

PRESCOTT WATER WORKS PUMP HOUSE
Del Rio Springs
Prescott vicinity
Yavapai County
Arizona

HAER AZ-92
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

PRESCOTT WATER WORKS PUMP HOUSE

HAER No. AZ-92

- Location:** Del Rio Springs, Prescott vicinity, Yavapai County, Arizona
- Dates of Construction:** 1900-1901
- Engineers:** George W. Sturdevant, Jr., designing engineer
W.W. Follett, resident engineer
- Original Owner, Use:** City of Prescott, Arizona, municipal water supply
- Current Owner, Use:** City of Prescott, Arizona; abandoned
- Significance:** The Prescott Water Works Pump House is an example of early long-distance pumping efforts in the American Southwest.
- Description:** Most of the early Southwest towns had sources of water for municipal use located above the town and a gravity system to distribute the water. The opposite situation existed at Prescott, Arizona. The only dependable source of water located a reasonable distance from town was Del Rio Springs. A large pumping plant was built at the springs, which lifted water 1,135' to Prescott, some 20 miles away. Only the foundation of the pumping plant remains today, located under large trees surrounding the Del Rio Springs. Also visible are the remains of the railroad embankment built for the track spur that went to the site of the pump house from the Santa Fe Railway. The pump keeper's house is intact and occupied by a family that leases the property.
- History:** Before 1900, the town of Prescott secured its water supply from a well sunk in the bed of Granite Creek, an intermittent stream. During the dry summer of 1900, while the reservoir was empty, three-fourths of the business district burned. The citizens realized they had to either abandon the town or find a new water supply. The Prescott Water Works Pump House was thus built to provide a dependable water supply to the city.
- The town fathers bought the water rights to Del Rio Springs and developed plans to pump water uphill from them to Prescott. George W. Sturdevant, Jr. of Chicago designed a pump plant and pipeline in August

1900 and construction began in December of that year. Work continued under the supervision of resident engineer W.W. Follett until final tests were completed on September 16, 1901. A steam-driven pumping station was installed at the springs, capable of lifting ½ million gallons of water daily to Prescott. Coal from Gallup, New Mexico, was originally used to fire the 65-horsepower engine. A large triplex Deane pump with three double plungers was belted to the engine.

The average daily flow of Del Rio Springs was about 2-½ million gallons in 1902. Of this amount, the city of Prescott had obtained rights to ½ million gallons a day. It is not known how long the pumping plant was in operation.

Sources:

Baker, M.N., ed. *The Manual of Water Works*. New York: Engineering News Publishing Company, 1890.

Follett, W.W. "High Pressure Pumping Plant and Force Main for the Water-Works of Prescott, Arizona." *Engineering News* XLVIII, no. 25 (December 18, 1902): 514-515.

The McGraw Waterworks Directory 1915. New York: McGraw Publishing Company, Inc., 1915.

Historians: Steve Rae and T. Lindsay Baker, August 2 and October 8, 1971

Project

Information: The Prescott Water Works Pump House was inventoried for the Historic American Engineering Record as part of the Southwest Water Resources Project, a joint project with the Texas Tech Water Resources Center. The survey was subsequently published as *Water for the Southwest: Historical Survey and Guide to Historic Sites* by the American Society of Civil Engineers in September 1973.