

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Formreceived APR 1 1988  
date enteredSee instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic  
and/or common Historic Resources of the Mimbres Valley in Grant County  
(Partial inventory; Historic & Architectural Properties)

## 2. Location

street & number Mimbres Valley in Grant County N/A not for publication  
city, town San Lorenzo x vicinity of Cong. Dist. 2  
state NM code 35 county Grant code 017

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resource		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see continuation sheets for districts & individual properties)  
street & number

city, town vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grant County Courthouse

street &amp; number

city, town Silver City state New Mexico

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NM Hist. Bldg. Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1984 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records NM Hist. Preservation Division;  
Silver City Museum

city, town Santa Fe; Silver City state New Mexico

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" 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		

☒ varies, generally fair to good

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

From its headwaters in the Black Range mountains of southwest New Mexico, the Mimbres River flows fifty-three miles before dissipating in the desert. This nomination covers a twenty-five mile section of the river from where it leaves a high mountain canyon and forms a broad valley to where it crosses the Grant/Luna County line. This irrigated, agricultural valley, averaging one-half mile in width, is surrounded for miles on either side by arid desert landscape. Two historic farming villages and twenty-three individual properties are scattered through the valley, mostly along the main north/south road, Highway 61, which hugs the west side of the valley. Ninety-three per cent of the buildings are built of adobe, eighty-four per cent have corrugated metal roofs. The majority also have linear plans in the Hispanic tradition of the American Southwest and northern Mexico, a type here called New Mexico Vernacular. A few additional houses of adobe and corrugated roofing incorporate Anglo-American house plans: the I-house type, the center hall plan, and the gable-front-and-wing family. The McElroy House, built in 1928 at the NAN Ranch, with its red tile roof, and cast-stone, wrought-iron and carved-wood Spanish Colonial Revival detailing is the only historic building with architectural pretensions in the valley. The other buildings at the NAN--foreman's house, bunk house, barns, power plant and so forth--are undetailed vernacular structures of frame stucco construction with asphalt shingle roofs. The nominated properties are largely unaltered and well maintained and represent about half of the buildings erected in the resource area during the period of significance, 1869-1937. The San Lorenzo District includes twenty-nine contributing and nine non-contributing buildings; the San Juan District has fourteen contributing and two non-contributing buildings; and the individually-nominated properties account for thirty-seven contributing buildings, two contributing structures and no non-contributing features.

## 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1869-1937

Builder/Architect Specified where known

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Historic Resources of the Mimbres Valley in Grant County include two historic district and twenty-three individual properties built during the historic period, 1869 to 1937, and variously reflecting the early settlement of the area and the preeminence of agriculture in the valley's economy, and possessing architectural merit. The mining towns of Piños Altos and Silver City, established in the early 1860s, are the only permanent settlements in Grant County which predate the occupation of the Mimbres valley in 1869 and 1870. Because of the threat of Apache Indian attack into the mid-1880s, the settlers' struggle to gain a foothold continued for twenty years and, with few exceptions, substantial buildings only began to appear in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Buildings erected up to 1900 (and specifically noted in the continuation sheets), therefore, are good representatives of the early settlement of Grant County and meet National Register criterion A. The valley was settled primarily to provide agricultural products to the nearby mining areas, and it prospered throughout the historic period as the premier agricultural area of the county. All nominated properties meet Criteria A as manifestations of the central importance of agriculture in the history of the valley. The fifteen barns, silos and other farm buildings, and numerous smaller out buildings directly reflect this history; all other buildings owe their existence, at least indirectly, to the agricultural economy. Most of the nominated buildings are the residences of farmers, either in the farming villages of San Lorenzo or San Juan, or on individual homesteads. Even the five stores were intimately tied to the local economy, as sources of supplies and credit for farmers and as collection and shipping points for cash crops. Most of the buildings also meet Criterion C as well-preserved, typical examples of the New Mexico Vernacular building tradition which predominated in the Hispanic farming areas of the state. They are modest in size and for the most part unornamented. But because of their repeated use of adobe walls and corrugated roofs, basic cubic forms and linear plans, these buildings, when taken as a group, give a strong sense of the appearance of typical Hispanic farming villages and homesteads of southwestern New Mexico. Several other houses also meet (see continuation sheet)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See continuation sheets

Quadrangle name San Lorenzo, NM/Dwyer, NM

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References See continuation sheets

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Resource area boundaries recorded on USGS maps and justified in discussion of methodology under 7. Description.  
See continuation sheets for districts and individual properties.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Chris Wilson, Consulting Architectural Historian

organization for NM Hist. Preservation Division date 9/10/87

Villa Rivera, Room 101 (505) 266-0931 Wilson  
street & number 228 E. Palace Avenue telephone (505) 827-8320 HPD

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Topography, vegetation and spatial relations. The head waters of the Mimbres River are located at 10,000 feet in the Black Range of Southwestern New Mexico. The river flows approximately eighteen miles through a rocky mountain canyon before entering the more open Mimbres valley. It winds another thirty-five miles through this valley before dissipating in the desert, although, during the spring run-off, it sometimes reaches another twenty miles through the desert to Deming. This nomination covers only the upper twenty-five miles of the valley, in Grant County, from where the river exits the canyon just above the village of Mimbres at 6100 feet to where it enters Luna County just south of the community of Dwyer at 5100 feet (maps 1,2).

The valley averages one-half mile wide, but varies from one-quarter to one-and-one-quarter miles in width. Arid, sand-covered hills two hundred to six hundred feet high flank the river (photos 1,2,20,21). On the hills surrounding the north end of the valley, pinon and other pines are common, although south of San Lorenzo, creosote bush, yucca, cholla cactus and mullein predominate. In the valley, with its abundant water, the cottonwood is the principal tree, joined by the desert willow, occasional stands of walnut, ash and oak, and horehound--considered by residents a weed.

Approximately twenty-five acequias (irrigation ditches) built by early settlers from the 1860s to the turn of the century define the edges of the green valley. Above the ditches is rocky ground with its mixture of arid plants; below the ditches the indigenous plants line the river and fences. During the summer, fields of corn and alfalfa, vegetable gardens, and apple and peach orchards are seen throughout the valley. A few cottonwoods or elms and some lilacs, irises, lilies, hollyhocks and roses are planted around many houses.

New Mexico Highway 61 runs the length of the valley, on the west side of the river, situated just above the irrigation ditches and fields. Most farm and ranch houses are located east of the highway, near the fields. Barns and sheds are generally located forty to sixty feet to the sides or rear of these houses. The large compound of buildings at the NAN ranch, however, is located east of the river, as is one homestead in Noonday Canyon. The communities of Mimbres, San Juan and Dwyer straddle the highway with buildings organized informally, one or two buildings deep to either

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side (maps 1,2,4). The largest village in the valley, San Lorenzo (map 3), is located east of the river on a slight rise just above the fields. There, most houses are spaced irregularly ten to fifty feet back from hard-top Galaz Street, with a few houses along the dirt streets which extend one or two blocks east from Galaz. The only historic public spaces are a small triangular park in San Lorenzo (photo 9) and the large open spaces in front of the churches in San Lorenzo and San Juan (photo 23) which are now generally used as parking lots.

The area looks today much as it did from 1869 to 1937 when it grew and prospered as a farming valley. The strong topographic relationship of the narrow, green, cultivated valley set in a vast desert landscape, of course, remains unchanged. The one major development in recent years is a suburban subdivision to the southeast of the village of Mimbres. Because it is located east of NM 61, it is well above the area of historic buildings and farming development. Approximately half of the historic farm/ranch houses have been demolished or greatly altered. Change has also been substantial enough in Mimbres, Sherman and Dwyer that only a handful of historic buildings remain. Conversely, the villages of San Lorenzo and San Juan, and perhaps half of the farm/ranch houses remain little altered since the end of the period of historic significance in 1937. Many houses built in the nineteenth century were originally flat roofed, but gained their pitched roofs by the 1930s. In many cases the original flat earthen roofs carried on log beams (*vigas*) remain in place under the new pitched roofs.

Architecture. Fifty-four buildings, 93% of the nominated buildings (for which material is known), are constructed of adobe. Adobe walls generally rest on stone rubble footings, although some stand on more substantial stone rubble walls projecting one to three feet above the ground (photo 25). Concrete skirts have been added at the bases of many adobe walls to protect against erosion. As is tradition in much of northern Mexico and the Hispanic Southwest many adobe buildings remain unstuccoed, although others have been hard stuccoed in recent years. One structure is stone, two are wood frame, and one is horizontal log construction. The underlying material of twenty-one, stuccoed buildings is unknown. Apart from two flat and two shed roofs, roofs in the valley are evenly divided between

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gabled and hipped roofs. Eighty-four percent of the roofs are corrugated metal, most of the rest are asphalt shingle.

Few buildings have any ornamentation beyond simple wooden frames around windows and doors. Two have pedimented window lintels (photos 25,43) and two others have chamfered porch posts (photos 14,38); both details often reflect the provincial influence in New Mexico of the Greek Revival style. A jig-sawn porch railing embellishes one house (photo 49). Three houses are very faintly Bungalow style with a few exposed brackets or wood shingled gable ends (photos 43,61). The one architect-designed building in the valley is the main house of the NAN Ranch. Its tile roof, stuccoed walls and arched openings, together with wrought iron grills and lamps, and Solomonian columns provide a Spanish Colonial Revival appearance with the slightly rustic inflection of exposed wooden porch posts, brackets and beams. The San Lorenzo School has rustic stonework, popular in much of the Southwest during the 1930s.

All of the houses in the San Lorenzo and San Juan districts (photos 3-31) and most individually nominated houses such as the Grijalva, Galaz and Trujillo Houses (photos 41,44,65) are a type of house derived from the Spanish-Mexican vernacular tradition which the New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual terms New Mexico Vernacular. This type, built throughout the historic period, 1869-1937, consists of one-story houses with adobe walls and corrugated metal roofs. Each room tends to be self-contained, have its own exterior door, and step with the slope of the site (photos 15,17,18,29,30). Houses of one to three rooms generally have single file plans; while some with three rooms, and most with more rooms, have L-shaped plans. Larger houses sometimes grow to U-shaped plans or full courtyard houses. Many of the single file examples have shed roofed porches or shed roofed rear additions. A handful have enclosed porches or rooms added in the 1920s or 1930s of wood frame construction (photos 18,41). Most of these houses are oriented toward the street or highway, although a few also face to the rear toward a courtyard, the sides of which are completed by adobe walls or wire fences.

Some houses built of adobe and corrugated metal, nevertheless, suggest the introduction of non-Hispanic building types. Three farm/ranch houses, built in the 1880s or early 1890s, the Wood, Perrault and Brockman Houses

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(photos 39,56,59) are one room deep and one-and-a-half stories tall with side facing gables; two of these have wall dormers. The Portillo and Huechling houses (photos 48,38), built about 1890 and in 1917 respectively, have center hall plans with a porch on two or three sides and an over-riding hipped roof. A few of the New Mexico Vernacular houses in the valley have portions of window/door/window symmetry or rectangular plans (photos 44,46,52,69) both possibly derived from these Mimbres valley hipped-roofed, center-hall plan houses.

The following chart summarizes the historic uses of buildings and the building counts (according to National Register Bulletin 14).

## Historic Uses and Building Counts

	<u>San Lorenzo</u>	<u>San Juan</u>	<u>Individually-nominated</u>
Residential	21	10	23
Farm (Barns)	2	1	12
Commercial	2	1	3
Religious	2	1	0
School	1	1	1
Entertainment	1	0	0
Contributing			
Building	29	14	37
Structure	0	0	2
Non-contributing			
Building	9	2	0

Current uses are the same as historic uses except that the commercial buildings and two of three schools are now used as residences; the other school and a few houses are used for storage. A handful of buildings are unoccupied or only occasionally occupied.

Methodology. A survey of historic buildings in Grant county was conducted during the early 1980s by the Silver City Museum. Museum director Susan Berry, a historian and historic preservationist, conducted the field survey in the Mimbres valley during the summer of 1982. The survey employed the New Mexico Historic Building Inventory form which includes a photograph, sketch plan and brief written



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description to document each building erected before 1945. Few written records on the early history of the valley touch upon architecture. In the summer of 1984, Drusilla Claridge of the Silver City Museum gleaned some information from county tax records before conducting thirty-six interviews with long-time families and older residents. Based on the field survey, research and interviews, she subsequently prepared an historic resources nomination. This nomination covered all unaltered structures, more than fifty years old which were associated with early settlement and the development of agriculture in the valley. Only the portion of the Mimbres valley in Grant County was covered by the nomination because the remaining portion in Luna County had not (and has not) been surveyed. While this exclusion is unfortunate, if expedient, all currently-remaining villages and the vast majority of historic structures in the valley are located in the Grant County section and therefore are included in the nomination.

In early 1987, architectural historian Chris Wilson was asked by New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (NMHPD) staff to revise this nomination. During a field visit, additional information was gathered and photographs taken. (Note: photographs taken in 1982 or 1984 have been included in the nomination only if the building remained unaltered as of March, 1987.) Wilson substantially confirmed Claridge's assessment of the integrity and significance of the nominated buildings. The Otto Huechling House has been added to the nomination as have three buildings at the north edge of the San Lorenzo district. The Santiago Serna House, which has received a large addition since 1984, has been excluded from this nomination as have the Jake Mitchell Barn and the Arthur Ancheta House, the integrity, significance and construction dates of which Wilson and NMHPD staff questioned. The Father Aull House and Chapel has also been omitted because it is not directly related to the major historic developments on which this nomination is based: the early settlement of the valley and the valley's importance as an agricultural area. Also omitted are the Eliseo Aguilar house and the sharecroppers houses on the Portillo property which lacked complete documentation and which were inaccessible to Wilson during his 1987 field visit.

This nomination covers all eligible, historic buildings in the study area (maps 1,2), but does not cover archeological resources or assess the significance of

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irrigation systems, fields or other aspects of the cultural landscape. San Lorenzo and San Juan, which are largely intact, have been judged eligible for nomination as districts. Buildings were considered contributing in these districts if they were built before 1937. Those built after 1937 and those which have received major additions or new porches and windows are non-contributing. Other communities, which have undergone major changes are represented by individually significant structures: Mimbres (two stores, a house and a school), Sherman (a house, a barn and a teacherage), and Dwyer/Faywood (four houses). The remaining ten houses, one store, one chapel and one large complex of farm houses and buildings represent the most significant and intact examples of the farm and ranch buildings scattered elsewhere in the valley.

After the Second World War the economy of the valley changed (as explained under 8. Significance) and the population gradually declined. Since 1937 Soil Conservation Survey aerial photographs are the only reliable source for dating buildings, 1937 has been chosen as the end of the period of historic significance. Most nominated buildings are in fair to good condition. The few that are in poor repair or deteriorated are noted in the building descriptions below. The two districts are discussed first on the continuation sheets and then the individually nominated properties in order from the north end of the valley south to the Grant County line. (Note: Building survey numbering was begun from 1 in both the San Lorenzo and Dwyer Quad areas; therefor, numbers 1-37 (San Lorenzo District) and 38 (Menarad-Galaz House) in the San Lorenzo Quad at the north end of the valley overlap with the numbering for individually nominated properties in the Dwyer Quad to the south.)

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(Significance summary paragraph continued) Criterion C as distinctive fusions of the Hispanic and Anglo-American building traditions; they combine adobe construction and, sometimes portions of linear planning, with eastern folk house types such as the I-House, center hall plan and gable-front-and-wing family. The McElroy House meets Criteria C as a very well designed and detailed Spanish Colonial Revival house, one of the two or three best architect-designed buildings erected in the county between the World Wars.

First settlers. The Mimbres valley was occupied from ca. 200 A.D. to ca. 1250 by the Mimbres or Mimbreno Indians, a subgroup of the Mogollon culture. A sedentary, farming people, the Mimbres are best known today for their black and white, geometric and representational pottery designs. Some time after 1600, the valley was reoccupied by Apache Indians. A Spanish expedition which visited the valley in 1780 noted the Apaches cultivating fields in addition to their hunting and gathering activities. The Spanish discovered copper at Santa Rita, ten miles west of the Mimbres valley, in 1800 and began mining activities there about 1804. A fort was built here as protection against Apache Indian attack. James Pattie leased the mine in 1826 and briefly attempted farming in the Mimbres valley before being driven out by the Apaches. Apache hostilities against other settlers would continue until the Apaches were finally subdued in 1886 making them the last warring Indian group in the United States.

Early American activities. Mexico ceded the area to the United States in 1848. John Bartlett, who headed the commission which surveyed the new boundary during the early 1850s, described his first impression of the Mimbres valley:

When we reached the verge of the hills which bound the valley of the river, a sight truly refreshing presented itself. The bottom for nearly a mile in width was covered with verdure, such as we had not seen since leaving the rich valleys near Fredericksburg, in Texas. As we rode rapidly forward, we noticed a herd of about twenty black-tailed deer quietly grazing on the luxuriant grass of the valley.

In January, 1852, the Boundary Commission established itself in the old fort at Santa Rita, renaming it Ft. Webster. That September, they relocated to the Mimbres valley, at a

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point directly across the river from current-day San Lorenzo, where they would remain for a little more than a year. This location allowed the troops attached to the Commission to begin farming and to keep an eye on the Apache band under Mangus Colorado which had sided with the U.S. in the Mexican-American War and which was now being encouraged to farm on the Mimbres. The following year, this new Ft. Webster too was abandoned.

The Butterfield stage route, which was initiated between St. Louis and Stockton, California in 1857, crossed the Mimbres River seven miles south of present-day Dwyer. A stage stop here quickly developed into a small community, called variously Mowry City, Rio Mimbres, Mimbres Crossing and Old Town. At its height in the 1870s, it boasted as many as 250 residents, but faded quickly when the stage line was discontinued in 1880 as the Southern Pacific Railroad built across the southern part of New Mexico and Arizona.

From 1863 to 1864, Camp Mimbres was located four miles north of Mowry City. The California Volunteers who garrisoned the Camp had arrived in New Mexico too late to see action against the Confederates and were detailed instead to resist Apache attacks. They dug an irrigation ditch along the Mimbres for their fields. Some of them, most importantly French Canadian George O. Perrault, returned to the area to settle after their military service. During the 1860s a new gold mining camp thrived at Pinos Altos, fifteen miles west of the valley. Along with Mowry City, it would serve as staging areas for the settlement of the Valley. (Note: these background developments are not represented by nominated properties either because they remain only as archeological ruins or are located outside the resources area.)

Permanent settlement. In the late 1860s, John Brockman of Mowry City developed a grist mill near the current NAN Ranch and by 1869 had constructed an irrigation ditch to water his fields of corn and grain. Also in 1869, a group of nineteen miners and their families from Pinos Altos, led by N.Y. Ancheta, founded San Lorenzo, constructed an irrigation ditch and began farming in the upper Mimbres Valley. Their object was to provide food stuffs for the nearby mining camps. The following year, 1870, much of the valley was settled from Mowry City to San Lorenzo, and numerous additional irrigation ditches begun. Leaders in the efforts

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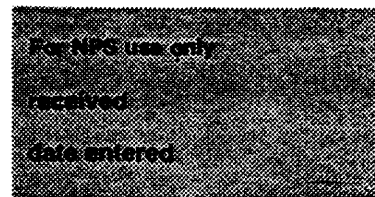
to construct ditches included: John Brockman, David Wardwell, E.J. Swartz, Luis Lujan, Ramon Baca, Canuto Parra, Idus Fielder and E.J. Foster in the area from Dwyer to Swartz, George G. Perrault, N.Y. Ancheta, Carlos Norero, Delores Heredia, Cosme Guadiana and Celso Gonzales in the Sherman to San Lorenzo area and Otto Huechling, Roberto and Raphael Kirker and Jim Hicks above San Lorenzo to the village of Mimbres. (Biographical information on some of these men and on others who helped develop the valley is included below in conjunction with the district and individual properties with which they are associated. The growth of San Lorenzo, San Juan and Mimbres are also more fully discussed below.) By the mid-1870s the village of San Juan had begun to coalesce around the homesteads of Carlos Norero and Luz Leiva.

The mid-section of the valley, especially around San Juan and San Lorenzo, was developed in typical Spanish-Mexican fashion: people concentrated in the villages, the ditches were built and maintained by the community, and long fields, running perpendicular from the river to the irrigation ditch, were allotted to each family. Indeed, the majority of settlers were from Chihuahua, many others with Spanish surnames were native New Mexicans, and a few came from Sonora. Anglo-American practices were stronger to the south toward Mowry City and at the north end of the valley which developed in conjunction with the Mimbres Mill. In these areas, independent family homesteads are more common and field boundaries more often follow section lines. And while there are many community ditches, others were constructed by individuals or corporations. Share-cropping was also more common in these areas.

In the early 1870s, silver was discovered at Georgetown, three miles east of the north end of the valley. By 1875 a silver mill was operating at the edge of the valley with the village of Mimbres growing around it. Georgetown along with Pinos Altos and Mowry City provided a good incentive for the development of agriculture in the valley. Although Mowry City declined after 1880, as did the mining towns after 1893 when the precious metals market collapsed, the Mimbres valley continued to find markets for its produce at Ft. Bayard, Silver City, which had emerged as the major city of the region, and the Santa Rita copper mine, which was revitalized starting in 1909. In fact, Santa Rita, only eight miles east, would develop as a source of wage employment for valley

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residents. Census figures for area communities give a rough sense of the growth and economic fortunes of the valley.

**U.S. Census of Population**

	Grant Co.	Mimbres (Mill)	George town	San Lorenzo	San Juan	Lower Mbres/Dwyer
1870	1,143			49		184
1880	4,539		540	284		284
1890	9,657	352	683	334		530
1900	12,883	295	88	329		486
1910	14,813	294		357		288
1920	21,939	307		273		291
1930	19,050	256		310	390	243
1940	20,050	349		476	237	237
1950	21,649	149		296	203	150
1960	18,700	1,153-Mimbres Div. incl. 201-Santa Rita				
1970	22,030	1,070				
1980	26,204	990				

(Notes: Grant County was subdivided in 1901 and 1919 to create Luna and Hidalgo Counties; census tract boundaries vary.) With the removal of the threat of Apache attack in the mid-1880s, the population of the valley jumped to approximately 1,200 in 1890, the level which would be maintained up to 1940. Population dropped to approximately 800 in 1950 and has declined gradually since.

Agriculture. The Mimbres valley was recognized throughout the period of significance, 1869-1937, as the major agricultural area of Grant County. A combination of ranching and farming developed in the valley. In the early days, livestock was grazed freely on the gramma grass which grew on the surrounding arid country side. But by the 1880s, the range was over stocked and seriously over-grazed. Between 1908 and 1912, the newly created United States Forest Service fenced much of the range and began regulating its use.

Corn, potatoes and vegetables were the first major food stuffs. Hay and alfalfa were widely grown for livestock to supplement the gramma grass of the surrounding hills. Apples, peaches, grapes and other fruit began to be planted in the early 1870s. Several commercial orchards of several thousand

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trees each were developed during the late 1880s and the 1890s. Sharecropping was fairly common in the valley; 12% of the farmers in Grant County in 1910 were sharecroppers. Under this system, the landowner provided land, equipment and credit at local stores to the share tenant who worked the land and returned a proportion, often one-third, of the crop to the landowner. Share tenants were usually recent immigrants from Mexico.

A devastating flash flood the night of August 29, 1902 washed away irrigation diversion dams, fences, crops, orchards and fields, damaged irrigation ditches and, in places, changed the course of the river. Most ditches were reconstructed by the spring of 1903, and agricultural production was nearly back to normal by 1907. The United States agricultural census of 1910 showed 198,519 head of cattle (1,631 dairy), 46,271 goats, 18,147 poultry, 10,089 horses and 2,263 swine in Grant County. Crops were valued at \$118,277 for cereals (primarily corn), \$95,088 hay/forage, \$42,066 fruits/nuts (primarily apples and peaches) and \$32,816 vegetables. With no Reclamation Service or commercial irrigation projects, most of the 40.8% of farms in the county which were irrigated were located in the Mimbres valley.

During the 1930s, an important aspect of the local economy was federally-funded public works employment provided by the construction of schools, the improvement of roads, and soil and forest conservation activities. The San Lorenzo School, built in 1936 by the WPA, is the most prominent remaining manifestation of this activity. After the closing of the open range, increasing acreage in the valley had been devoted to growing fodder for livestock. This shift became even more pronounced after the Second World War as ranching predominated and truck gardening declined. Although the population of the valley has also declined, agriculture remains the most notable activity in the valley.

Since the Mimbres valley was settled and prospered almost entirely on the basis of agriculture, virtually every nominated property owes its existence, directly or indirectly, to agriculture. San Lorenzo and San Juan were both primarily farming villages; the vast majority of male adults residents are listed on early census enumerator sheets as either farmer or laborer. Most of the individually

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nominated properties are either the houses of small farmers or the headquarters houses for larger farm and ranch spreads (photos 36,38,39,41,42,44,48,53,54,59,64,65,67-70). That only fifteen barns and other substantial farm buildings along with a few sheds remain today reflects the sharp decline in the importance of agriculture since the Second World War. These include two substantial adobe barns (photos 13,50), one log barn (photo 37), a walled courtyard of farm buildings attached to a house (photo 54), clusters of service buildings around several farm houses (photos 47,52,69) and a complex of barns, silos, poultry houses and garages on one large commercial ranch (photos 62,63). Local stores too were intimately involved in the agricultural economy because they actively extended credit and supplies to share tenants and other farmers, and often received payment in produce. They thereby became centers for transporting cash crops to the outside world. In San Lorenzo, for instance, Gorgonio Galaz built a large barn (photos 4,12,13) with a walled corral across the street from his store to handle agricultural products.

Architecture. That the majority of settlers of the Mimbres valley were recent immigrants from northern Mexico is reflected in the fact that most buildings in the valley (photos 1-31,41,44,57,64-70) continue the vernacular architectural tradition found in Mexico and elsewhere in Hispanic New Mexico. The New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual calls this type New Mexico Vernacular. Its basic characteristics are, first, the self-contained nature of the individual rooms--an exterior door for each room, floor level of each room stepping with the slope, etc. And second, the linear organization of these rooms to form single file and L-shaped plans. Houses sometimes grew to a U-shaped form, such as the Ramon Baca House (photo 69, 70) and to full courtyard houses. The courtyards of the Perrault and Brockman houses (photos 54,59) are probably derived from this Spanish tradition, although, both also have portions clearly based Anglo house types. The orientation of some local L-shaped houses to the rear (photos 5 left, 15) and vestiges of adobe walls (photo 24) suggest that some houses originally had courtyard spaces behind. (See also site plans for individually nominated properties.)

In this Hispanic tradition, the most readily available material, capable of producing a massive (generally masonry)



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wall, was employed. Accordingly, in the Mimbres valley, adobe is the predominant material. Early photographs of the Mexican section of Georgetown show some adobe rooms but a preponderance of log construction--either vertical jacal or hewn horizontal logs. The easy availability of timber there accounts for this and suggests that some early houses in the north end of the Mimbres valley especially at Mimbres Mill may also have been log construction, although no examples have been identified. Early log rooms could conceivably exist unrecognized in larger stuccoed houses. Early photograph of the Chihuahua Hill section of Silver City show widespread use of stone from the hill as building material. Some of these houses have stone rubble walls up to the window sills and adobe above. This arrangement protected the base of walls from erosion by capillary action. Some examples of this arrangement have been identified in the valley, most notably the Portillo House and Barn, and the Norero House in San Juan (photo 25). Just how widespread this construction detail was is uncertain because many buildings have been stuccoed.

Houses of this Hispanic tradition were usually flat-roofed. Likewise, many, if not most of the early Mimbres Valley examples were flat roofed. As in other areas of New Mexico, the earliest Mimbres examples have received pitched roofs and those built after about 1910 have integral pitched roofs. Most of the 19th century examples have side-facing gabled roof; the later examples tend to have hipped roofs. Especially in San Lorenzo and its vicinity hipped roofs also tend to have gablets (photos 6,10,14,15,18,38,41,64). The use of hipped roofs with gablets for workers houses at Santa Rita after 1909 may account for the introduction of this roof detail into the valley.

Like most Hispanic, Catholic churches in New Mexico, those in San Lorenzo and San Juan are built of adobe with corrugated metal roofs--gabled at the front and transepts and hipped over the apse. Both face to the South, the second most common orientation. The San Lorenzo Church has a single nave plan, the most common type. The plan of the San Juan church, however, represents an unusual variation. Inside, is a single nave; but where the transepts of cruciform churches are located, secondary rooms have been added--a sacristy and confessional. These secondary rooms make this relatively modest single nave church appear to be a more elaborate

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cruciform plan (the second most common plan, usually found in larger communities). In 1962, two rooms--a shrine and a confessional--were added to the sides of the San Lorenzo church to give it a similar appearance. Additional field research in the southern portion of the state and northern Mexico is needed to determine whether this Mimbres variation is a common regional type.

The leading non-Hispanic settlers were Anglo-Americans from east of the Mississippi such as John Brockman and Dr. Granville Wood and single representatives of other ethnic group such as French Canadian George G. Perrault, Italian Carlos Norero and German Otto Huechling. Although numerically small, they controlled many of the major homesteads. Like their neighbors, they generally used adobe and corrugated roofing, but introduced Anglo-American house types.

The Wood, Perrault and Brockman Houses, built in the 1880s or early 1890s, are one room deep and one-and-one-half stories tall with side facing gable; two have wall dormers (photos 39,53,59). With so few examples and without a detailed study of the buildings, it is difficult to say with certainty what their derivation was. They appear to be related to the I-house plan of the English folk tradition in the Eastern United States, which has previously been noted as far west as Missouri and Nebraska and among the Mormons in Utah. Houses which share the story-and-a-half adobe construction and wall dormers also exist in Hispanic Wagon Mound and Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico.

The Portillo and Heuchling Houses (photos 48,38), with their hipped-roofs, center hall plans and large porches, are similar to other ranch houses in southern New Mexico and Arizona. Jane Stewart, author of *Arizona Ranch Houses*, feels the type can be traced back through Texas to French Colonial and Greek Revival houses in Louisiana and the South which have hipped roofs, verandas wrapping the house, and, often, center hall plans. These two local examples probably introduced rectangular plans and window/door/window symmetry into the local vernacular tradition (photos 44,46,52,69).

Five remaining stores attest to the importance of local mercantile activities. The two in San Lorenzo reflect the activities of Hispanic merchants, most important of which

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were Sonoran N.Y. Ancheta, leader of the first settlers and Gorgonio Galaz, founder of the largest family in the valley. The other three stores were built by Anglo-Americans away from the Hispanic villages. Merchants who had been active in Georgetown and stayed in the area after its decline were responsible for the two stores at Mimbres. Four of the stores employ the ubiquitous adobe and corrugated roofing (photos 14,32,45), although one is wood-frame (photo 34),

Preservation activities. The most notable example of historic preservation has been the partial restoration of the tower of San Lorenzo Church about 1984 including the return of the original hipped roof (photo 11). Most historic buildings are occupied and maintained as a matter of course. Most recent repairs respect the historic character of buildings (for instance, photos 55,56), although some major alterations have occurred (photo 19). The Historic Building Inventory, on which this nomination is based, was conducted by the Silver City Museum. Over the last decade, the Museum has spearheaded efforts to publicize the history of Grant County and to identify and protect the historic resources of the county. Information developed in this nomination will be integrated into the Southwest New Mexico Regional Overview, a preservation plan to be sponsored by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division beginning in 1988 or 1989.

This nomination covers two historic districts and twenty-three individual properties--both individual buildings and farm/ranch complexes which each include a house and farm buildings. The San Lorenzo and San Juan districts represent the only historic communities remaining in substantially unaltered condition in the resource area. The individual properties include both significant, unaltered buildings in the communities which have otherwise lost their historic integrity (Mimbres, Sherman and Dwyer) and the major buildings of historically significant farms and ranches.

Because of the threat of Apache attack through the mid-1880s, few areas were settled in southwestern New Mexico before the Mimbres valley. The two most important ones, the mining towns of Pinos Altos and Silver City, have been recognized through the designation of National Historic Districts. In southern New Mexico, only the Chihuahua Hill district of Silver City and the Mesilla Historic District, to the east on the Rio Grande, possess comparable concentrations

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of historic Hispanic vernacular architecture. The folk buildings of the Mimbres valley, however, with very few exceptions, are more modest than comparable examples in northern New Mexico. The buildings of the Tierra Amarilla area near the Colorado border, which was developed at the same time as Mimbres, for instance, have more and larger rooms, and far more ornamentation and elaboration. That was one of the most prosperous agricultural areas of the state. By comparison, the very modesty of buildings here suggests a harder life for the settlers of the Mimbres valley.

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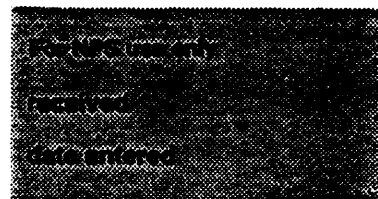
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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic GroupName Mimbres Valley MRA  
State Grant County, NEW MEXICO

## Nomination/Type of Review

## Date/Signature

Cover	Substantive Review	Keeper	<u>Beth Boland</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
1. San Lorenzo Historic District	Substantive Review	Keeper	<u>Beth Boland</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
2. San Juan Historic District	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
3. Sibole, George, Store	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
4. Redding, William, House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
5. Hooks--Moore Store	Substantive Review	Keeper	<u>Beth Boland</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
6. Mimbres School	Substantive Review	Keeper	<u>Beth Boland</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
7. Valencia, Ysabel, House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
8. Huechling, Otto, House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5/16/88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
9. Wood, Dr. Granville, House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Helena Byers</u>	<u>5-16-88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____
10. McGregor, Elizabeth and Alex, House	Substantive Review <b>DOE/OWNER OBJECTION</b>	Keeper	<u>Carmel Shuler</u>	<u>8-5-88</u>
		Attest	_____	_____



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Nomination/Type of Review Date/Signature

- DOE/OWNER OBJECTION**
11. Bloodgood, Clyde A., House **Substantive Review** Keeper Determined Eligible - Beth Boland 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
12. Grijalva, Luciana B., House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
13. Menard--Galaz House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
14. Acklin Store **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
15. Torres, Antonio, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
16. Portillo, Mauricio, House **Substantive Review** Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
17. Valencia, Jesus, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
18. Perrault, George O., House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
19. San Juan Teacherage **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
20. NAN Ranch **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byrum 5/16/88  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_

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Thematic GroupName Mimbres Valley MRA  
State Grant County, NEW MEXICO

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Eby, Tom, Storage Building

Substantive Review

Keeper Beth Boland 5/16/88

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

22. Trujillo, Maria J. and Juan,  
HouseEntered in the  
National Registerfor Keeper Melorus Byrum 5/16/88

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

23. Soliz--Baca House

Entered in the  
National RegisterKeeper Melorus Byrum 6/17/88

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

24. Andazola, Trinidad, House

Entered in the  
National Registerfor Keeper Melorus Byrum 5/16/88

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

25. Baca, Ramon, House

Entered in the  
National RegisterKeeper Melorus Byrum 6/17/88

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

26.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

27.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

28.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

29.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

30.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_