

PH0367893

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 14 1977
DATE ENTERED OCT 21 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

The Raton Downtown Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

roughly bounded by Rio Grande, Clark, 1st & 5th Sts

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Raton

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Colfax

CODE

007

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Library

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Raton and Various Private Property Owners

STREET & NUMBER

(see Continuation Sheet Page 1)

CITY, TOWN

Raton

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Colfax County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Raton

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

August 27, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Planning Office, 404 Don Gaspar

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on the New Mexico side of Raton Pass (National Register 10/66) the town of Raton was founded in 1880 when the site was chosen as a division point on the newly built Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. In Spanish the word raton denotes a variety of small rodents and the name of pass, mountains and town refers either to the large number of these creatures found nearby or, possibly to the shape of a ridge above the town which suggests a pack rat or ground squirrel. Optimistically referred to during its early years as "the Pittsburgh of the West" because of its railroad shops and the extensive coal fields in the surrounding mountains Raton has long been the most important community in northeastern New Mexico. Although the town's economy has always been subject to fluctuations in the demand for coal it has been stabilized by its position as a trading center for the surrounding ranch country and more recently by an influx of tourist traveling over the pass on Interstate Highway 25. During the summer months increasing numbers of visitors are drawn to the area by the pleasant mountain climate and the attractions of La Mesa Park, a popular race track located just south of town.

The Raton Downtown Historic District, which covers approximately twenty acres, includes a five city block area containing the town's original business section extending west from the railroad tracks along First, Second and Third Streets. Because of flimsy construction methods and the ravages of fire, most of the first buildings erected were replaced after 1882 by more substantial structures including many two-story, flat-roofed, stone buildings with brick facades. Later, as brick became more readily available, it was used for side walls as well as fronts. Most of the buildings remaining within the district today were put up during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to house a wide variety of hotels, saloons, stores, warehouses and railroad facilities.

Facing the railroad tracks in the middle of the 100 block of North First Street are two adjoining two-story, flat roofed buildings erected in the early 1880's, among the oldest remaining structures in the historic district. Constructed with stone masonry side walls and brick facades they were both faced with lap siding around the turn of the century. The entrances to each are set back from the sidewalk and have double doors topped by transoms flanked by large display windows. The original bracketed cornice extends across both buildings over four arched windows in each one which at one time overlooked a continuous porch shading the entrances. To the north of these two structures stands a similar one, also constructed with stone sidewalls and brick facade, embellished on the upper level by three pedimented double-hung windows below a bracketed and pedimented cornice made of pressed metal. The location of Louis Blair's Home Ranch Saloon for some years before 1900, it is now occupied by a Gambles department store which has made some alterations on the lower level including new aluminum-framed show windows placed between the original cast iron pilasters. The same store also occupies the two-story brick Investment Block immediately to the north. Erected in 1896 by the Raton Real Estate and Investment Co. the first tenants there included Newman and Mendelson's

(See Continuation Sheet Page 4)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Because of its location south of Raton Pass, the present site of Raton, New Mexico was well known to early day travelers crossing between the Arkansas River in present Colorado and the headwaters of the Canadian in New Mexico. Beginning as a prehistoric Indian trail the route over the pass was used successively by 18th century Spaniards seeking trade with Apaches and Comanches roaming the buffalo country along the Arkansas, by Missouri frontiersmen blazing the Mountain Branch of the famous Santa Fe Trail and, in 1846, by U.S. forces under Brigadier-General Stephen Watts Kearny in the historic invasion and takeover of New Mexico. During the Civil War the pass was used by a contingent of Union troops, the Colorado Volunteers, who marched into New Mexico in 1862 to defeat a Confederate Army at Glorieta Pass east of Santa Fe, an engagement which denied New Mexico to the South. Three years later frontier mountain man Richens Lacy "Uncle Dick" Wooton received authorization from both the Colorado and New Mexico Territorial legislatures to construct and maintain a toll road over the pass, a thoroughfare which greatly facilitated the journey through the mountains and soon became the route of the Barlow, Sanderson and Company stagecoach line.

In 1860 the U.S. government established a forage station south of the pass at Willow Springs Ranch, which later became a stop on the stage line, but this outpost did not become a town until after the arrival of the Santa Fe railroad. Following a sharp contest with the rival Denver and Rio Grande for the right of way, which generally followed Wooton's toll road, the tracks were continued into New Mexico and the first engine crossed the pass in December, 1878. A construction camp was set up on the New Mexico side at Otero, five miles south of Willow Springs, but when the railroad decided to construct a roundhouse and shops near the old stage station, most of Otero's citizens moved not only themselves but the town's buildings to the new location henceforth called Raton. By 1881 the number of structures there had grown from twenty to over two hundred and the population rapidly expanded to approximately 3,000.

Beginning near Trinidad, Colorado, Raton's sister city north of the pass, and continuing south into New Mexico, the new railroad crossed many miles of land claimed by the Maxwell Land Grant Co., an enormous 1,700,000 acre holding which originated in a questionable grant made by Mexican governor Manuel Armijo to Charles Beaubien of Taos and Guadalupe Miranda of Santa Fe. The property was later acquired through inheritance and purchase by Beaubien's son-in-law, Lucien Maxwell who in turn sold it to what was to be the first of a series of syndicates composed of eastern, British and Dutch

(See Continuation Sheet Page 8)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Territorial Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Records of the Secretary of the Territory, 1851-1911, Records of Incorporations.

Bohme, Frederick G. "The Italians in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical (See Continuation Sheet Page 11)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 20 acres

UTM REFERENCES - See map dated 6-23-77

A 1,3 | 5,5,0,0,1,5 | 4,0,8,4,0,1,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1,3 | 5,5,0,0,1,0 | 4,0,8,3,0,6,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,3 | 5,4,9,0,8,0 | 4,0,8,3,0,9,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D 1,3 | 5,4,9,0,8,5 | 4,0,8,4,0,1,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Third Street and Clark Avenue, extending in an easterly direction along the south side of Clark Avenue to the southwest corner of First Street and Clark Avenue, continuing in an easterly direction to the Santa Fe Railroad tracks, a total distance east to west of approximately 1000'; thence in a southerly

(See Continuation Sheet Page 11)

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

Sylvia Cook, Architectural Historian, State Planning Office;
 John O. Baxter, Archivist, State Records and Archives

DATE

April 5, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. ...

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

4-19-77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Robert B. Kottig

DATE

10/21/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Robert B. Kottig

DATE

10/12/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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✓ VFW Post 1793
106 Park Ave.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

Nicholas T. Molnar
✓ 218 Park Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Bennett Transportation
217 N. Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ James B. Marchette
Raton, New Mexico 87740

Paul and Jesse E. Arthur
✓ c/o Paul Sofranko
400 South Sixth Street
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Bill E. Harris
Box 696
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ City of Raton
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Mike Christos
✓ Mike and Joy Pappas
Box 338
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Dr. L. A. Hubbard
5601 N. Kings Highway
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29577

✓ JAWM Inc.
120 N. Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Margaret Hubbard
3829 Inca, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

✓ Noel B. and Jane E. Rogers
1412 Mountain View
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Virginia H. Floyd
835 N. Alverson
Tucson, Arizona 85711

✓ Johnny's Bakery
c/o John F. Bacca
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ First National Bank
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ William S. Fegan
Panama City Beach, Florida 32401

Durrett-Peterman
✓ c/o John Monroe
The Man's Store
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Al Bisconti
224 Garcia St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

Raton Credit Union
✓ c/o Camillo Tarango
318 S. Third Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ J.J. and Doris M. Bugg
723 Galisteo
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Charlene L. & Charles Joseph Counts
1590 State Street
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ E. K. Bernard
529 Twelfth Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

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✓ E. G. Kilmurray
626 Apache Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ United States Postal Service
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Clair and Beulah Mae Sweney
Box 1172
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Salvatore La Rocca
409 N. Fourth Street
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Mary Abourezk
c/o Marie Easley
Box 1272
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Sam Tapia
P. O. Box 936
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Two Fifty Park Inc.
250 Park Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ DiLisio Industries, Inc.
Box 771
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Maxine R. Drury
6017 Princess Jeanne, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

✓ Kenneth H. & Adroth B. Abernathy
Box 1165
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Ethel Tomlinson
c/o K. Abernathy
126 S. Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Kenneth M. Jones
508 South Fourth St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Tony Marchiondo
120 S. First St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Rubins Inc.
113 S. Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Perina Gatti
226 Mora
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ George Joseph, Jr.
105 Park Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Joe G. and Amelita Marchiondo
Box 224
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Lena Musso
111 Park Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Andelecio & Fabiola Solano
101 South Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Smidgelow Building
c/o Ray Burrow
120 Park Hill Road
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Furniture Mart
c/o H. and R. Woodworth
Box 518
Raton, New Mexico 87740

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✓ Rose Ann Gigante
244 S. First St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Josephine M. Leal
Box 373
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Richard DiMarzio
Box 520
Raton, New Mexico 87740

George Raymond and Joe Sisneros
228 S. First St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

Albert Schulte
413 S. Fifth St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Carl R. Pasquale
1140 Dwyer Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Tinnie Mercantile Co.
P. O. Box 1000
Roswell, New Mexico 88201

✓ Patrick Allen & Myrtle Potter
119 Cooke Ave.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Hiram & Mondo Valentini
133 Cook Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Key Properties
c/o Louis Castellini
Box 548
Raton, New Mexico 87740

William J. & Marion E. Tadus
✓ Box 1199
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Errington Memorial Chapel
c/o Barie P. Fritz
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Masonic Corporation
c/o Earl Keesecker
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ United Chevrolet Co.
303 South Second St.
Raton, New Mexico 87740

✓ Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Ry.
80 East Jackson
Chicago, Illinois 60604

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dry goods store and the offices of the Maxwell Grant Co. After 1905 it was occupied for many years by the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Co., the region's largest coal producer. Its simple pressed metal cornice is supported by a flat-arched corbel table over ten round-arched windows arranged in two groups of three on either side of a group of four. The same type of display windows recently installed next door have also been used here.

Another two-story brick erected about the same time as the Investment Block is the Fred Brueggeman Building at the southwest corner of First and Park, formerly the site of the Gem Saloon, in the east portion, and the offices of Raton Realty Co. in the west. Built in the 1890's by a local rancher-investor, the interior has recently been refurbished with the original pressed metal ceiling and wall paneling which is adorned with painted cupids still in place. The doors and windows along the north wall are embellished by a series of round arches in the brick work, a motif repeated over the large window in the east facade which looks out of the saloon. South of the Gem in the middle of the 100 block of South First Street stands a two-story building, again with stone masonry sidewalls and brick facade, occupied since 1913 by Marchiondo's Store, purveyors of dry goods, groceries and liquors. Painted bright yellow the facade contains seven double-hung windows topped by decorated pediments which cover the original brick segmental arches. The roof line is embellished by a bracketed cornice painted a dark green as is the window trim. Between the cornice and the window pediments, bold lettering advertises Lee and Levi overalls and "The Golden Rule and New York Stores," two early establishments combined by Marchiondo. In its early days the building housed the Raton post office and a series of store keepers including George J. Pace, pioneer grocer and early postmaster.

Two doors south of this store is the 1893 Roth building which has a particularly ornate pressed metal facade adorned by Corinthian pilasters, a bracketed cornice and a high center pediment. Presently the location of a linen supply business, the structure was an early investment made by German-born Frederick Roth, a Colfax County cattleman and real estate developer who also financed the Roth Block on South Second Street. Standing on the northwest corner of First Street and Cook Avenue is Cook's Hall, originally designed to be a public hall, over store fronts. Put up in two stages by Captain George W. Cook the nucleus, a one-story stone building constructed in the early 1880's was expanded in 1892 into the two-story brick in situ today. The six windows overlooking First Street are capped by divided headmolds under the usual bracketed metal cornice with the first floor display windows again divided by original iron pilasters.

Across Cook Avenue from Cook's Hall and opposite the Santa Fe depot to
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the east is the Palace Hotel erected in 1896 by the three Smith Brothers, Hugh H., John H. and William H., Scottish immigrants who had conducted a successful mercantile enterprise at the nearby coal camp of Blossburg before moving to Raton. Made of locally quarried sandstone the hotel, the first three-story building in Colfax County has recently been refurbished and reopened as a restaurant by its present owner, the Tinnie Mercantile Co. which has been active in promoting the redevelopment of the historic district. Set into the northeast corner of the building the double glass doors in the main entrance into the bar are surrounded by a round sandstone arch supported by colonettes; the arch is repeated as a prominent detail over three windows in the top floor of the east facade and again over two others in the north wall. Below the roof line, which is embellished by two carved stone pediments flanked by flambeaux, is a frieze of alternating light and dark sandstone blocks laid in checkerboard fashion. The original hotel entrance was moved from First Street to Cook Avenue following a fire which badly damaged the lobby in the 1920's.

Next door to the Palace is a smaller hotel known as the Haven built in 1913 of yellow brick with brown brick trim. The entrance, under a small round window, is framed by an arch made of brown brick; the same material is used in an additional detail rising above the entrance and terminating above the parapet in a pair of carved stone pineapples. A pair of stone lion heads divides the second floor windows which have brown brick surrounds. Immediately south of this hotel is the so-called Coors building erected in 1906 as a warehouse by the well-known Colorado brewing company. Recently donated to the City of Raton by the Tinnie Mercantile Co. for restoration as a museum it shares a common wall with the Haven whose owners agreed to handle Coors beer forevermore in return for this accommodation. A third hotel in the same block was erected at the corner of First and Rio Grande about 1910. A two-story brick, the stairway to the hotel is located between two store fronts with a third commercial section opening from the Rio Grande Avenue side on the south. A brick frieze extends around the corner under the roof.

Across First Street from the series of hotels, bars and stores described above are the remaining Santa Fe railroad buildings - the depot, the express office and the reading room - all constructed in the familiar Spanish Mission Revival architectural style which the Santa Fe employed extensively throughout the Southwest. Still used by Amtrak passengers, the 1903 depot is surrounded by an arcade; its roof, stopped by curvilinear parapets, was originally capped by tiled spires which were removed in the 1920's. The express office was built about 1910, also in Mission style with a roof and parapets similar to those on the depot. The reading room built in 1922 to replace an earlier structure destroyed by fire represented

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an attempt by railroad officials to provide library facilities for employees as a constructive alternative to the ever present saloons. Down the tracks from the railroad buildings is a large two-story stone warehouse, at one time the local headquarters of the Charles Ilfeld Co. Based in Las Vegas, 100 miles south of Raton, the Ilfeld Co. was an important pioneer wholesale and retail general mercantile firm, one of the largest in New Mexico.

Developing contemporaneously with First Street, albeit somewhat more slowly, was Second Street, one block west. As First Street's commercial prosperity was tied to the railroad it was the designation of Second as the route of the north-south highway through Raton which made it the town's main street in later years. One of the first businessmen to establish himself there was hardware merchant A. H. Carey who in 1882 erected a two-story stone building faced with brick of the type so familiar in Raton. Three doors up the street is the Odd Fellows Hall erected circa 1905. In a reversal of the usual design it is made of brick with a stone facade crowned by a pressed metal frieze and cornice in which the name of the lodge has been stamped. Nearby is the Foote Hotel, a two-story brick built in 1901 with a pair of cresting-topped bay windows which protrude over the sidewalk.

On the east side of Second Street across from the Foote Hotel is the Shuler Theater one of the largest and most significant structures within the historic district, which contains Raton's municipal offices and a large auditorium. First conceived during the administration of Mayor J.J. Shuler as a modest city hall, the scope of the proposed structure was greatly enlarged following the destruction by fire of the town's leading theater, the Garden Coliseum in 1911. The following year plans were submitted by architect William Rapp of Trinidad for a two-story 100'x140' brick building which were greeted by enthusiastic public approval. Unfortunately, unexpected cost over-runs caused the construction to become a highly partisan political issue which at one time led to the flight of the mayor and the entire city council to escape the wrath of irate taxpayers. The conflict was resolved, however, prior to the grand opening on April 25, 1915 a date described in the local press as the beginning of "the greatest epoch in the history of Raton" and four years later the building was renamed to honor Mayor Shuler following his death.

The entrance to the theater's lobby placed between two offices presently occupied by city officials and the local Chamber of Commerce, is flanked by finial topped pedestals and covered by an awning and a large marquee, recent replacements. The north portion of the building which originally housed a fire station has been converted into a third first-floor office. The interior design of the theater, decorated in a style described "as a

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rough approximation of Rococo" features a proscenium arch in front of the stage which has elaborately embellished opera boxes set on each side. In the rear of the auditorium a large balcony overlooks the stage. The coved ceiling of the foyer was redecorated with murals depicting local historical scenes done in the 1930's by Raton painter Manville Chapman as part of a W.P.A. artists project. After some years of idleness brought about by competing forms of entertainment, the Shuler has undergone a renaissance during the last decade and is now the home of the Kaleidoscope Players, a repertory theater group which has produced a wide variety of stage presentations there. South of the Shuler at the southeast corner of Second and Park is the 1905 Fred Roth Block which presently houses several stores facing both streets with offices upstairs. There is a series of double-hung windows at the second level under a decorated frieze and cornice; the first floor facade is largely intact. Near the south end of the block facing Second Street stands the brown stucco Raton Realty Building erected in 1928 from plans drawn by architect H. W. J. Edbrooke. An example of Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style the structure is topped by a red tile roof with a cross gable over the entrance. On the second level there are two pairs of round-arched, terra cotta trimmed windows under a rose window. A fire severely damaged the rear of the building in the early 1970's but it has been rebuilt using the original facade.

Two blocks down the street from the Shuler at the northwest corner of Second and Cook is another brown brick building erected in 1918 to house the International State Bank. When Joe DiLisio, its founder and president, moved the bank across the street into the old Swastika Hotel, he established the department store which bears his name in the north half of the bank building. The entrance to the old bank is recessed in the structure's southeast corner and defined by three Doric columns; the windows of this section are topped by stained glass panels. A block north and a block east of the International Bank at Third and Park is the Seaburg European Hotel, now known as El Portal, a large one-story stucco covered structure which rambles over most of the west half of the block. Its nucleus was an adobe livery stable built in the early 1880's which was remodeled and expanded into New Mexico's largest hotel circa World War I. During its early years under the management of Mrs. Stella P. Hankins, the hotel was one of the best known in the Southwest and still retains an aura of its former grandeur.

In 1917 a U.S. Post Office building in neo-classical architectural style was erected at Third and Cook just west of the International State Bank. Converted into a public library after the construction of a new Federal Building in the north half of the same block of Third Street it was renamed

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to honor Raton banker Arthur Johnson. A symmetrical structure, its entrance is centered under a round arch between pilasters which also frame a window just over the arch. The parapet at the roofline is trimmed with a simple cornice.

Except for the new post office and a new First National Bank building at Second and Park there has been little new construction within the historic district in the last fifty years. Many of the structures have undergone some modification particularly to their first floor facades but there are few intrusions and the area continues to retain its original character. The proposed Raton Downtown Historic District continues to be a significant part of the town's business community and it is hoped that recognition will encourage efforts for its stabilization.

speculators. In 1880 a group of railroad officials and attorneys from the territorial capital at Santa Fe formed the New Mexico Town Co. and obtained a concession from the Grant Company for 320 acres on which to develop the town of Raton. At first the town's residents established their homes and places of business in the usual collection of tents, boxcars and temporary shacks, which characterized the birth of many new settlements on the frontier, but gradually a substantial community emerged.

Although the presence of vast coal deposits on the Maxwell Grant had been common knowledge in the 1860's and 70's there was no incentive to develop them until the coming of the railroad created a market, first to fire the locomotives and later as an industrial fuel. In 1881 the grant company joined forces with the AT&SF RR to form the Raton Coal and Coke Co. in order to exploit this important resource. Following the turn of the century, and several corporate reorganizations, Maxwell Grant officials negotiated a 500,000 acre coal lease with the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Co. in 1905. During the next fifty years in which the St. Louis company was the dominant force in Raton area coal mining, production steadily increased until after World War I. Satellite camps to house the throngs of newly arrived miners, many of them foreign born, sprang up in the canyons surrounding Raton. Such towns as Blossburg, Dawson and Brilliant enjoyed temporary prosperity but declined with the loss of market to diesel fuel and natural gas. In 1955 the Kaiser Steel Co. of Oakland, California purchased the remaining St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Co. for some \$3,000,000 acquiring coal holdings to over 200,000 acres. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in coal as a partial solution to growing energy shortages presently confronting the nation which may revive this traditional mainstay of Raton's economy.

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One of the first businessmen to establish himself in Raton was George J. Pace. Born at Allegheny City, Pa. in 1843, Pace worked as a stove moulder during his early years in the east. After extensive service during the Civil War, in which he fought at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, he made his way westward and after a brief residence at Las Animas, Colorado, moved in 1878 to the stage station at Willow Springs, New Mexico. When the Santa Fe railroad was constructed over Raton Pass into New Mexico, Pace moved his store to the new boom town of Otero five miles down the tracks but returned to Raton, as Willow Springs was renamed after railroad officials made the decision to establish shops and a roundhouse there. In addition to his grocery business, which he conducted until 1902, Pace also served as postmaster until 1886 and invested in other enterprises in the growing community. He served as an officer and director of the Raton Crystal Ice and Storage Company, the Gate City Building and Loan Association and the Raton Electric Light and Power Co. which, after a long political battle, was sold to the city in 1919 for \$60,000. Active in politics, Pace was elected to various county and municipal positions including the city council, the board of county commissioners and the school board and, in 1902, the office of Treasurer of Colfax County.

Another citizen who served Raton well during its early years was Dr. James Jackson Shuler. A native of Virginia, Shuler came to Raton in 1881 fresh out of medical school as the official physician and surgeon for the Santa Fe. Despite the demands of an extensive practise Dr. Shuler found time to participate in many diverse activities for the betterment of his town. Although he had been elected to the city council as early as 1891 and had served as mayor from 1899 to 1902 it was during his second term in that office that Shuler and other city fathers undertook and completed a remarkable number of important civic projects. Elected on the Citizens' Progressive Ticket in 1910, the slate, which included all the councilmen, promised the voters to provide the town with a municipal water works, a public library, parks and a new sewer system, and this they proceeded to do. Their most notable achievement, however, was the erection of a large auditorium suitable for the presentation of elaborate stage productions, motion pictures and other public functions. Despite a long series of difficulties the auditorium was completed in 1915. Known as the "Rex" during its first years it was renamed the "Shuler" after the doctor's death in 1919, in recognition of his services to the community.

A notable success story among Raton's first community leaders is that of Swedish-born Hugo Seaberg who came to the United States in 1887 and, after a brief stay in Chicago, moved west to New Mexico to work in the orchards belonging to Springer attorney Melvin W. Mills for \$15 per month plus room and board. In classic fashion Seaberg was soon reading law in

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Mills' office, was admitted to the bar in 1892 and married the adopted daughter of his employer and benefactor. In addition to a growing law practise in which he specialized in land case, Seaberg amassed a considerable fortune as a dealer in land scrip acting both as speculator for his own account and as broker for others. Land scrip was a form of security issued by the federal government to land grant railroads, notably the Santa Fe, in lieu of land within their original donation which had previously been preempted by others. Seaberg moved to Raton in 1904 where he promoted a number of real estate ventures including the enormous Garden Coliseum Theater which burned down in 1911 and the 175-room Seaberg European Hotel, at one time the largest hostelry in New Mexico. Like most of his contemporaries, Seaberg was active politically and served as delegate from New Mexico to the Republican National Convention of 1912 which nominated William Howard Taft to the presidency. The depression years of the 1930's were hard ones for Seaberg and when he died at Trinidad, Colorado in 1945 his fortune was largely depleted.

Another immigrant who found opportunity in Raton was Joe DiLisio, the founder of DiLisio's Department Store and the International State Bank. One of a large number of Italians who came to the region to work in the coal mines there, DiLisio arrived in 1904 at El Morro, Colorado, a railroad and mining camp located a few miles northeast of Trinidad, where he was employed in his uncle's general store. After a brief apprenticeship, he soon accumulated a modest nest egg by operating a series of stores and saloons in such coal towns in the Raton area as Brilliant, Blossburg and Gardiner, but the rewards of a decade of hard work were wiped out during the long and bitter strike of the coal miners against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co. at Ludlow, Colorado where DiLisio was then running a saloon. Moving to Raton in 1914 after this disaster, he was able to find new financing for a saloon and store which prospered from the beginning. Four years later DiLisio incorporated the International State Bank and soon was able to diversify his interests into such enterprises as the Raton Wholesale Liquor Co. and the Swastika Hotel, renamed the Yucca at the outbreak of World War II. The father of a large family, DiLisio was active in various local civic and benevolent organizations throughout his career.

Today Raton's Downtown Historic District remains as a reminder of the hopes and disappointments of the town's first years. The significant elements of the area's economy-coal mining, the railroad, wholesaling and retailing are represented in the office buildings, warehouses and stores found within the district. In addition the service businesses - hotels, theaters and saloons - which give the town its individuality also remain. Businessmen in the district are proud of the neighborhood's heritage and are anxious to maintain its historic character.

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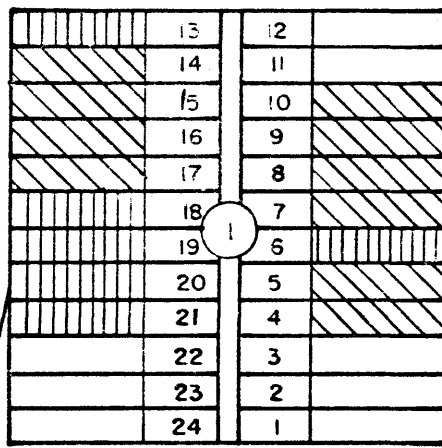
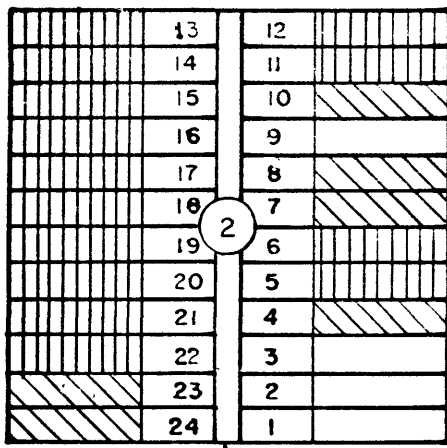
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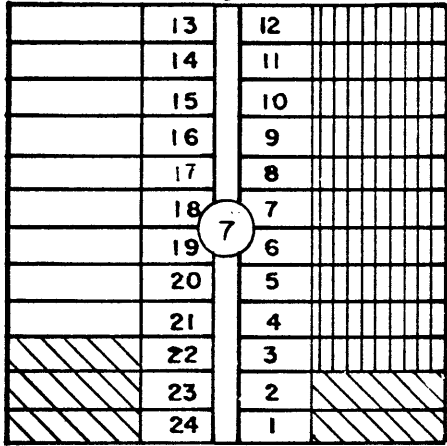
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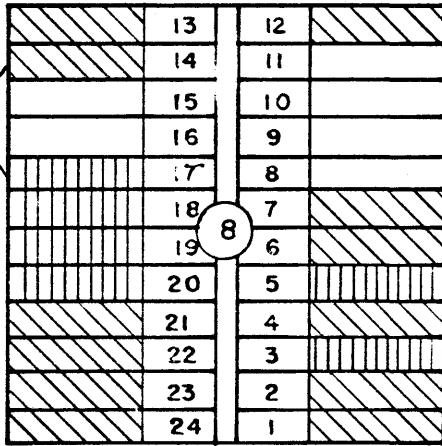
direction for a distance of approximately 1300' along the railroad tracks to a point approximately 150' south of the Charles Ilfeld warehouse; thence in a westerly direction to the west side of First Street; thence in a northerly direction to the northwest corner of the intersection of First Street and Rio Grande Avenue; thence in a westerly direction along the north side of Rio Grande Avenue to the northeast corner of Second Street and Rio Grande Avenue; thence in a northerly direction to the northeast corner of the intersection of Second Street and Cook Avenue; thence in a westerly direction along the north side of Cook Avenue to the northeast corner of the intersection of Third Street and Cook Avenue; thence in a northerly direction along the east side of Third Street to the point of origin.



PARK



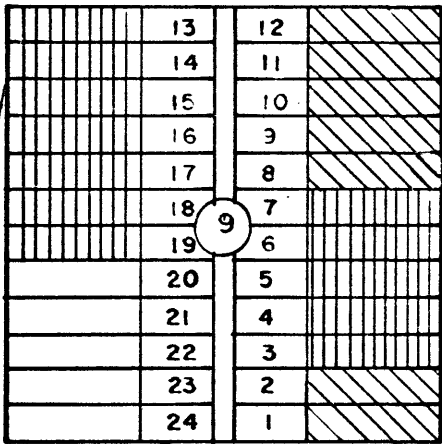
THIRD



SECOND

FIRST

COOK



RIO GRANDE

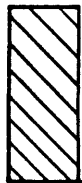
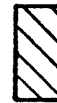
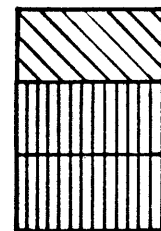
RATON DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS



OTHER BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISTRICT



CLARK

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PARK

THIRD

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FIRST

COOK

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RIO GRANDE

RATON DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS



OTHER BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISTRICT

