor R.C. McCormick, he secured a post office in August of the same year. Ruggles held numerous public offices including that of Territorial Legislator.

On first encountering the town of Florence, a visitor's first impression may well include a sense of bewilderment at the multitude of periods, materials and forms which comprise the local scene. On closer examination, however, one discovers that Florence, when carefully "read", constitutes a veritable museum for the study of changes in architectural styles and building traditions in Arizona since Territorial times. A number of old structures have disappeared; many more have been remodeled out of all resemblance to their beginnings; but more than a full century after its founding, the town has managed to preserve a greater number and variety of early-day buildings than any other small town in the state. The entire history of Territorial architecture can in fact be seen along the streets of Florence, with good examples of almost every style and building tradition developed during the period. These range from the earliest Spanish Colonial/Mexican Sonoran adobe vernacular, through at least two distinct phases of hybrid, or "Anglo-Sonoran" Territorial traditions, and finally through a rapid succession of purely Anglo-American brick and frame styles imported from Eastern, Midwestern and Californian cities during the closing years of the Territory and early years of statehood.

—Florence Townsite A.T., Prepared by Harris Sobin & Associates, Tucson, Arizona – May 1977

Welcome to Florence! We are pleased that you are interested in the various architectural styles found in Florence. The walking tour is 1.5 miles long and will take approximately one hour to complete. We hope you enjoy the tour!

Architectural Styles in Florence

Sonoran Style (**S**) 1866-1950
Late Transitional Style (**LT**) 1878-1949
American Bungalow Style (**AB**) 1908-1950
Early Transitional Style (**ET**) 1871-1947
American Victorian Style (**AV**) 1885-1922
Mission Revival Style (**MR**) 1911-1942
Neo Classic Revival (**NCR**) 1913-1936

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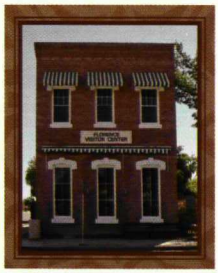


1. Conrad Brunenkant's City Bakery (1889) (AV) *291 N. Main St.*

This two-story red-brick commercial building was constructed in 1890 for Conrad Brunenkant, a Dutch-born baker and grocer. The bricks were made locally, and the rock-faced cut lintels and sills are from locally-quarried stone. The original entrance was changed from the west end to the south side. This local landmark is the oldest two-story red-brick building in Florence.

2. Jesus Martinez House (1875) (S)

321 N. Bailey St.

Jesus Martinez, a farmer from New Mexico, built this adobe house from 1872 to 1880. The building features a Sonoran flat dirt roof and central patio. In 1886, Pinal County converted part of the building into the first County Hospital. It had six beds each with a horsehair mattress and a wool blanket. By 1890, the house was used as a meat market, store and residences.

3. Second Catholic Church of the Assumption (1912) (MR)

221 E. 8th St.

The building is the best example of Mission Revival Style in Central Arizona. The previous church on the site burned in 1893. This building was designed and constructed under the direction of Father Henry Heitz, the last of a long line of French-born priests in Florence.

4. Chapel of the Gila (1870) (S) *306 E. 8th St.*

The chapel was the first Catholic Church built in Central Arizona. The Capilla was built by Father Andre Echallier. The 10-room "Capilla Complex" has served as a school (St. Theresa's Academy for Girls), a parish hall, a recreation center, a food distribution center for the needy and indigent housing during the Depression. This region's earliest Catholic churches, including those in Phoenix and Tempe, were originally missions of the Florence parish.

5. Jean Baptiste Michea Residence and Lone Star Store *(1878) (S)*

220 E. Ruggles Ave.

The single-story section of this building was built by French-born Jean Baptiste Michea, a farmer from the French region of Burgundy and former artilleryman with Maximilian's occupation army in Mexico. The single-story housed the Lone Star Store from 1878-1888. Jean Baptiste's widow, Carmen Robles Michea, built the two-story addition in 1888.

6. First Pinal County Courthouse (1878) (ET) McFarland State Historic Park

24 W. Ruggles Ave.

Levi Ruggles designed and built this adobe building in 1878. It served as a courthouse until 1891. Since then, it has functioned as a hospital, health center, home for the elderly and a museum. The structure combines Sonoran and Anglo-American architectural features typical of Territorial Arizona. It is the Historic District's finest example of the Early Transitional Style.

First Pinal County Courthouse (1878)
McFarland State Historic Park
The local "Vigilance Committee" stormed the sheriff's office in this building in 1888, dragged two men from their cells and hanged them in the corridor of the jail. The two had been charged with holding up a stage and killing Johnny Collins, the guard. A coroner's jury later found that the two prisoners had met their deaths "at the hands of parties unknown." A short time later, the same "vigilance" group attempted to lynch four other prisoners under the same circumstances but was thwarted in its efforts when Michael Rice, the jailer, armed the prisoners, took them upstairs and faced down the mob from the windows above the street. The Sheriff's wife, Pauline Cushman, was positioned downstairs.

7. E.N. Fish and Company Store (1867) (S)

420 N. Quartz St.

The mercantile firm of E.N. Fish & Co., with Joseph Collingwood as partner and local manager, opened Florence's first store in this building in 1868. A second store was built on the property by Levi Ruggles. George A. Brown acquired the block from Collingwood's widow and used it as a residence and the second Wells Fargo office. The third addition housed the San Carlos Hotel rooms into the 1920s.

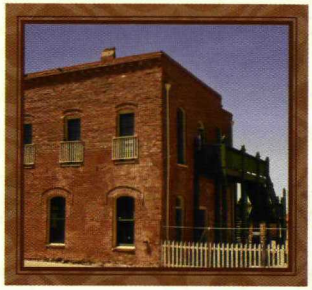
8. George A. Brown House (1870s) (ET)

125 W. Ruggles Ave.

Built in the mid-1870s, this Early Transitional home was occupied by George A. Brown, Florence's first Wells Fargo agent (1877-1903). This building is a good example of a transformed Sonoran structure. Although extensively remodeled over the last 30 years, the building retains much of its overall integrity of form.

9. Silver King Hotel (1876) (AV)

24 W. 6th St.



Originally an unplastered L-shaped adobe with a gable roof, the hotel was built for William Long, a partner in the Silver King Mine. It was renamed the Florence Hotel in 1890. Fire destroyed a portion of it about 1895, which was replaced by the two-story fired-brick east wing. The building complex was the social focus of Florence for many years. It provided "modern" overnight lodging and the finest dining room in town.

10. Second E.N. Fish and Company Store (1874) (ET)

520 N. Main St.

The second site of the E.N. Fish & Co. Mercantile Store became the Joseph Collingwood & Co. Store and Wells Fargo Office in 1877. As chief produce buyer, E.N. Fish & Co. was responsible for providing the economic foundation of the town's early success as an agricultural trading center. The firm played a role during Florence's mining booms by extending credit to the Silver King Mine. The west wing contained hotel rooms and an office. A saloon and dining room were in the south wing. From early statehood until the mid-1940s, the west wing contained dwellings and became the American Legion Post headquarters in 1944.

11. W.C. Smith and Company Building (1890) (AV)

380 N. Main St.

This building was designed by James M. Creighton, who also designed the 2nd Pinal County Courthouse and the University of Arizona's "Old Main." An ornate front façade, interior columns, building cornice and window caps manufactured by Mesker Bros. Front Builders in St. Louis were shipped by rail to Casa Grande and then freighted to Florence. Originally a two-story structure, the building was a focal point on Main Street due to its height and bulk. Later, it was occupied by the Price and Powell Florence Commercial General Store and the second floor was used as quarters for the local A.O.U.W. Lodge. The second story burned in a 1948 fire.

12. Charles Rapp Saloon (1870s) (S)

363 N. Main St.

This building from the mid-1870s is the most intact of the four remaining adobe-walled, earth-roofed Sonoran buildings in Florence. Three canales from the old mud roof are still in place above the rebuilt awning. Chicago-born Charles Rapp advertised the building as featuring an "Elegant Club & Reading Room in Connection with the Bar." The building was the first location of John Keating's famous "Tunnel Saloon" from 1886 to 1888.

13. Mauk Building (1925) (NCR)

360 N. Main St.

This building was one of three built by early movie-house mogul, and later U.S. Marshal, George Mauk. A portion of the Isis Theater was located on the same site. On December 22, 1924, a fire destroyed half of this Main Street block, which included the theater. Mauk built a new theater and the Mauk Building using the original site and a portion of 7th Street.

14. The Popular Store/Mandell's Department Store (1915) (NCR)

290 N. Main St.

This is one of the few buildings in Florence exemplifying the Neo-Classical Revival style applied to a small commercial building. It was designed by Lescher and Kibbey of Phoenix, the leading architectural firm in Arizona from 1915 to 1930, and was built for C.G. Powell's "The Popular Store," specialists in ready-to-wear clothing. Kaufmann Mandell purchased the building in 1919 and operated the Mandell's Department Store with his son Kay for more than 60 years.

15. White-McCarthy Lumber & Hardware (1914) (NCR)

280 N. Main St.

This single-story commercial building includes a partial basement, wide-open interior spaces, and a Main Street facade of exposed pressed brick. A metal surface covers the flat, wood-framed roof. For a half century after 1918, H.H. Freeman used the southern portion as headquarters for the Pinal Lumber and Hardware Co. In 1941, the owners added a wood-and-metal sidewalk canopy, suspended with metal ties from the parapet wall.

16. Juan Avenenti/Angulo/Theophile Nicholas Meat Market Building (1886) (S)

289 N. Main St.

Italian immigrant Juan Avenenti purchased this property in 1886 from Frank M. Griffen. Previously, it had belonged to Florence pioneers Levi Ruggles and Charles Douglas. Avenenti, a grocer, butcher and rancher, built the present structure for a meat market. It became part of a complex of four buildings on this block. In later years, it served as saloon, bank, restaurant, city council chambers, and cobbler's shop. The original viga and saguaro rib ceiling was preserved as part of a restoration project by the Florence Industrial Development Authority.

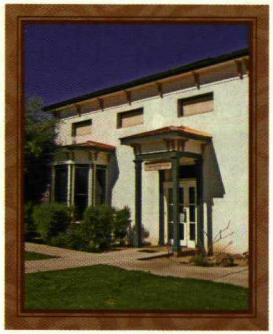
17. La Paloma Bar (1912) (NCR)

255 N. Main St.

Originally a saloon, the building served as a pool hall during statewide Prohibition. The interior includes a matchstick ceiling, an ornate back bar and a mural painted on the opposite wall depicting one of the gunfights that took place in Florence during Territorial times. The period wood and mirrored back bar came from Europe around the cape by steamship and overland from San Francisco.

18. William Clarke House (1884) (LT)

190 N. Main St.

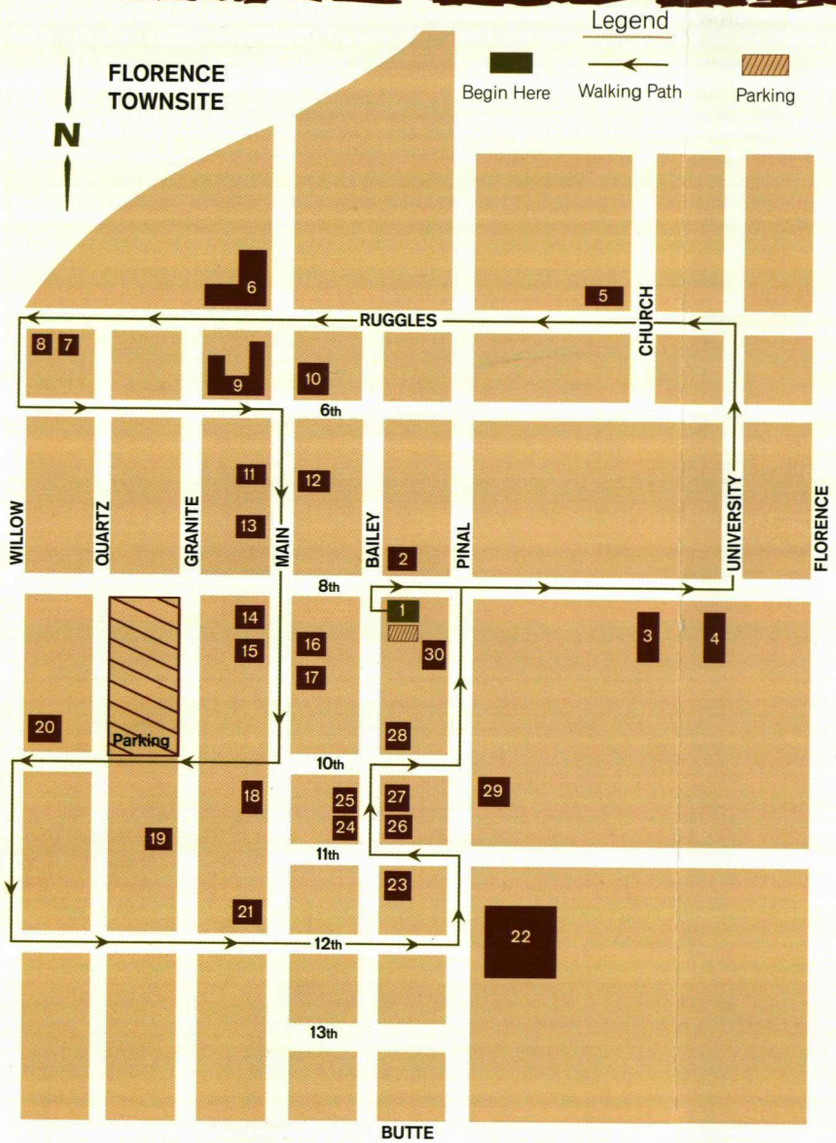


Built for Silver King mining engineer William Clarke and his wife Ella, the house is a prime example of cultural fusion in architecture. The Sonoran mud-plastered adobe walls were combined with a Victorian louvered bay window, prefabricated entrance porch and corrugated metal roof. The house later served as the residence of Richard E. Sloan, Arizona's last Territorial Governor.

19. John P. Clum House (1878) (LT)

180 N. Granite St.

The home was built by John Clum, an Indian agent, editor and publisher of Florence's first newspaper, the *Arizona Citizen*. He also was the founder and editor of the *Tombstone Epitaph* and was Tombstone's first mayor. This building appears to have housed the Citizen's office and press. A later owner, William Guild, built the telegraph line from the Silver King Mine to Casa Grande.



20. Woman's Club of Florence (1929) (MR)

231 N. Willow St.

This building's architects were Lescher and Mahoney, the same firm that designed Florence Union High School. Arizona State Prison inmates completed the construction in 1929 at a cost of $9,420. The Florence Woman's Club was organized in 1897 and is the second oldest Woman's Club in the state. The building functioned as a USO club during World War II and has served Florence as a center for celebrations and community events.

21. Denier and Richmond General Merchandise Store (1890) (NCR)

110 N. Main St.

Built in 1890, the store originally had unplastered adobe walls, a gabled roof and a large commercial-style glass display front. The building housed the C.R. Michea Store and later the Michea-Arballo store. The exterior brick veneer and canopy were added after 1915. The building was used as an armory and grocery. Strube's General Merchandise operated in this building from 1941 until 1986, when it became the Florence General Store.

22. Second Pinal County Courthouse (1891) (AV)

135 N. Pinal St.

The Courthouse is the most important architectural landmark in Florence and the most outstanding surviving example of the American-Victorian Style in Central Arizona. The building was designed by Arizona architect James M. Creighton, who was among the Territory's first architects. Creighton also designed the W. C. Smith and Co. building the same year. Florence contractors A.J. Doran and T.A. Adams built the courthouse for $29,000. A shortage of funds resulted in painted metal clock faces in the distinctive cupola.

Second Pinal County Courthouse (1891)
Three notorious women were brought before the court in this building. In 1899, Pearl Hart committed what was likely the last stagecoach robbery in the U.S. Eva Dugan was convicted of a brutal murder and had the distinction of being the only woman hanged at the State Prison. Winnie Ruth Judd, the "Trunk Murderess," defended by Ernest W. McFarland, was found to be insane by the court. She had been found guilty of killing her two roommates, dismembering their bodies and shipping them to Los Angeles in trunks.

23. Jesus Preciado de Luna/Bernardina Lorona House (1880) (S)

115 E. 11th St.

Juan Luna built this single-story, Sonoran-style adobe house for his wife and put the title in her name, according to Spanish tradition. The building's two L-shaped wings are one-room deep, and the roof's original vigas and latillas are well preserved. Subsequent owners covered the ceiling's exposed saguaro ribs with muslin for protection. Santiago Lorona bought the house in 1904 and it remained the family residence for several decades.

24. John Nicholas Second Saloon (1889) (AV)

46 E. 11th St.

Designed by prominent Arizona architect James M. Creighton, this is the oldest standing fired-brick building in Florence. French-born rancher/farmer John Nicholas moved his saloon to this building soon after its construction in 1889. Tradition has it that Nicholas' patrons were cooled by a steam-powered fan. Fired-brick buildings became common in Florence after the first brickyard opened in 1886.

25. John Nicholas Residence/First Nicholas Saloon and Beer Hall (prior to 1881) (ET)

180 N. Bailey St.

The south portion, a single-story adobe rowhouse, was built by John Nicholas. It has been used as a dwelling since its construction. The north portion became John Nicholas's "New Beer Hall" in 1886. This establishment offered customers "Fine California Beer on Draught" served in the "Coolest Place in Town." After its days as a combination newspaper office and printing shop, the north portion was used as a general store.

26. Elena Llescas House (1879) (S, ET)

175 N. Bailey St.

This is one of only two buildings in the district in which all or a portion of the exterior walls are not parallel to the cardinal directions, or the original Ruggles street grid. The alignment of the walls corresponds to the contours of the local topography and alignment of early irrigation ditches. Built for Pablo and Elena Llescas, the building has since housed a wide variety of uses, including a Chinese laundry, offices and a private dwelling.

27. Isabella Cosgrove House (1878) (ET, AV)

191 N. Bailey St.

Irish-born blacksmith, Frank Cosgrove, and his Sonoran-born wife Isabella, built this adobe-walled, mud-roofed Sonoran structure. Sometime between 1890 and 1898, John Nicholas's nephew, Theophile Nicholas, installed a wood-shingled gable roof above the original earthen roof. A veneer of more fashionable fired-brick was added to the adobe portions of the house between 1898 and 1911.

28. Joseph Spinas Rental House (1913) (AB)

221 N. Bailey St.

This house was built as rental property for Joseph Spinas. A naturalized citizen of Swiss origin, Spinas was a prominent cattle rancher. With his two brothers, he built one of the first irrigation ditches in the Florence area on the north side of the Gila River. The original American-Victorian house of locally-made sand-struck brick was later transformed into a bungalow.

29. Sam Kee House (1880) (LT)

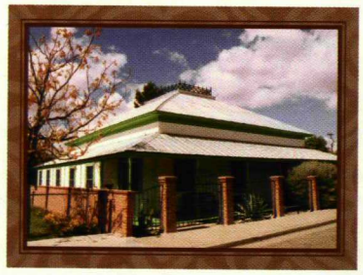
171 N. Pinal St.

Built in the 1870s by Chinese-born Sam Kee, this home sits on the property line adjacent to Pinal Street. This building has undergone an extraordinary amount of change over the years. The original structure appears to have been a Sonoran style rowhouse measuring 29 by 22 feet. The first improvements began in 1888 and continued into the 1980s. The Lucas Leos family made most of the improvements to the building after purchasing it in 1927.

30. Jacob Suter House (1888) (LT)

270 N. Pinal St.

This house was built in 1888 for Swiss-born tinsmith Jacob Suter. Constructed of adobe brick with 20-inch-thick outer walls, the house displays a traditional Sonoran floor plan and originally included a zaguan, or breezeway. The wood mansard roof, windows, and wooden floors are Anglo influences. The house was remodeled in the bungalow style about 1917 and is an excellent example of the Late Transitional Style, characterized by the use of Spanish-Mexican sun-dried adobe walls and pyramidal frame wood-shingled, Anglo-American roofs, porches, and full setbacks.



FLORENCE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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