

PH0367907

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 28 1976

DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

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

## NAME

\* HISTORIC

The Nestor Armijo House

AND/OR COMMON

## LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Lohman Avenue and Church Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Las Cruces

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#2

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Doña Ana

CODE

013

## CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

\_\_ DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 \_\_ STRUCTURE  
 \_\_ SITE  
 \_\_ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

\_\_ PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 \_\_ BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
 \_\_ IN PROCESS  
 \_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

OCCUPIED  
 \_\_ UNOCCUPIED  
 \_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
 \_\_ YES: RESTRICTED  
 \_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

## PRESENT USE

\_\_ AGRICULTURE  
 \_\_ COMMERCIAL  
 \_\_ EDUCATIONAL  
 \_\_ ENTERTAINMENT  
 \_\_ GOVERNMENT  
 \_\_ INDUSTRIAL  
 \_\_ MILITARY  
 \_\_ MUSEUM  
 \_\_ PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 \_\_ RELIGIOUS  
 \_\_ SCIENTIFIC  
 \_\_ TRANSPORTATION  
 \_\_ OTHER:

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Loretto Development Co., Inc., Collier, Heinz and Associates

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1849 W. North Temple

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Utah 84116

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Doña Ana County Clerk's Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Cruces

STATE

New Mexico

## REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

May 23, 1969

\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
 SURVEY RECORDS

New Mexico State Planning Office, 200 W. De Vargas

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

# 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Nestor Armijo House is a 55'x45' two-story pitched roof adobe structure in the agricultural and educational center of Las Cruces, southern New Mexico's largest city. One of the few buildings remaining from New Mexico's Territorial period in Las Cruces' downtown area, it contrasts sharply with the enormous adjacent shopping center which now occupies the former location of the Roman Catholic convent of the Sisters of Loretto. Following its acquisition in 1877 and subsequent rehabilitation by affluent 19th century New Mexico merchant and rancher Nestor Armijo it served for many years as his residence and business headquarters and exemplified his standing in the community. Although the supporting outbuildings have been razed and the original orchards and fields have been paved over to permit four lane traffic on Lohman Street, the house remains virtually unchanged, an important example of Victorian architecture and the home of a rico of that period.

According to family tradition the nucleus of the structure now known as the Nestor Armijo House was erected by Bradford and Maricita Daily on property east of the Loretto Convent which the Dailys had purchased in 1868 from John Barncastle for \$2,000. Daily died sometime prior to 1877 when Armijo bought the adobe house and adjoining land for \$4,050 from Maricita, then Mrs. D.B. Rea. Unlike traditional New Mexico residences erected by the original Spanish settlers, which were usually flat-roofed structures with single rooms arranged in a line or around a placita, the floor plan of the 45'x33' Daily residence consisted of two rooms in tandem on each side of a 10' hallway, topped by a small storage area in the space under the pitched roof. Other innovations of Anglo origin included balanced placement of doors and windows, which were uniform in size, and measurements made in feet rather than varas, the historic Spanish unit of approximately 33 inches. Soon after acquiring the Daily property Armijo erected an imposing two-story, four-room adobe-brick addition on the north end of the house which gave it the aspect it retains today.

Placed at right angles to the roof on the Daily residence, the new roof created a center gable design for the enlarged house. Both levels of the addition were enclosed on the north and east by wide porches embellished with intricate carpenter-style woodwork characteristic of the period. Square columns with chamfered edges on pedestals support the upper porch which is enclosed by fancy milled railings between small pillars with sections of lattice covering the ends. The top of each bay in the lower level is decorated with brackets and bargeboard which is also used to trim the eaves. Round lattice covered openings 2' in diameter were placed under the peak of the eaves for ventilation, an important consideration in southern New Mexico. On the west end of the building there is a small balcony with a shed roof.

The doorway in the new main entrance was framed by paneled pilasters carrying an entablature which enclosed a half-glass, half-wood door under a transom with diamond-shaped lights. A window with moulded trim and one-over-one lights was placed on each side of the entry; the whole design is repeated in the upper story. Louvered shutters were made for all the windows, both in the addition and the older portion of the house. Presently, the door and

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

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window sash is painted dark brown while the shutters are green. All hardware on both appears to be original.

The new entrance opened into a continuation of the Daily's original hallway flanked by a bedroom on each side, a plan repeated on the second floor where two parlors or salas divided by a hall were placed over the new bedrooms. Because of the brevity of the new hall the steep single-run stairway to the second story was confined rather awkwardly next to the front door. The original room layout was altered soon after construction by the acquisition of an enormous brass bed from England which had made its way to Las Cruces via Chihuahua. When it was discovered that none of the downstairs rooms would accommodate the bed's 10' canopy, the ceiling in one of the upstairs salas was altered and the room became the master bedroom.

As in other regions with high summer temperatures the family kitchen and dining room were contained in a separate ell-shaped one-story adobe building a few yards northwest of the house. It is still in situ although the north facade was necessarily altered by the widening of Lohman Street in the 1930's. Other outbuildings included a two-story barn and corral south of the house which were torn down in the 1920's and a large placita-centered adobe structure to the north demolished some thirty years later. Used to house servants teamsters and ranch hands from the various Armijo enterprises and to store merchandise and supplies in transit, this building was referred to by its Spanish name el mesón.

Following Nestor Armijo's death in 1911 the Lohman Street property was inherited by his granddaughters Josephine Armijo Gallagher and Gertrude Armijo Ascarate who lived with their grandfather after the death of their parents in 1902. Mrs. Gallagher, who has lived in the main house continuously since her marriage to Peter Gallagher of El Paso and raised four children there, remodeled two bedrooms west of the hallway into a kitchen and dining room. Her sister, Mrs. Ascarate, following the death of her husband, refurbished the small building containing the old kitchen and dining room for her residence. She has recently died.

Today the yellow-stuccoed, red-roofed Nestor Armijo House shielded from the heavy traffic on Lohman Street by a low wall, crimson blossomed oleander bushes and heavy garlands of ivy retains the dignity reminiscent of an earlier era and stands as a reminder of the family who has lived there so many years.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Nestor Armijo House, erected during the 1870's in Las Cruces, county seat of Doña Ana County and southern New Mexico's most important city, was the residence of one of the leading businessmen and ranchers of that area at the end of the 19th century. Founded in approximately 1850, Las Cruces was located near the southern end of the dreaded 100-mile jornada del muerto (journey of the dead man), a particularly fearsome stretch of southern New Mexico desert over which the Spanish Conquistadores of the late 16th and 17th centuries blazed the road from northern New Spain to New Mexico which became the Camino Real (Royal Road), the single route connecting New Mexico with Mexico. Named for the cluster of crosses which marked the graves of some 40 victims of an 1830 Apache raid, Las Cruces grew in importance after the U.S. Army post of Fort Fillmore was established a few miles to the south. At the time of U.S. occupation of New Mexico in 1846, Colonel A.W. Doniphan decisively defeated 1300 Mexican troops under General Ponce de Leon on Christmas Day at nearby Brazito, the only battle of the Mexican War to be fought on New Mexico soil.

Las Cruces soon became a stopping place for traders and freighters on the Camino Real carrying American manufactured goods to El Paso, Chihuahua and interior Mexican trading points. Closely connected to the oligarchy of native New Mexico families which controlled much of this trade, Nestor Armijo was a leader in the development of the Las Cruces area, which changed from a raw frontier to a highly productive irrigated valley and nascent business center during his career. His residence, purchased and enlarged in 1877-78, remains as a landmark of his activities and influence.

Nestor Armijo, the eldest son of Juan Cristóbal Armijo and his wife Juana María Chávez de Armijo, was born in 1831 at Los Padillas, ten miles south of Albuquerque, one of the small family-centered plazas which characterized Spanish settlement of the Rio Grande Valley. The marriage of his parents joined two of New Mexico's most prestigious clans - active in all phases of commerce, agriculture and politics and who, with a handful of others, including the Yrisarris and the Oteros to whom they were also linked by marital and business connections, dominated the lucrative trade which extended south from New Mexico to the commercial centers of Mexico.

After primary schooling in small private classes conducted near his father's hacienda north of Albuquerque, Armijo and a few contemporaries were sent east with a wagon train in the spring of 1843 to Independence, Missouri. There they boarded the steamship Oceana for St. Louis and enrolled in Jesuit

(See Continuation Sheet Page 2)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Baptisms, Isleta 1830; Marriages Isleta 1830, Albuquerque 1850. Microfilm copies, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.  
Bernalillo County Records, County Assessment Rolls 1870, State Records Center and Archives.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. .4 acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1	3	3	32	7	5	3	5	7	5	10	5	5	B							
	ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING				ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING				
C														D							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John O. Baxter, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION

New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, August 31, 1976

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Thomas W. Mehan

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

9-20-76

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/12/91

DATE

12/6/76

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administered St. Louis University. Returning to New Mexico after concluding his studies, Armijo was married in Albuquerque December 16, 1850 to María Josefa Yrisarri, daughter of Mariano and Juana Otero Yrisarri, another union of two important mercantile families. Their only surviving child Carlos Armijo was born in 1854.

Tradition states that Armijo took part in at least one of the great sheep drives of the early 1850's when hundreds of thousands of New Mexico sheep were trailed overland to provide meat for the 49'ers of the California gold fields. The legend states that his party took a route through southern New Mexico down the Rio Grande, over to the Gila Valley to the Colorado and then across the Mojave Desert. If this is so, it may have given Armijo his first look at Las Cruces and the surrounding country. By 1854 he was licensed to operate both a tienda (store) and dram shop in the new community. Along with other members of the Armijo family and their associates he continued to do business in Las Cruces into the 1860's and in 1862 opened the first important retail store there, probably in conjunction with another outlet in El Paso and continued trade into Chihuahua. During the 1850's and '60s he worked closely with his father Juan Cristóbal in an extensive agricultural enterprise at the traditional family location, at Los Griegos (now a part of Albuquerque). Together, father and son had over 14,000 sheep and 70 dairy cows in addition to almost 300 mules necessary for both their agricultural and mercantile activities.

In 1868 Nestor Armijo sold his store in Las Cruces and during the next decade concentrated his attention on affairs in Mexico. Unfortunately these years are scantily documented. Although he continued to maintain property in Las Cruces, it was not until 1877 that he made the town his permanent residence and business headquarters. In that year he purchased from Mexican-born Mrs. Maricita Rea the four-room house which she and her first husband Bradford Daily, a Missouri freighter, had built several years previously. Armijo immediately began construction of a two-story addition on the north facade, the first two story house in Las Cruces.

During the same year Carlos Armijo was married in an impressive ceremony in Denver to Beatrice Otero. Since Carlos was the only Armijo child, the size of the addition which provided a six-bedroom residence suggests that the elder Armijos planned to have the newlyweds become part of the household. This did not take place, however, and it was not until after the marriage of Carlos' younger daughter Josephine to Peter Gallagher of El Paso and the birth of their four children that the house was filled.

Although Armijo never played an active role in partisan politics, in the later years of his career he accepted appointments to various positions dedicated to public good. A member of the Democratic party, he was named by Republican Governor L. Bradford Prince as alternate delegate to the National Silver Convention in St. Louis in November, 1889 and, in 1892, to a 32-member Statehood Commission. Despite intensive lobbying in Washington for accept-

(See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

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ance of New Mexico into the Union, this objective was not achieved until 1912 one year after Armijo's death.

Tragedy marked Armijo's later years to a large degree. In the winter of 1902 both Carlos and Beatrice died within seventeen days of each other and two years later Josefa also died leaving only Carlos' two remaining daughters Gertrude and Josephine who became heirs to Nestor Armijo's estate upon his death in 1911. Since that time the house has been maintained with few changes. Within recent years, Josephine (Mrs. Peter Gallagher), now 88 and the last member of the family in Las Cruces, sold the property to the real estate company which has erected the adjoining shopping center on the former site of the Loretto Convent, retaining a life interest. Since that time she has been under much pressure to vacate her grandfather's house so that the site might become part of the development. Presently efforts are being made by the city of Las Cruces and the local Chamber of Commerce to persuade the real estate company owner to preserve the house as it is, possibly for a local history museum.

#9

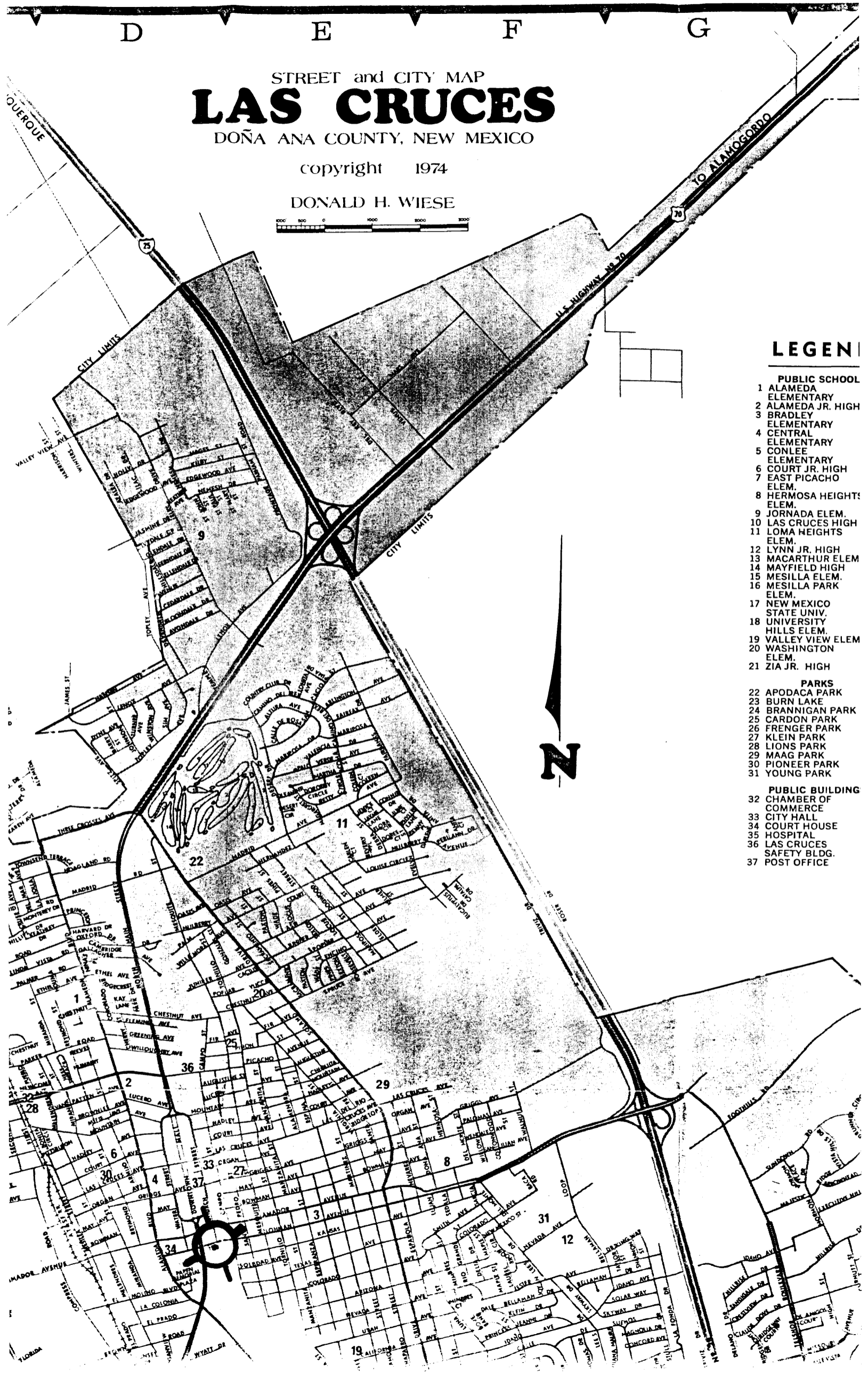
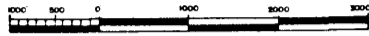
- Doña Ana County Records, County Assessment Rolls 1870-1881, State Records Center and Archives.  
Territorial Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives.  
Records of the Auditor, 1851-1911, Audited Reports of County Commercial Licenses, Doña Ana County, 1853-1870.  
Territorial Census Reports: 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1885.  
Governors' Papers: L. Bradford Prince, Appointments, 1889-1892.  
Allison, W.H.H. "Colonel Francisco Perea," Old Santa Fe. October, 1913, Vol. I, #2.  
Anderson, George B. History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People. Los Angeles, 1907.  
Bunting, Bainbridge. "The Nestor Armijo House, Las Cruces, New Mexico," New Mexico Architecture, July-August, 1972, Vol. 14.

# STREET and CITY MAP LAS CRUCES

DOÑA ANA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

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DONALD H. WIESE



## LEGEND

- PUBLIC SCHOOL**
- 1 ALAMEDA ELEMENTARY
  - 2 ALAMEDA JR. HIGH
  - 3 BRADLEY ELEMENTARY
  - 4 CENTRAL ELEMENTARY
  - 5 CONLEE ELEMENTARY
  - 6 COURT JR. HIGH
  - 7 EAST PICACHO ELEM.
  - 8 HERMOSA HEIGHTS ELEM.
  - 9 JORNADA ELEM.
  - 10 LAS CRUCES HIGH
  - 11 LOMA HEIGHTS ELEM.
  - 12 LYNN JR. HIGH
  - 13 MACARTHUR ELEM
  - 14 MAYFIELD HIGH
  - 15 MESILLA ELEM.
  - 16 MESILLA PARK ELEM.
  - 17 NEW MEXICO STATE UNIV.
  - 18 UNIVERSITY HILLS ELEM.
  - 19 VALLEY VIEW ELEM
  - 20 WASHINGTON ELEM.
  - 21 ZIA JR. HIGH
- PARKS**
- 22 APODACA PARK
  - 23 BURN LAKE
  - 24 BRANNIGAN PARK
  - 25 CARDON PARK
  - 26 FRENGER PARK
  - 27 KLEIN PARK
  - 28 LIONS PARK
  - 29 MAAG PARK
  - 30 PIONEER PARK
  - 31 YOUNG PARK
- PUBLIC BUILDING**
- 32 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
  - 33 CITY HALL
  - 34 COURT HOUSE
  - 35 HOSPITAL
  - 36 LAS CRUCES SAFETY BLDG.
  - 37 POST OFFICE