

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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

Bridge Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *100 block of*
Bridge Street

---NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

--- VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE 35

COUNTY

San Miguel

CODE

047

3 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Las Vegas and various private property owners.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Miguel County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

August 28, 1974

---FEDERAL STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Planning Office, 505 Don Gaspar St.

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

Located in the important northern New Mexico town of Las Vegas the Bridge Street Historic District is an 800' long block of Bridge Street, the thoroughfare which gives the district its name. Primarily a commercial area consisting of various small independent enterprises, the district extends from the east end of the concrete bridge which spans the Gallinas River to the east boundary of the Las Vegas Plaza Historic District (National Register 12/74) formed by the First National Bank on the south side of Bridge Street and the Romero Block on the north. The alleys which run behind both rows of buildings are the north and south boundaries. Although a few of the buildings along Bridge Street were erected during the 1920s and 1930s most were built between 1880 and 1910 during or just after the period of Las Vegas' economic predominance in the region. At various times new facades and fenestration have been added to the fronts of some of the structures but other changes during the last fifty years have been minimal.

Prior to 1879 Bridge Street was a wagon road, alternately muddy or dusty depending on weather conditions, which ran from the ford across the Gallinas to the historic plaza which, with the arrival of the railroad in that year, became known as West Las Vegas. When the tracks and depot were built a mile to the east a new town grew up beside them called East Las Vegas. By January, 1880 a plank bridge had been erected over the Gallinas and businesses began to spring up on each side of the road connecting the two towns, which became known as Bridge Street. The following year a street car line began operation from the depot to West Las Vegas crossing the Gallinas on the new bridge and continuing up Bridge Street to the plaza.

In 1886 the wooden bridge was replaced by a much larger one with high wrought iron trusses and stone abutments designed by S. O. Wood and built by the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Works of Leavenworth, Kansas at a cost of \$11,000. An impressive structure it was strong enough to withstand the disastrous flood of September, 1904 which devastated many of the businesses on Bridge Street. It was replaced in its turn by the present concrete structure in 1909.

Constructed of adobe or rough lumber, most of the original buildings along Bridge Street were short lived, but by 1883 a number of substantial stone structures were being erected. Reflecting an architectural time lag common in western communities, the first permanent buildings were Italianate in design, a style in vogue ten to twenty years earlier in the East. Later structures beginning in the 90's, erected after Las Vegas reached its peak economically, were more utilitarian in character, usually one-story and with less ornamentation. Quarried locally, the stone used along Bridge Street and elsewhere in Las Vegas was a source of civic pride. One promoter noted: "The blue limestone and the white sandstone are used in rubble work. Both the brown and white sandstone are adapted to bas relief work, for they are hard and work up well." Excellent examples of this construction remain within the district.

On the north side of the street one of the first stone buildings put up was the two-story structure at 116 Bridge, first occupied by a grocery and
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE #1

a sewing machine dealer and then for many years after 1897 the location of the Stern and Nahm mercantile enterprise which later also occupied the building next door at No. 114. Both buildings featured display windows on either side of double doors which were set back from the sidewalk and flanked by two slender iron Corinthian columns. In the earlier building three pairs of windows topped by a continuous lintel opened into the offices located on the second floor. A parapet with a decorated cornice concealed the flat roof. The other Stern and Nahm building, also a two-story stone structure, was in situ by 1886. Capped by arched head moldings the second floor fenestration consisted of a pair of coupled windows in the center of the facade flanked by a single window on each side. Today, the name of the firm is still emblazoned in 2' high lettering just under the cornice of this building. To the west were a one-story stone structure at 124 Bridge and a brick-front at 136, both of which still appear very much as they did in an 1883 photograph. Through the years they have had a wide variety of tenants.

Erected about the same time on the north side of the street were the two-story building at 144, and the one-story buildings at 148 and 150 Bridge Street. The three were constructed at the same time and have common walls. A second floor was later added to the building in the center^{#148} and except for window size, details of the two-story ones are identical. Their second-floor facades are of stone, with double, circular arched windows in the center topped by a circular molding of pressed metal. Single, segmental arched windows are on either side of the double windows. Both buildings have a decorated cast iron frieze and had a bracketed cornice, which has since been removed from the building at 144 Bridge Street. This latter structure has three doors on the first floor separated by two plate glass windows. The doors are topped by square transoms with twelve small square lights surrounding a round light. The facade of the building at 148 Bridge has been altered by the addition of a new store front. The building at 150, for many years a drug store, repeats the quoins and string course of the other two.

On the same side of the street, an abstract company constructed an imposing two-story stone building at No. 110, set fifteen feet back from those on either side. A new stone front was added in 1920 but a more recent one-story addition in front obscures the facade of the structure. However, the elaborate cornice and much of the decorative stonework of the second floor remains intact.

On the south side of the street the two-story stone building at 171 Bridge was occupied in 1883 by a piano dealer, and later housed a second hand store, a dry goods dealer and a furniture shop. The facade is brick with three windows topped by carved label moldings under a carved and bracketed sheet metal cornice. The first floor display windows have been replaced but the stone quoins and string course are still in place

(See Continuation Sheet Page 2)

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Next door, at 167, is the only remaining adobe fronting on Bridge Street. At times partitioned into two shops, the small one-story structure, which has windows on either side of double doors, was used as a drug store, fruit store, restaurant, barber shop and tailor shop. The front is plastered with a simple bracketed cornice.

At 157 Bridge stands the two-story stone structure known as the C. V. Hedgcock building, originally a boot and shoe shop. Later it was occupied by a saloon and other enterprises until 1939 when it was sold to the Town of West Las Vegas and was used as the town hall until East and West Las Vegas were consolidated in 1970. Today, it is used by the City of Las Vegas as an office of the Bicentennial Committee. The upper portion of the facade has a pair of coupled windows flanked by another window on each side, all with elaborate pressed metal moldings. The corners of the second floor are set with cast iron quoins with pilasters below. The first floor had display windows on either side of double doors, which have been replaced by a concrete block wall.

An excellent example of the kind of construction which became popular along Bridge Street after 1900 is the one-story brick front at 129, originally known as the Winternitz Block. Divided into two sections by a plastered steel partition it has had many uses including a saloon, motion picture theater and grocery, hardware and dry goods stores. In 1903 the west section was occupied by the Hofmeister grocery with the hardware store of Ludwig William Ilfeld in the larger portion on the east. Across the street at 164 and 166 is another similar structure with a common interior wall and brick facade which has been altered extensively in No. 164.

At 155 Bridge next door to the Hedgcock Building is the firehouse of the E. Romero Hose and Fire Company. Built in 1908 by M. M. Sundt from plans drawn by E. W. Hart it replaced a small frame building at the same location. Of brick construction with a large double door on the first floor to accommodate the Seagram hose and chemical wagon used by the firemen, it was erected on top of the acequia (irrigation ditch) which crossed the street at right angles to carry water to fields below. The ground floor also provided a stable for horses which pulled the wagon with housing for the firemen upstairs. Although no longer in use the firehouse is still owned by the Hose and Fire Company which has maintained it in excellent condition.

Today, Bridge Street shows evidence of neglect caused by years of economic depression in both the neighborhood and the town. The condition of the buildings, some of which are vacant, ranges from fair to good, with an occasional exception which is extremely well kept up. There are indications within the community, however, of a new interest and pride in the history of the street which is manifested in efforts to preserve and maintain this historically important district.

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 checked="" 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

One of the oldest commercial areas in the well-known northern New Mexico mercantile center of Las Vegas, the Bridge Street Historic District grew up during the last two decades of the 19th century on both sides of the main road leading into the original Las Vegas Plaza. Although Bridge Street followed the route of the famous Santa Fe Trail from its crossing of the Rio Gallinas to the plaza, it was only after the arrival of the railroad in 1879 that various businesses began to be established along it. The bridge from which both the street and district derive their names was first built in 1880 and has been twice reconstructed in 1886 and 1909. Most of the buildings within the district were erected between 1880 and 1910, the period of Las Vegas' greatest expansion when it was generally believed that the town would become New Mexico's most important city. This belief did not become reality but, today, the changes made along Bridge Street accurately reflect the changing fortunes of Las Vegas.

The Las Vegas area was first settled by twenty-nine families from the nearby Pecos Valley community of San Miguel del Vado who were placed in possession of the Las Vegas Land Grant by Alcalde José de Jesus Ulibarri y Durán on April 6, 1835 on orders from Francisco Sarracino, governor of New Mexico. Some years later the same grant was claimed by the heirs of Luis María C. de Baca, who had presumably been forced to leave his ranch on the Gallinas by repeated Indian attacks. Alleging that their rights were based on action of Spanish authorities in Durango shortly before Mexican Independence in 1821, the Bacas were ultimately compensated with other lands after lengthy litigation which was resolved by the Surveyor General of New Mexico.

In making the grant Ulibarri ordered the settlers to construct a traditional plaza west of the river and, in delineating the individual allotments of land, reserved a strip of 25 varas (approximately 25 yards) for a road to the watering place on each bank of the Gallinas. This right of way became the route by which traders and travellers on the Santa Fe Trail reached the plaza, a commercial center of growing importance. After following the historic trade route into New Mexico General Stephen Watts Kearny entered the plaza on August 15, 1846 and proclaimed U.S. sovereignty from the rooftop of the alcalde's residence.

As the 19th century progressed Las Vegas entered a period of population growth and commercial prosperity which accelerated with the advent of the railroad in 1879. To the dismay of the merchants doing business on the plaza the depot and sidings were built across the Gallinas, a mile east of the original town. A new community known as East Las Vegas, predominantly Anglo in character, grew up across the river causing a shift in social and economic activity which resulted in ill feelings persisting for many years.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 3)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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San Miguel County District Court Records, Civil Case #2762, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 5)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 7 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A <input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="3"/> <input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text" value="0"/> <input type="text" value="0"/>			B <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
C <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>			D <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
ZONE EASTING NORTHING			ZONE EASTING NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

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

DATE
November 4, 1976

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. Merbau*

TITLE *State Historic Preservation Officer* DATE *11-10-76*

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST: <i>Charles H. Smith</i>	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE <i>2/26/78</i>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <i>7-26-78</i>

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The original wagon road to the plaza thus became a street connecting the two towns which was gradually flanked by various business establishments. In August, 1879 the Board of Commissioners of San Miguel County issued a call for bids for a bridge over the Gallinas which was erected by contractor T. C. Matsolf during the ensuing months and accepted by the commissioners January 8, 1880. At this time transportation between the two towns was provided by hacks running between the depot and the plaza which offered travelers some protection from the alternating mud and dust.

In December 1880 a new corporation, the Las Vegas Street Railroad Co., petitioned the County Commissioners for right of way to construct a street car line to run from the railroad station to the plaza, the first in New Mexico. During July of the following year four red and yellow cars manufactured by Andrew Wight of St. Louis costing \$750 each were delivered and the company began operations. The fare was ten cents but a significant saving could be made by purchasing a book of 25 tickets for one dollar. At least one plaza merchant, Charles Ilfeld, attempted to use the cars to transport merchandise from the railroad sidings in East Las Vegas to his store across the Gallinas but muddy conditions made the experiment unsuccessful. The line was electrified in 1903 but never prospered financially and ceased operation in 1927.

By 1882 Bridge Street, as the thoroughfare was now known, was solidly built up by various businesses with many second floor offices occupied by professional men. In addition to the local post office and such necessary enterprises in the era of horse powered transportation as a blacksmith shop, livery stables and a carriage works there was a high incidence of saloons and gambling dens where frontier entrepreneurs such as Bob Ford, who had gained nationwide notoriety by killing Jesse James, provided recreational facilities for the cowboys, teamsters and railroad workers who came to Las Vegas looking for excitement. At times the excitement was extreme even for wild and woolly Las Vegas. On the night of October 22, 1892, in the midst of a snowstorm, the infamous Vicente Silva gang hanged Patricio Maes, a suspected informer, from the bridge following a kangaroo court session in Silva's saloon. On another occasion Carpio Saiz, treasurer of a rural school was robbed and murdered under the bridge for \$160 which had been apportioned to his district.

A continual problem for the citizens of Las Vegas as for other burgeoning towns in the West was the threat of fire. After a particularly disastrous blaze in East Las Vegas a hook and ladder company was organized on that side of the river in 1881 and some years later the E. Romero Hose Company, named after a leading Republican jefe político (political boss) who had made a substantial cash contribution, was organized. Evidently cooperation between the two towns was possible during an emergency. At first the firemen

(See Continuation Sheet Page #4)

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themselves pulled the cart which carried 1,000 feet of 2 1/2" hose but in 1903 the twenty-five members were able to purchase the handsome team of mares, known as "the Queens," which are still remembered in Las Vegas. In 1908-09 a new two-story brick building, a replacement for an earlier frame structure in the same location, was erected on Bridge Street to house the Queens and the firemen. The Queens were replaced in the summer of 1916 by an American-La France fire engine.

Among the first businessmen to set up shop on Bridge Street was carriage maker W. H. Shupp who was manufacturing buggies and wagons there as early as 1880. The following year he erected a large building across the street at No. 141 which provided space for extensive wood-working, blacksmith and paint shops. This structure was razed about 1920. Still in situ are the two buildings occupied by the mercantile partnership of Stern and Nahm which was formed in 1897 and was still doing business on Bridge Street in 1940. Besides retailing a line of general merchandise Stern and Nahm were active wool buyers from ranchers in the Las Vegas trade area, a common practise among the merchants of that period who used their customers' prospective wool clip as security on advances for groceries and other supplies.

Another Bridge Street entrepreneur was C. V. Hedgcock. A native of Indiana, Hedgcock came to Las Vegas in 1881 and was employed by C. A. Rathbun, the proprietor of the Chicago Boot and Shoe Store. In 1900 Hedgcock purchased his employer's business interests including the building on Bridge Street and another outlet in East Las Vegas. About 1905 the building was converted into a saloon by Adelaido Gonzales, and, later, it became the town hall of West Las Vegas.

The hardware store of Ludwig William Ilfeld was also one of Bridge Street's most important businesses. A member of a large clan of German-Jewish merchants, Ilfeld first came to Las Vegas in 1891 to work for his uncle Charles Ilfeld, one of New Mexico's most successful businessmen, who maintained a large mercantile establishment on the plaza. After a six year apprenticeship, Ludwig William briefly conducted an independent venture in nearby Springer, but following a trip to Germany returned permanently to Las Vegas. In addition to his business interests in the town he held the position of fire chief for many years.

The Bridge Street Historic District is significant as an example of the development of a business district in a 19th century New Mexico town. Its transition from wagon road to a commercial block demonstrates both the boundless expectations and subsequent disillusionment of its settlers. The bridge, the street and its buildings are reminders of both changing tastes and circumstances in the history of Las Vegas.

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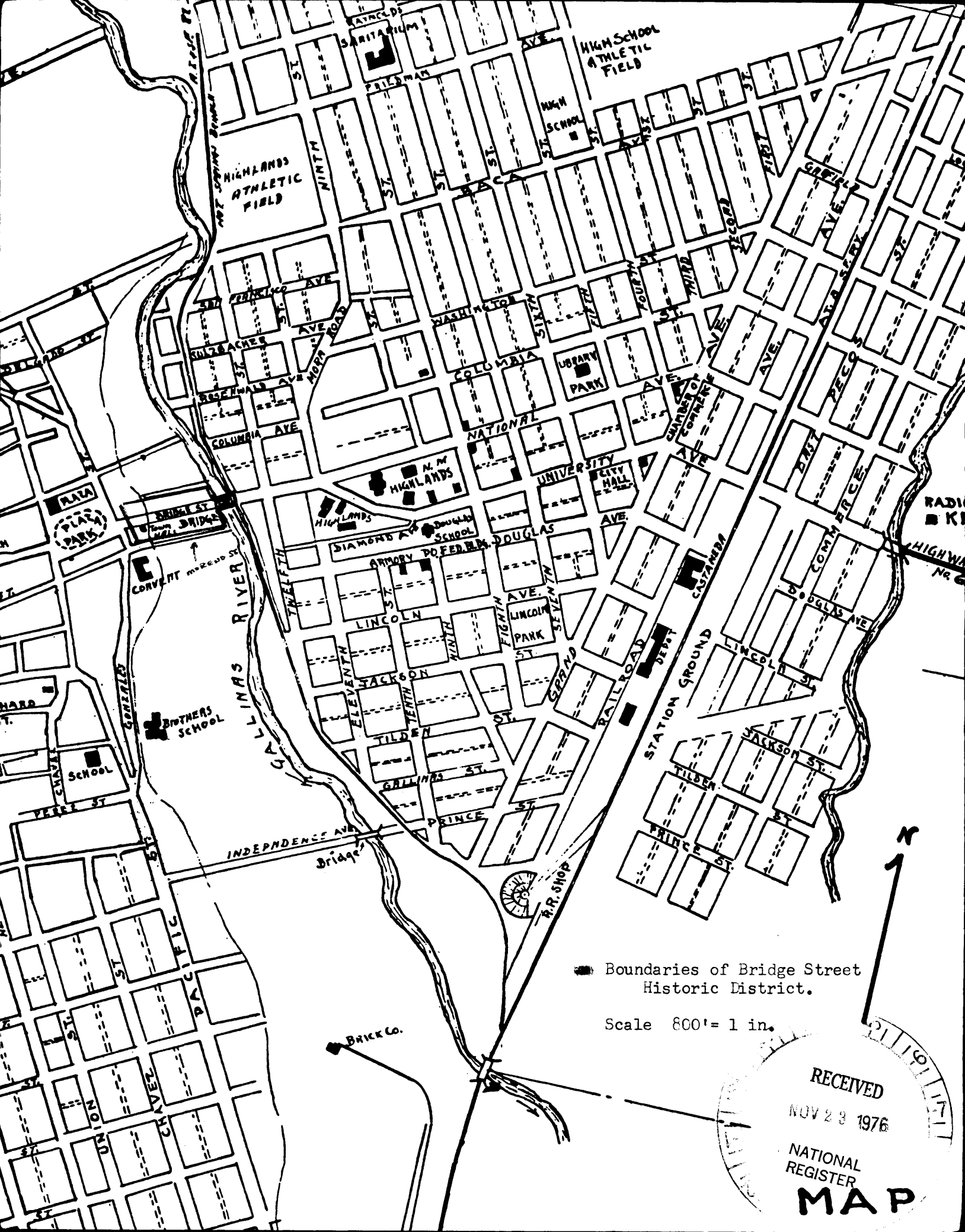
BRIDGE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

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10. Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northern corner of the Gallinas River Bridge, proceed southeast across Bridge Street to the eastern corner of the Bridge; then southwest along the side of the bridge to Moreno Street; then southeast along the northeast side of this street for approximately 150 feet; then southwest following the northwest side of Moreno Street for approximately 670 feet to the intersection with the Las Vegas Plaza Historic District Boundary; then northwest along the northeast property line of the Plaza Bank Building to Bridge Street; then north across this street; then northwest along the northeast property line of the Romero Block; then northeast along the northwest property line of the buildings facing Bridge Street for approximately 570 feet across Valencia Street; then southeast along the northeast side of this street to the western corner of the Gallinas River Bridge; then northeast along the side of the Bridge to the point of beginning. The District contains approximately seven acres.



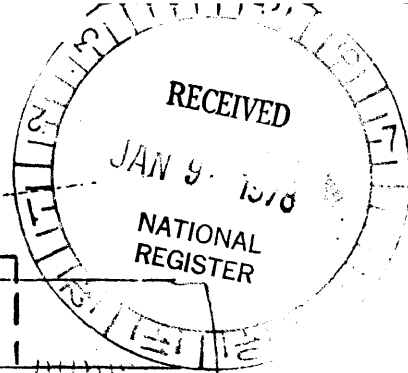
● Boundaries of Bridge Street Historic District.

Scale 800' = 1 in.

RECEIVED
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 MAP

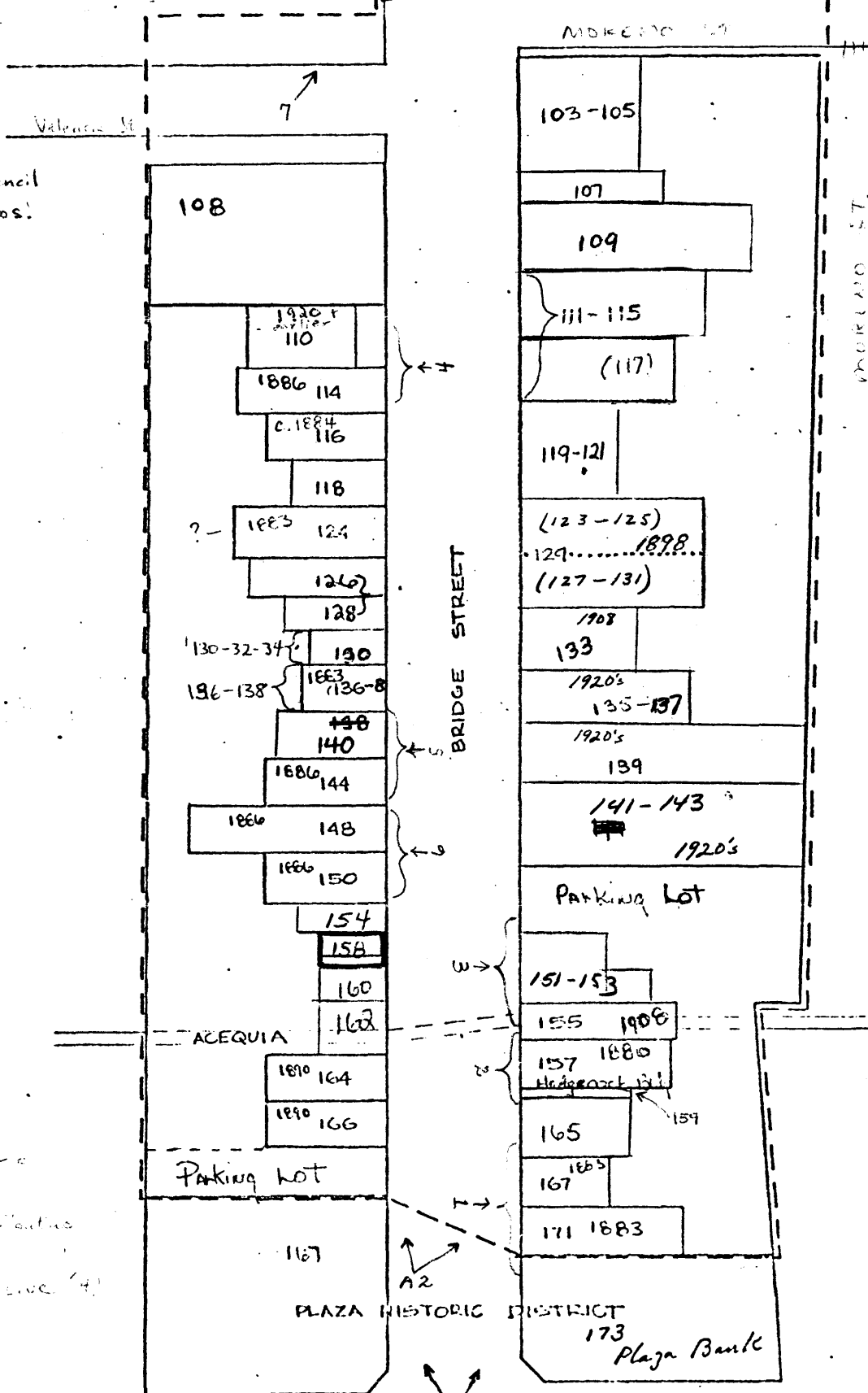
BRIDGE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

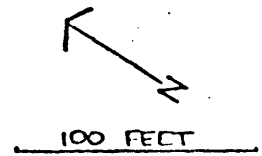


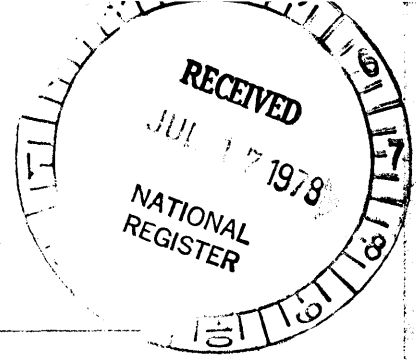
GALLINAS RIVER

Numbers in pencil indicate photos!



- Color key
- = Historic
 - = Contributives
 - = Intensive





BRIDGE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES - - - - -

GALLINAS RIVER

150

MORENO STREET ←

VALENCIA STREET

- 110
- 114
- 116
- 124
- 136
- 144
- 148
- 150

BRIDGE STREET

129

MORENO STREET

ACEQUIA

- 164
- 166

- 155
- 157

- 167
- 171

ROMERO BLOCK

PHOTO 2

PLAZA BANK BUILDING

PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

PHOTO 3

