RAY J. PURVES (1901-1980)

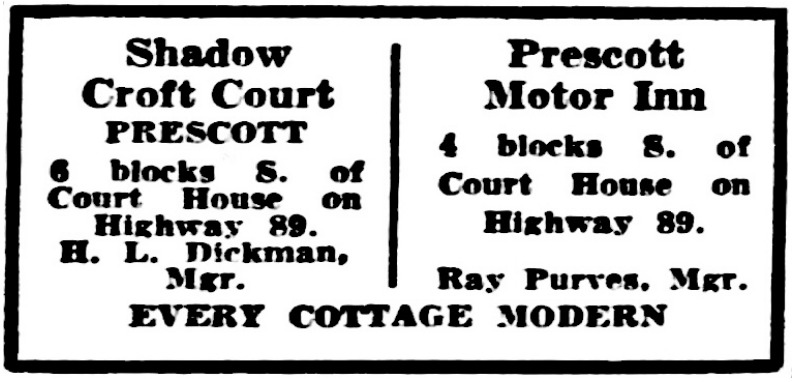
Prescott

Very little is known about the early life of Ray J. Purves. He doesn't appear in newspaper searches (under that spelling) until 1935:

> "Ray Purves, employe of the Los Angeles Herald, landed at Ernest A. Love municipal field north of Granite Dells Christmas morning in his Lambert monocoupe to visit a few days with Mrs. Purves, who is a patient in the rest home in Miller Valley of Mrs. A. G. Wood."
>
> *Prescott Evening Courier,* December 26, 1935: 2

Ray and his wife were from Los Angeles. In the early 1920s, there was a "Ray Purvis" who was the recipient of a very early federal first class amateur radio operator's license. He operated Station KFAW owned by the *Santa Ana Register* newspaper. Whether this was the same person has not been determined.

Ray's wife was suffering from an undisclosed illness and came to Prescott in October 1935 for treatment and recuperation. Ray would fly over from Los Angeles on weekends to visit her. At some point in 1936 or '37, they decided to make Prescott their home. He built and operated the Prescott Motor Inn on South Montezuma St. He also built a hangar at Ernest A. Love Field for his "Tank Robin," a Curtiss Robin powered by a 115-hp Milwaukee Tank engine. Ray joined the band of Prescott aviators, doing his part to keep Love Field open during the Great Depression.



Arizona Republic, June 18, 1939: 15

On October 2, 1938, Ray reportedly crashed in the desert near Congress Junction while searching for a missing Phoenix man. With him was deputy sheriff, Robert Born, who was also an active Prescott pilot. Neither man was injured.

By 1940, Purves had become Prescott's designated airport manager. In that capacity, he organized a ground school and flight training program sponsored by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. He also coordinated with the CAA and Army engineers on the complete reconstruction of Ernest A. Love Field. He left the position sometime prior to June 1942, but was reappointed in October 1942 following the brief tenures of M. W. Maxwell and Marcus Rawlins. From that point, he guided the airport through the World War II / War Training Service years.

In July 1945, it was reported that Purves had sold his motel and was moving to California. Succeeding him as airport manager was Grant MacCurdy.

> "He [MacCurdy] is fortunate in succeeding Mr. Purves, who did such a fine job and built so well during the many years he was manager of the airport. Numerous improvements were made under Mr. Purves and Mr. MacCurdy intends to make many more."
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> "Our Municipal Airport" (editorial). *Prescott Evening Courier,* July 18, 1945: 4

Ray and his family settled in the Desert Hot Springs / Palm Springs area. He passed away in Joshua Tree, Calif., in 1980 at the age of 78.



The Prescott Motor Inn was built by Ray Purves in the mid-1930s. After nine decades, it is still operating as The Motor Lodge at 503 South Montezuma Street.