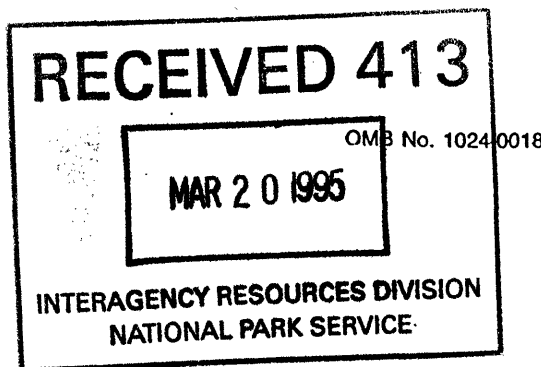


United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Architectural and Historic Resources of Hillsboro, New Mexico

Part 1: Domestic Architecture

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Developmental Trends of the Community of Hillsboro, New Mexico, from its Inception in 1877 to 1944.

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

organization Research Services of Santa Fe

date September 1994

street & number 1042 Stagecoach Road

telephone (505) 983-5605

city or town Santa Fe state New Mexico

zip code 87501

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Architectural and Historic Resources of Hillsboro, NM.

Part 1: Domestic Architecture

Name of Property

Sierra County, New Mexico

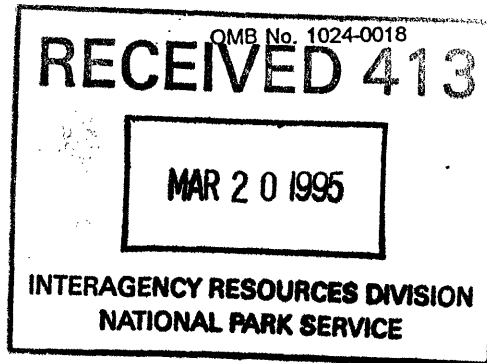
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E. Statement of Historic Context

**DEVELOPMENTAL TRENDS OF THE COMMUNITY OF HILLSBORO, NEW MEXICO,
FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1877 TO 1944.**

Summary

Hillsboro was founded in 1877 on the Percha Creek following the discovery of gold nearby in the Black Range, and was the first mining camp in future Sierra County. When the county was established in 1884, its largest village, Hillsboro, became the county seat. After the collapse of the mining boom in the early 1890s, Hillsboro continued as a small supply center for area ranches and farms and for whatever mining remained. The town retained its governmental and judicial role until replaced as county seat by Hot Springs (present Truth or Consequences) in 1938. Thereafter, Hillsboro gradually lost population and businesses subsiding into the small community of about 100 which it remains today.

Precious Metal Mining in New Mexico¹

Myths and legends of great mineral wealth first drew Spanish explorers north into New Mexico in the sixteenth century. However, instead of the Seven Cities of Gold, they found indigenous peoples whose use of mineral resources consisted primarily of stone and clay for both practical purposes, such as tools, building materials, and vessels, as well as for the decorative and ceremonial. Though disappointed in their quest for fabulous treasure to match that of the Aztecs and Incas, the Spanish, nevertheless, did not locate or exploit significantly

1. Unless otherwise noted, most of this discussion is based on information drawn from Paige W. Christiansen, *The Story of Mining in New Mexico* (Socorro: New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources, 1974).

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the considerable metal deposits of New Mexico except in isolated instances for the most part late in the nearly 250-year rule of the Spanish crown.

Spanish colonization was concentrated primarily in the valleys of the Rio Grande and its tributaries, near the native Pueblo Indian population. The mountainous areas beyond the valleys, where metals were to be found, remained the domain of semi-nomadic tribes whose opposition to European intrusion persisted in some areas nearly to the end of the nineteenth century. Spanish development of mineral resources was further hindered by a lack of accumulated capital in what was primarily an agricultural, subsistence economy.

Turquoise was probably the first commercial mining product in the Colonial New Mexico. Early mining for lead and possibly silver at Cerrillos near Santa Fe and copper mining at Santa Rita, located about 15 miles west of present Silver City in southwestern New Mexico, are the best documented and most extensive mining efforts of the Spanish period.

During the 25-year Mexican period (1821-1846), trade over the Santa Fe Trail brought increased population and new capital, and New Mexico had a first rush for gold. Within about ten years, in 1828 and 1839, two gold strikes south of Santa Fe, known as the Old and the New Placers inspired short periods of feverish activity. However, significant lode mining for gold in New Mexico did not begin until the 1880s and was pursued actively only until about the beginning of the twentieth century.

Throughout the Mexican period and for some years after New Mexico was occupied by the United States military in 1846 and became a territory of the United States in 1850, mining activity was inhibited by Indian hostilities and by a chronic lack of capital to provide labor and technology. After the Civil War, the military turned its attention to what was known as the "Indian problem," and gradually danger to the prospector diminished. By the late 1870s Indian hostility was limited to localized raids in western and southwestern New Mexico.

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Meanwhile, extravagant claims from both official and unofficial sources trumpeting the mineral riches of the territory succeeded in attracting new population and capital. Actual discoveries of precious metal deposits lent credibility to the propaganda, prompting rushes of prospectors and miners followed by merchants and other business men, and the establishment of quickly mushrooming boom towns in remote areas, far from established travel routes.

Gold was discovered in Pinos Altos, near modern Silver City, in about 1860, although mining was delayed until about 1867. In 1870 silver was discovered near Silver City which was platted in that year and grew into the leading camp and center of commerce for the region, succeeding Pinos Altos as the county seat of Grant County. Nearby Georgetown developed into a booming silver camp in the early 1870s.

Precious metal mining became a significant economic factor in New Mexico in the 1880s. Early in the decade American troops with advantages of numbers and weapons, broke the final resistance of the Apaches in the southwestern part of the territory. The building of a transcontinental railroad through the state about 1880 and thereafter branch lines to resource areas brought new prosperity to most local industries including mining. Fast, cheap transportation promoted population growth and provided an economical means of exporting local products and importing technology. Eastern and foreign capital now found New Mexico attractive, making possible significant mining endeavors.

Sierra became one of the principle mining counties of the state. Hillsboro, producing primarily gold and some copper, together with nearby Kingston and Lake Valley, primarily silver camps, were the communities associated with the most important mining districts in the county. The total value of ore taken from the Hillsboro district before 1904 had an estimated value of about \$6,750,000; from Kingston about \$6,250,000; and from Lake Valley about \$5,300,000. Other districts in the county together

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produced ore valued at about \$1,500,000. In contrast, the total production of the county from 1904 to 1930, exclusive of manganese ores, was valued at \$1,201,263.²

The boom years in precious metal mining were brought to a crashing halt in 1893 as a consequence of national monetary policy. Silver prices had been kept high from 1876 by limited coinage of silver and after 1890 by the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. The repeal of the Sherman Act in 1893 precipitated a national financial panic with disastrous effects on the New Mexico mining industry generally. Most of the mines in southwestern New Mexico closed and many towns disappeared as quickly as they had come into being.

Communities that survived the Panic of 1893 were those that had an economy founded on something other than mining, such as ranching and farming or in local government. Furthermore, accessibility to a main artery of transportation was essential to the long-term stability of a community.

Although the heyday of precious metals was over in New Mexico by the early twentieth century, subsequent decades saw cycles of renewed interest in precious metal mining in response to fluctuations in metal values. Mining generally in New Mexico was stimulated by World War I. Although an economic slump in the early 1920s closed most mines, mining expanded again later in the 1920s until 1929.³

Figures for the total value of gold produced in Sierra County through the 1920s demonstrate the widely but ultimately downwards fluctuating course of production. For example, in 1905 the value of gold (both placer and lode) produced in the county was \$99,042; a year later the value fell to \$18,048 and the next year was reduced by more than half to \$8,224. In 1911 the value

2. Samuel G. Lasky and Thomas Peltier Wootton, *The Metal Resources of New Mexico and Their Economic Features* (Bulletin No. 7. Socorro, New Mexico: New Mexico School of Mines 1933) 99.

3. Lasky and Wootton 19.

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rose to \$27,785 but fell a year later to \$4,143 and the following year to \$857. The high during the war years \$2,836 in 1915. After 1917 no values are given for placer gold. In 1918 the value of lode gold fell to \$568 but in 1920 rose to \$15,896 only to drop a year later to \$1,323. The high for the rest of the decade was \$8,621 in 1927. In 1930 a total value of \$3,638 was mined.⁴

Because of government policy, gold values rose during the depression that followed the crash of 1929. In 1933 the price was bid up by the Treasury under the Gold Purchase Plan and finally set at \$35 per ounce, under the Gold Reserve Act of January 30, 1934. This was a 69% rise in value which encouraged gold mining worldwide and gave a temporary stimulus to the New Mexico industry.

Gold mining is an expensive undertaking, for which the rewards can be significant and the risks daunting. Significant capital is needed both for mining activities themselves and development of such necessities as water resources and transportation. Intensive labor as well as expensive equipment is required to most efficiently mine and process ores. Whole communities had to be formed near deposits in remote, otherwise undeveloped areas.

Placer gold (that found in present or former stream beds mixed with sand and gravel as a product of erosion from veins in lode deposits) was the most easily accessible requiring technologically simple but inefficient techniques of hand panning and mercury amalgamation. Gravels needed to be rich and a significant amount of water was required for washing away other materials.

Lode mining for gold found in veins required that ores first be dug out and then crushed in order to separate the metal from the quartz or rock in which it is embedded. Once the ore was reduced to gravel, the gold could be separated through washing

4. Lasky and Wootton 100.

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and mercury amalgamation. Two methods of crushing ore were used at Hillsboro. The *arrastra* employed a mule to drag a boom to which was attached a 400 to 500 pound rock which crushed the ore against the sides and bottom of a shallow, circular, stone pit. After a few hours water and mercury were added and the resulting amalgam later processed in a retort. *Arrastras* soon gave way to the steam-powered stamp mill in which heavy iron pestles were dropped to crush the ore. Small smelting furnaces could also be used to reduce the ore.

The mining of precious metals was relatively short-lived as a major industry in New Mexico, and never reached levels of production comparable to those of other areas of the country. Nevertheless, such mining played a major role in the economic development of the territory in the late nineteenth-century by attracting population and providing wages and capital for other investment. Crop and livestock production were increased to feed this new population which did not itself produce food. In response to mining roads and railroad lines were built, and water resources developed.

Ranching in New Mexico

The range cattle industry grew dramatically after 1870, the year the first cattle company was incorporated in New Mexico, and peaked in the 1880s. In 1870 there were an estimated 57,000 head of cattle in New Mexico; by 1880 there were 348,000. The need to feed growing numbers of military personnel brought in to subdue the Indians and then to feed the Indians themselves, as well as the increasing numbers of miners and others drawn to new lands created a market for food which stimulated both ranching and agriculture. After 1880 railroads brought in new population as well as improved machinery for both production and the development of water resources and also provided access to national markets.⁵ By the 1890s the cattle boom was over as competition increased for the open range. Sheep and especially

5. Christiansen 42.

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goats in Sierra County rose in importance. In 1900 there were 65,094 cattle on farms and ranches, 35,674 sheep, and 17,058 goats. Ten years later the number of Cattle had declined to 65,094 and sheep to 20,486, but the number of goats had risen to 57,249.⁶

History of Hillsboro

Sierra County, in southwestern New Mexico, is crossed by the Rio Grande which flows south through the county slightly east of center. The Black Range, an unbroken mountain chain over 100 miles in length, forms the western boundary with Grant County. Tributary streams, such as the Percha Creek, flow eastward from the mountains carrying runoff to the Rio Grande.

Though rich in minerals and grazing lands, Sierra county was one of last areas in New Mexico to be settled by Europeans. The Spanish had passed through the area as they traveled up and down the Rio Grande but established no settlements in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries because of the lack of apparent resources and Apache resistance to encroachments upon their lands. At the end of the Colonial period settlement was limited to a few scattered agrarian communities, and did not begin in earnest until the discovery of precious metals in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the spring of 1877, Dan Dugan and David Stitzel, two prospectors from Georgetown, a camp about 60 miles to the west across the Black Range, discovered gold near the southern end of the Black Range in then Socorro County.⁷ By summer twenty men were working in the district which they called Las Animas, sixty-one locations were recorded, and Joe Yankie had one arrastra running.⁸ By September four arrastras had been erected and the

6. Christopher Wilson, Stanley Hordes, and Henry Walt, *The South Central New Mexico Overview* (Santa Fe: The Historic Preservation Division, 1989) 46.

7. A 1880 boundary adjustment put Hillsboro in Dona Ana County.

8. *Grant County Herald* 25 August 1877.

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new district, which was said to cover about four square miles, yielded its first return, a sack of gold with an estimated value of \$500 dollars.⁹

Word spread quickly and the settlement that had formed in the Percha Valley soon acquired the name Hillsborough (later shortened), chosen by lot according to one version of the story.¹⁰ By the following February (1878) about 100 men were at work in the mines of the Las Animas District and the miners were considering building permanent homes.¹¹ In March the camp could boast 175 inhabitants, two stores, one butcher shop, one bakery, and one hotel. Fifteen arrastras had been erected and one small mill was running.¹² The discovery of placer gold that spring brought in more miners.¹³ By fall there were three stores in town, one of which belonged to Nicolas Galles. A small sawmill in the mountains was producing lumber and shingles and permanent buildings were being erected.¹⁴ By the end of the year about 250 miners were in the camp, nine arrastras were running and a ten-stamp mill about to start up.¹⁵ On March 7, 1879 a post office was granted to Hillsborough.

The Hillsboro gold strikes were soon followed by rich finds of silver nearby. In August of 1878 a prospector from Hillsboro discovered silver near what would become the town of Lake Valley, about fifteen miles to the south. There the Bridal Chamber, claimed to be the purest deposit of silver ore found in the world, yielded about \$3,000,000 worth of almost pure silver in

9. *Grant County Herald* 29 September 1877.

10. George B. Anderson, *History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Pacific States Publishing Company, 1907) 759.

11. *Grant County Herald* 16 February 1878.

12. *Grant County Herald* 9 March 1878.

13. *Grant County Herald* 11 May 1878; 21 December 1878. *Weekly New Mexican* 18 December 1878.

14. *Grant County Herald* 21 September 1878.

15. *Grant County Herald* 21 December 1878.

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six months.¹⁶ The town of Kingston about eight miles west of Hillsboro in the Percha Valley was platted in 1882 after silver was discovered nearby.¹⁷

Despite unwaveringly optimistic newspaper reports and rapid initial growth, the early years at Hillsboro were difficult. Development of the mines was impeded for about the first decade¹⁸ by several interrelated factors, including lack of capital, scarcity of water, the high cost of labor and supplies, primitive equipment, lack of a rail link, and the Apache presence.

By the late 1870s Indian clashes were reduced to localized raids. The reservation system was in place; the Apaches, the last group to be subjugated, were moved from place to place of inadequate rations and poor farmland. In 1877 they were moved yet again from southern New Mexico to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona. Victorio and other leaders objected and soon left with a number of followers.¹⁹

From 1879 to 1881 the Apache threat brought most mining to a halt at Hillsboro and other Black Range camps.²⁰ Black soldiers of Company C, Ninth Cavalry were detailed to Hillsboro, fourteen of whom were counted among the residents of the election precinct of Hillsboro in 1880.²¹ In September of 1879, after a skirmish near McEver's Ranch (Lake Valley), armed citizens went to the

16. Anderson vol. 2, 967. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexico History*, vol. 4 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1917) 268.

17. Twitchell vol. 4, 270.

18. George E. Robin, *Mineral and Other Resources of Sierra County, New Mexico* (St. Louis: Great Western Printing Company, 1893) 16. *Illustrated History of New Mexico* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1895) 187.

19. The history of Apache and Anglo-American relations in southwest New Mexico is discussed in some detail by Boyd C. Pratt and Dan Scurlock, *The Southwest New Mexico Regional Overview*, vol. 1 (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1991) 111-128.

20. *Weekly New Mexican* 17 January 1880. *The Daily New Mexican* 26 June 1881.

21. United States Census 1880.

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scene and lives were lost on both sides.²² The following January, militia companies at Hillsboro, La Mesilla, Las Cruces, and Silver City, the major communities of southern New Mexico, took to the field and soldiers were brought in.²³ In 1881 George Daly, the founder of Lake Valley, and Captain Schmitt, in charge of the Black troops, were killed in a conflict near Hillsboro, having set out in search of Victorio when it was heard he was coming to raid the town.²⁴

Nevertheless a small community had formed at Hillsboro. Among the professions of the 171 persons listed in the 1880 United States Census were thirty-six miners, one prospector, one metallurgist, six stockmen, ten laborers, six general merchants, two carpenters, and one blacksmith, brick mason, butcher, hotel keeper, physician, attorney, cobbler, millwright, and druggist.

By the spring of 1881 mining recommenced.²⁵ That year rail transportation came within twenty-five miles of Hillsboro when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway met the Southern Pacific building east from California. Supplies and passengers for Hillsboro and other nearby mining towns were transferred at the Nutt station onto freight wagons or stagecoaches for the remaining journey. Capital was still scarce and much needed. An 1882 business directory claimed a total population of about 500 with about 300 men working the mines near the camp.²⁶ The same year R.H. and N.L. Jones were publishing the *Hillsboro Prospector*, Hillsboro's first, but short-lived, newspaper.²⁷

22. *Grant County Herald* 20 September 1879.

23. *Weekly New Mexican* 17 January 1880.

24. *Santa Fe Register* 4 September 1949.

25. *Daily New Mexican* 26 June 1881.

26. *A Complete Business Directory of New Mexico and Gazetteer of the Territory for 1882* (Santa Fe: New Mexican Printing and Publishing Company, 1882) 57.

27. F. Stanley [Crocchiola], *The Hillsboro, New Mexico Story* (Pep, Texas: privately printed, 1964) 4. Pearce S. Grove, Becky J. Barnett, and Sandra J. Hansen, *New Mexico's Newspapers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975) 499-500.

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The year 1884 was momentous for Hillsboro. Sierra County was formed from parts of Grant, Socorro, and Dona Ana Counties at the behest of mining interests and appropriately named for the mountains which were the source of county's prosperity. Hillsboro, the largest community, became the county seat. The townsite was patented²⁸ and the lots deeded by John Donahoe, probate judge and trustee of the townsite of Hillsboro. The distance to a railroad connection was about halved when a 13-mile subsidiary line was built from Nutt to Lake Valley.²⁹ The *Sierra County Advocate*, Hillsboro's first long-running newspaper, was founded.

At mid decade, the Territorial census counted 120 households of 376 individuals in the Hillsboro voting precinct including, sixty-two miners, ten ranchmen, five farmers, three herders, six cowboys, fifty-six laborers, four merchants, two storekeepers, one butcher, one baker, six saloon keepers, two carpenters, and one blacksmith, shoemaker, hotel keeper, printer, gambler, physician, and three lawyers.

Throughout 1880s the town continued to prosper. The cattle industry thrived and sheep and goat herding also gained significance. Hillsboro acquired a bank when William H. Bucher and John W. Zollars moved over from Kingston to found the Sierra County Bank. By 1890 the official population had grown to 621, nearly double that of five years earlier.³⁰

In 1888 Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Orchard, who were operating a stagecoach line between Silver City and the mining camps of Pinos Altos and Mogollon, bought the line from Lake Valley through Hillsboro to Kingston. For two years Orchard continued to run

28. *Silver City Enterprise* 12 September 1884.

29. David F. Myrick, *New Mexico's Railroads* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, rev. ed. 1990) 204.

30. United States Census 1890.

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the Silver City line while his wife operated the new line. One of the area's most colorful figures, Sadie Orchard often drove the coach herself and broke many of the horses.³¹

The first years of the new decade boded well for Hillsboro. The principal mines among many were the Bonanza, the Snake, the Opportunity, and the Richmond. Four mills with a combined capacity of seventy-five tons per day were running constantly to mill and concentrate ore. A copper-matte furnace of thirty-ton capacity reduced the heavier ores.³² Two major brick buildings were constructed in 1892, the county courthouse and the nearby Protestant Union church. Hillsboro was the headquarters of several cattle companies with herds of 40,000 to 50,000 head, though agricultural interests were small and confined to fruit growing and pasture in the immediate vicinity.³³

In 1893 the national economy collapsed. Black Range mining virtually closed down never to return to anything resembling former levels. Little capital was available for the rest of the decade. Some mines owned by outside financiers were worked by local leasees who forwarded royalties.³⁴ Attempts at placer mining, which requires less capital, were hindered by lack of water.³⁵ The value of the total 1899 output of gold from the Hillsboro mines, more than half produced under lease, was said to be about \$181,500, a figure that was less than the annual output of the Opportunity before 1893. The Snake mine was then the principal producer by leasing; the Bonanza and Opportunity were shut down; and the Richmond, long in hands of a receiver had just been sold.³⁶ At the end of the decade, the ever hopeful press

31. "Hillsboro," WPA City File (Quoted by Museum of New Mexico Historic Sites Inventory, 1965).

32. Robin 17.

33. Robin 18.

34. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 3 February 1889.

35. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 26 January 1899; 27 January 1899.

36. *Elizabethtown Mining Bulletin* 4 January 1900. Quoted by Stanley 12-14.

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avered that what was needed was "but a touch for the Magis (sic) wand of some capitalistic Moses to metamorphose Hillsboro from a Rip Van Winkle to a full fledged metropolitan dude."³⁷

In spite of economic difficulties, Hillsboro remained the seat of county business. When the district court was in session the town filled with lawyers, witnesses, jurors, and spectators. In 1899 one of most famous trials in New Mexico history took place at the Sierra County Courthouse involving some of the leading figures of Territorial New Mexico. News went out over a telegraph wire strung from Lake Valley. The town was so crowded for the 18-day trial that tents had to be set up for witnesses.

Oliver Lee and Jim Gililland were acquitted in the trial arising out of the 1896 disappearance, and presumed but never solved murder, of Albert J. Fountain, well-known lawyer, politician, and newspaper publisher, and his nine-year-old son while traveling home to Las Cruces. Pat Garrett, then sheriff of Dona Ana County and famous as the Lincoln County sheriff who shot Billy the Kid, had arrested the defendants. Judge Frank W. Parker, later a state supreme court justice presided. Thomas B. Catron appeared as chief counsel for the prosecution and Albert Bacon Fall was the lead lawyer for the defense. Catron dominated Territorial business and politics for more than half a century and was chosen one of the first two United States senators after statehood in 1912. The other was Albert Fall.

Fall's New Mexico career began as a prospector for gold and silver in Kingston in 1883. There he formed a friendship with Edward L. Doheny, a fellow miner. Fall went on to become a prominent lawyer, political leader, who served as a territorial legislator, district court judge, and attorney general of New Mexico. In the 1920s as Secretary of the Interior in the Harding administration (1921-1923) and the first New Mexico resident to serve in a presidential cabinet, Fall gained national notoriety for his involvement with Doheny in the scandals involving bribery in connection with the leasing of naval oil reserves and known

37. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 18 January 1899.

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collectively as Teapot Dome. In 1931 he was imprisoned at the State Penitentiary in Santa Fe, at the time the only cabinet member ever convicted of a crime.³⁸

In the first decades of the twentieth century various mines were periodically reopened, often by hopeful leasees, but mining remained small scale and intermittent. In 1905 the Good Hope and Bonanza was the only property being worked, employing some 40 men.³⁹ Nevertheless, in 1900 Hillsboro with 145 dwellings, 160 families, and 557 individuals, despite lost population, was still the largest community in the county by 100 people.⁴⁰ Ten years later the population, though dropping, was still 400 individuals.⁴¹ Other nearby towns, without the advantage of the county seat, declined much more sharply. After the Lake Valley mines closed in 1893, population fell from 368 in 1890 to 215 in 1900, and 125 in 1910. The population of Kingston, the richest silver producer in New Mexico during the nineteenth century, was 816 in 1890, but had dropped to 284 in 1900 and 123 in 1910.⁴² By 1910 Kingston gave the impression that "little remains but decayed remnants of...former activity."⁴³

38. The careers of Fountain, Garrett, Parker, Catron, and Fall are outlined in William A. Keleher, *The Fabulous Frontier* (1962; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982).

39. Waldemar Lindgren, Louis C. Graton, and Charles H. Gordon, "The Ore Deposits of New Mexico," Department of Interior United States Geological Survey, Professional Paper 68. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910) 276). *Santa Fe New Mexican* 15 January 1906.

40. United States Census 1900.

41. United States Census 1910.

42. Clark, Carol L., "Architecture and Town Development in the Mining Camps of Southwestern New Mexico," (M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1982) 46-47, n. 13.

43. Lindgren 218.

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On the other side of the mountains in Grant county, Georgetown had a population of 683 in 1890, and just 88 in 1900. In contrast, Silver City, the Grant County seat, grew steadily, averaging an additional 500 to 700 inhabitants during each decade of the twentieth century.⁴⁴

A comparison of the Hillsboro listings in the New Mexico State Business Directory for the years 1905-1906, 1913-1914, and for roughly five-year intervals through the 1920s, provides a profile of the changing business community. The total number of entries for Hillsboro dropped through the teens and 1920s from 80 in 1905-1906 to 64 about ten years later, and continued downward to 54 in 1920 and 31 in 1925 but began to rise by the end of the decade, to 44 in 1929 and 51 in 1930.

Mining remained the industry with the most listings in 1905-1906, including some twenty mining and milling companies. Other industries represented are two land and cattle companies and three growers of produce, alfalfa, hay, and fruit. After mining companies, county officials predominate including the county assessor, justice of the peace, probate clerk, and superintendent of schools. The remaining entries are for a very basic range of businesses, services, and professions, including four general merchants, a meat market, a drug store, a bank, a newspaper, a hotel, a restaurant, three saloons, three blacksmiths, a jeweler, a barber, three attorneys and one physician.

In subsequent years, the directory listings show a dramatic drop in the number of mining companies from twenty in 1905-1906 to six in 1913-1914, up slightly to eight in 1920 down to two in 1930. There is however some increase in consumer oriented businesses and changes which reflect the impact of new technologies. The number of hotels fluctuated between two and three; a theater was listed in the 1920s; a Chamber of Commerce was established in the early 1920s. Automobile-related businesses increased in number from the teens; blacksmiths and freighting companies had disappeared by the mid 1930s. An ice

44. Clark 46-47, n. 13.

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and electric plant was established in the late 1920s. The number of county officials listed in Hillsboro was fairly constant ranging between about eight and eleven until the county seat election of 1936.

At least two important losses of the private concerns occurred in the 1920s and at least one major gain in the public sector. The Sierra County Bank was gone early in the decade and the longest-running newspaper, the *Sierra County Advocate* moved to Hot Springs in 1928.⁴⁵ In 1922 the Sierra County High School was built on Elenora Street, not far from the county courthouse and the Union Church. The plans prepared by the El Paso architectural firm of Trost and Trost, for more than three decades the leading designers in a wide area of West Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, and the designers of many school building in New Mexico at all levels of education.

This adobe, California Mission style building was the first structure in the county built solely as a four-year high school and the first secondary school available to all county students. Previously the only high school work in the county was three grades in an adobe room added to the elementary school in 1921. Most students were from Hillsboro but a few came from Kingston, Lake Valley and other Sierra County communities. Students from nearby ranches traveled to school on horseback. Some families rented or purchased homes in Hillsboro so that their children could attend high school. Other students boarded in town and by 1924 a "bachelor hall" was furnished for the convenience of self-supporting students.⁴⁶

In the 1930s the value of gold rose in comparison with other metals causing renewed interest in heretofore unprofitable old mines. Some were reopened and the placers worked, although water remained a significant problem. Business activity appears to have increased also. The total number of business directory

45. Grove 500.

46. Corinne Sze, "Hillsboro High School," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1992.

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entries rose again to fifty-one in 1930 and sixty-six in 1936. There are more service and auto related businesses. There were six restaurants in 1936 up from two in 1930, and four automobile-related businesses, including service stations and repair garages, and an auto camp. New in the decade were a cleaning and pressing shop, a dairy, two insurance agents, and an electrical appliance store.

The number of mining companies listed in the business directories rose from two in 1930 to 11 in 1936, an increase which seems to reflect expectation rather than reality. The state mining reports for 1933 and 1934 list only one operating mine in Sierra County, El Ora at Hillsboro. The rail line from Nutt to Lake Valley was abandoned in 1934 and later in the decade state mining reports list no mines.⁴⁷

Hillsboro, never directly served by a railroad, for want of a successful competitor remained the county seat and leading community for decades after the collapse of the mining industry, until eclipsed by a town with an advantageous position on a newer mode of transport. Agitation to move the county seat had begun as early as 1909 when Cutter, located on the AT&SF, was unsuccessfully proposed as a replacement. Laws requiring wide margins for the passage of measures attempting to move county seats helped Hillsboro hold on. As early as 1920 the town prevailed in a county seat election only because Hot Springs failed to win the necessary 60% of the vote, though the count was 809 to 908 in favor of the move.⁴⁸ until 1936 when Hot Springs (Truth or Consequences) took the county seat by a referendum vote of 1012 to 572. Hillsboro did not give up without a court battle, but in 1938 was forced to accede. The last term of the

47. State Inspector of Mines, *Annual Report for the Year Ending October 31, 1933*. State Inspector of Mines, *Annual Report for the Year Ending October 31, 1934*. Myrick 205.

48. *Sierra County Advocate* December 3 and 10, 1920.

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court was held in the Hillsboro courthouse in that year and the building was sold and largely dismantled, its bricks and fixtures sold for other uses.⁴⁹

With the loss of government activity, Hillsboro declined but did not die. The number of businesses listed in the state business directories fell to 16 in 1942-1943. Hillsboro's regional high school was closed about 1940, its students thereafter bused to Hot Springs. Although the 1946-1947 annual report of the Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources noted that some small-scale mining operations were revived at Hillsboro, and three mines were listed in Hillsboro, no valuation is provided for the products of Sierra County mines and only one Hillsboro mine is listed as having employees and that just two.⁵⁰

Although commonly described in guides to New Mexico ghost towns, Hillsboro has been continuously occupied since its founding and remains a pleasant, well maintained, unincorporated village, with a population of about 100, primarily artists, writers, retirees, and old-timers. The post office on Main Street is a gathering place. The regional high school building, which is being renovated as a community center, contains a small library. Local business consists of some four antique shops, about the same number of galleries or gallery studios, two or three restaurants, a branch bank, a bed and breakfast, and an automotive garage but no gas station.

The Hillsboro Historic District was entered in the State Register of Cultural Properties on October 24, 1986.

49. *Albuquerque Journal* 14 July 1938.

50. New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, *Annual Report 2 for the Fiscal Year July 1, 1946 - June 30, 1947*, 7, 36, 40, 45.

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Adobe Architecture in New Mexico

During the Spanish (1598-1821) and Mexican (1821-1846) periods, Spanish builders relied on the same locally available, minimally worked materials as the indigenous Pueblo peoples, primarily adobe mud, peeled logs, and in some localities stone. The multistoried pueblos of the Indians were composed of flat-roofed, cubical rooms piled upon one another to form an irregularly shaped mass. Flat mud roofs were supported by logs, sticks, and brush. The Spanish, possessing only simple tools and isolated by geography from the distant centers of colonization in Mexico and by policy from the rest of the North American continent, built structures composed of similarly shaped and similarly roofed rooms placed in a single file, without interior hallways, to form detached, single-story dwellings. Rooms might not communicate with one another but were reached from outside doors which could be sheltered by a portal, a flat-roofed portico supported by posts made of peeled logs sometimes with carved corbel capitals.

Window openings were small, infrequent, and unglazed. A typical dwelling might begin as one or two rooms and grow by accretion of rooms continuing in a straight line, bending into an L or a U. Finally a rectangle of rooms might be completed around an inner courtyard. In towns these buildings were generally placed directly along the street line or irregularly close to it. The Spanish introduced only two differentiated building types in New Mexico, the mission church and the torreon, defensive tower. For most functions both public and private, the same building types sufficed.

The essential patterns developed by the colonial Spanish, now called Spanish-Pueblo Style⁵¹ for its debt to indigenous builders, sufficed without major change for more than two and one half centuries until the United States assumed control of the region in 1846. The American army immediately set up lumber

51. *New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual*, University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning, 1980, VI:4-5.

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mills. Trade accelerated over the Santa Fe Trail bringing new materials such as window glass, small amounts of fired brick, nails, hinges, and later metal roofing. Immigrants from the United States brought new stylistic expectations initially expressed as additions to the traditional adobe building type.

Like the Spanish before them, the Americans who settled in New Mexico after 1846, relied primarily on a limited range of locally available materials. Because of the difficulty and expense of hauling heavy, large, or fragile items to New Mexico by wagon, adobe remained the most commonly used building material until the arrival of railroad in the late 1870s.

After the Civil War, adobe forts built or rebuilt by the army were influential in establishing a new mode, called the **Territorial Style**,⁵² which used brick and milled lumber to create decoration inspired by the Greek Revival. A coping of bricks, often with one course protruding to suggest Greek dentils, was added to protect easily eroded adobe parapet walls that extended above the flat mud roof. Window openings were enlarged to accommodate long, double-hung, wood-sash windows with multiple lights. Doors became important features. The main entrance was often deeply recessed and panel-lined with double, partially glazed and/or paneled doors with side and over lights. Window and door openings were framed with milled lumber, and typically topped with Classical pediments which could be as simple as wooden triangles. The portal became a long porch across the front of a building. Posts of peeled logs were replaced by squared, often chamfered posts and carved corbels by pieces of molding arranged to suggest square Doric capitals. Although the elements of the Territorial style were first added to traditional linear floor plans, after the Civil War the influence of a new symmetrical center-hall plan was felt, creating blocks of rooms rather than lines.

52. *New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual VI:7.*

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Pitched roofs were introduced into New Mexico, first covered with locally made wooden shingles and later with metal. After the arrival of the transcontinental railroad in 1879-80, metal gable roofs became ubiquitous on Territorial as well as Spanish-Pueblo style adobe buildings. Changes in floor plan and simple ornamentation drawn from imported styles are also seen. To the extent that traditional Spanish building accepted these and other innovations, a new style was created called **New Mexico Vernacular**.⁵³

Although more specialized building types were introduced by Anglo-American immigrants, the local custom of incorporating various functions into dwellings persisted in smaller towns and the neighborhoods of larger communities, with the placement, for example, of a store, a post office, or the office of the justice of the peace in or directly attached to a home.

With the railroad came an influx of population with different stylistic expectations and easier access to a wider selection of affordable building materials, including prefabricated elements, to make such expectations realizable. The railroad popularized the gridded town plan characterized by straight streets defining blocks divided into long narrow lots. Businesses were centralized on a principle street, often called Main, in buildings that were often contiguous and stretched back narrowly from the street line. Houses might have one or two stories with rooms grouped two or more deep and were set back from the street with front and back yards often defined by some sort of fencing at the street line. New floor plans were introduced and decorative elements associated with the formal styles of the Victorian period were added to homes, often still built of adobe, sometimes in combination with Territorial embellishments, creating a property type here called **Late Victorian Vernacular**.

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The miners and merchants who established new communities in New Mexico in the 1870s and 1880s, shortly before and even after the railroad arrived, experienced the same limited range of building materials as their predecessors. Initially mining communities began as tent cities thrown up in the exigencies of the moment to provide immediate and possibly temporary shelter for miners more interested in striking it rich than in the amenities of daily living, and who might soon be moving on to another site. Instant communities were needed to supply the needs of miners and to provide protection in remote areas far from established transportation. In contrast to earlier frontiers where towns came later to serve an established agricultural population, here urban development preceded rural settlement and ranching and farming followed in response to markets created by these population centers.⁵⁴

Where tents were replaced by more permanent materials, miners and business people in Sierra County turned once again to adobe, a cheap and flexible medium requiring little in specialized equipment or skills. Imported vernacular house types came to predominate. Though realized in adobe or other locally obtainable materials these buildings reflect the Victorian era in plan, siting, and decoration.

Early business locations were sometimes combined with dwellings for practicality with a merchant displaying his wares in his tent,⁵⁵ or combining a home and store in same building without major differentiation in architecture of domestic and commercial purposes. Public functions were typically first assigned to existing, generic structures, only later were specialized building constructed.⁵⁶

54. Clark 9-10.

55. Clark 16.

56. Pratt and Scurlock 186.

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In towns that prospered past the mining boom, adobe was supplanted by stone or brick which were regarded as more permanent and modern.⁵⁷ In Sierra County much of the wealth produced by the mines went elsewhere because so many of the mines were owned by absentee capitalists, and most Sierra County mining communities did not prosper after 1893. For these reasons most communities never replaced adobe. Other masonry is found only in Hillsboro, Kingston, and Silver City, and predominated only in the last.⁵⁸

Architectural Development of Hillsboro

Today's Hillsboro lies south and west of the Percha Creek as it traverses a narrow river valley and is bounded by steep hills on the north and south. Like other similarly located mining communities in Sierra County, the village was platted in a long, narrow grid which follows the terrain. The Creek running below the north ridge forms the northern boundary. On the south the boundary is beyond the buildings on the slope of the south ridge. The western bridge over the Percha forms the west boundary. On the east another bridge over the creek forms the boundary of Hillsboro proper. East of the bridge a predominantly Spanish residential area developed known as Happy Flats.

In the optimism of the 1880s, the area originally platted was considerably larger than present Hillsboro, and lay both east and west of the Percha Creek. The town was laid out in an orthogonal grid of blocks extending 200 feet between the main

57. Clark has traced a three-fold architectural evolution of mining towns in Grant and Sierra counties from an initial settlement of temporary structures such as tents, to the boomtown phase dominated by more permanent but local materials, primarily adobe and wood, and finally to the mature town of multistoried buildings of more expensive masonry, such as brick or stone. Only Silver City got to the mature stage.

58. Clark, 45, 51-52.

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streets. The blocks were themselves divided into uniform, long, narrow, generally 50-foot wide lots, typical of towns developed by or near railroad interests.

West of the creek, two principle streets, Main and Elenora, run roughly east to west through the valley. Perpendicular to these are short, connecting, side streets originally numbered as avenues in sequence from east to west, beginning with a wider thoroughfare called Broadway.⁵⁹ Some of these cross streets have been lost through infill and disuse and except for Main, neither street names nor numbers are customarily used in Hillsboro now.

Main, which was eventually lined with cotton wood trees that grew to be huge, became a commercial center containing a mix of commercial and residential buildings toward the east and primarily residences further west. Elenora Street lies south of Main on the slope of the ridge commanding a view of the townsite and the north ridge beyond. From here homes as well as Sierra County's impressive brick courthouse, the Protestant multid denominational Union Church, and after 1921 the California Mission style Sierra County High School, looked out over the town. In 1893 George T. Miller's first impressions of Hillsboro as jotted in his diary were of "a pretty place down in the valley, flags flying on school house and court house, nice brick church, several ore mills, pleasant shade trees and small stream flowing through. Houses all adobe."⁶⁰

Hillsboro began like other mining communities as a city of tents which soon gave way to adobe. Early photos show simple, rectangular, bare adobe, mostly gabled buildings with shingled roofs. Some Main Street businessmen gave their buildings a more progressive appearance with wood siding and the wooden false fronts typical of western frontier town. Some business locations were shaded by wooden portals. The first Sierra County

59. *Hillsboro*, map, filed for the record 14 December 1887 (tracing of photostat, Sierra County Courthouse).

60. George T. Miller, *Diary*, 23 February 1893 (ms., Geronimo Springs Museum, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico). Some punctuation added.

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Courthouse was an existing adobe building with a shingled roof at the corner of First and Main Street, purchased for \$600.00 in 1884.⁶¹

By 1893 when the first Sanborn map of Hillsboro was drawn and the year which marks the end of the era of gold mining prosperity, the leading businessmen had built modest adobe homes, incorporating elements taken from Victorian styles and surrounded with gardens irrigated by windmill pumps. Fired brick was reserved for two important public buildings, the county courthouse and the nearby Union Church, both completed in 1892.

Although scarcity of water hindered mine development and periodic droughts were a problem for ranchers and farmers, periodic excesses of water when the Percha exceeded its banks impacted Hillsboro architecture. On August 14, 1887 the creek became a river which rushed through the town, undermining some of the adobe homes.⁶² A flood on July 16, 1895 swept away fences, pig pens, and outhouses.⁶³ A major flood, described as "a wall of water six feet high foaming through town," occurred on June 10, 1914. The river filled the first floors of Main Street adobe business buildings. Many were washed away or so weakened that they collapsed, including Charles Meyer's saloon which floated off its foundation, the large general merchandise store of Keller, Miller & Company, Miller's drug store, and the bank.⁶⁴ Property damage was estimated at \$45,000, borne mostly by the business community. On September 3, 1972 another major flood demolished a reported seven businesses and severely damaged 13 houses. Total damage in the area was estimated at \$750,000.

61. Clark 43.

62. Stanley 5, quotes the *Black Range*.

63. *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* 16 July 1895.

64. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 11 June 1914, 13 June 1914. *Sierra Free Press* 18 June 1914.

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F. Associated Property Types

SUMMARY OF PROPERTY TYPES

1. New Mexico Vernacular Domestic Dwellings
2. Late Victorian Vernacular Domestic Dwellings

1. NEW MEXICO VERNACULAR DOMESTIC DWELLINGS

Description

Dwellings of this type are built of adobe and may possess the Spanish-Pueblo arrangement of rooms in a one-story, single file. They are usually built close to the street line in towns and residential use may be combined with a commercial function. Some examples may evidence modifications of the traditional plan derived from imported influences. Pitched roofs, usually covered with metal, are typical. Fenestration incorporates imported elements such as long, double-hung windows. Ornamentation is minimal and usually limited to simplified wooden elements, either prefabricated or easily fabricated.⁶⁵

Significance

This building type illustrates the nineteenth-century accommodation of the Spanish-Pueblo style of adobe building to imported innovations made possible by better modes of transport, primarily the pitched roof and wood-sash windows. These buildings often are associated with Spanish ownership, and although the style persisted in New Mexico until about 1930, at Hillsboro, for the most part dwellings of this type were built early in the history of the village.

65. New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual VI-14.

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Registration Requirements

Buildings of this type are significant under Criterion C if they reflect traditional Spanish building practice combined with innovations in roofing, fenestration, plan, and limited decoration, but are without a combination of elements to clearly identify them with another building type such as the Folk Territorial⁶⁶ or the Late Victorian Vernacular. Because this is a vernacular architecture, the combination and number of particular features varies from building to building. Properties associated with events important to the history of Hillsboro are also eligible under Criterion A; those associated with persons significant in that history under Criterion B.

LATE VICTORIAN VERNACULAR DOMESTIC DWELLINGS

Description

These single-family dwellings are constructed of adobe or other locally available materials such as blocks of slag from the smelter. Usually one story, they are only one or two rooms wide and may stretch back on long, narrow lots. They have metal-covered, primarily gabled roofs. Typically a front and an intersecting gable form an L or a T-shaped plan. Single-story examples typically have three to five original rooms. They were originally designed with no bathrooms.

Under the front gable a large, decorative window or a bay dominates the narrow main facade, and is often embellished with sometimes leaded, colored and/or beveled glass. Other windows are double-hung with wood sashes. Decorative cladding materials such as shingles are sometimes found in the gables. The entry is located on the side and marked by a modestly trimmed porch with sometimes turned or chamfered posts and delicate brackets, a wooden balustrade and possibly a freeze. Doors can be paneled with glass and sometimes have transoms. These dwellings are

66. New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual VI-9.

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regularly spaced and set back from the street with front and back yards, but often without significant side yards. Characteristically a low masonry wall or picket fence defines the property line across the front wrapping around the side if located on a corner.

Significance

These small, pragmatic, single-family dwellings are a realization in economically feasible, local materials of an imported design that was commonly built of wood or brick on railroad lots in most states west of the Mississippi River to the west slope of the Rocky Mountains.⁶⁷ In Sierra County such designs were typical of the boom town phase of development of the 1880s and 1890s. In restrained and modest dimension, they are a vernacular adaptation of contemporaneous formal styles, such as the Queen Anne, as realized in local materials by Hillsboro's business community which never amassed sufficient local wealth for high-style Victorian designs. Although primarily of adobe, these buildings contrast with traditional Spanish architecture in New Mexico in form, siting, and decoration, and illustrate the potential of adobe for vernacular adaptation.

Registration Requirements

Dwellings which meet registration requirements under Criterion C have retained sufficient integrity in materials and stylistic features to invoke the period and architectural context which they represent. Because this is a vernacular architecture, the combination and number of particular features varies from building to building. Eligible buildings have at least these defining characteristics, a front gable roof with intersecting cross gable, an original L or T shape, a large front window, and a side entrance from a porch. Many houses of this style have

67. Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (1985; Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988) 182-183.

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been enlarged by rear additions which do not preclude eligibility. Those associated with events important to the history of Hillsboro are also eligible under Criterion A; those associated with persons significant in that history under Criterion B.

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G. Geographical Data

All the buildings in this nomination are within the boundaries of the Hillsboro Historic District as listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties. A map is included herewith.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

In 1985 students in the public history program at New Mexico State University under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey P. Brown conducted a survey of historic buildings in Hillsboro, New Mexico, under contract with the State Historic Preservation Division. The group looked for the history of Hillsboro using historic maps, newspapers, county records, interviews, and secondary sources.

The New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Form was completed for 118 properties in Hillsboro, west of the east bridge over the Percha, and Happy Flats, the area east of the east bridge. Properties were evaluated as significant, contributing, intrusive, or removed. Significant and contributing properties had to be more than 50 years old, and to convey architectural or historic associations with the development of Hillsboro. Contributing properties were those with some alteration or less complete documentation. Intrusive structures were those less than 50 years old, significantly altered, or in ruins.

In Hillsboro 9 buildings were classified significant, 42 contributing, and 37 intrusive; in Happy Flats, none were classified significant, 10 contributing, and 20 intrusive. Based on the survey results and historic research, a nomination was prepared of the Hillsboro Historic District covering 65 acres west of the east Percha bridge. The district was listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties on October 24, 1986 and recommended for the National Register.

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However, when opposition to National Register listing was expressed by members of the community, the project was suspended. In 1994 in response to renewed local interest, Corinne Sze was contracted by the Historic Preservation Division to prepare a multiple property nomination for Hillsboro including a number of representative individual nominations.

Sze performed considerable additional historic research in order to prepare a statement of historic context delineating the developmental trends of Hillsboro from its founding in 1877 to 1944. To select buildings for individual nomination, Mary Ann Anders, the architectural historian with the Historic Preservation Division, and the contractor first made a preliminary determination from the survey sheets of which buildings appeared to be strong or possible candidates and which were clearly ineligible, based on age, alterations, and apparent potential for architectural or historic significance. They next held a public meeting at Hillsboro at which the nomination process and its consequences were explained to property owners and those interested in listing were invited to provide further information about their property.

From this self-selected group of candidates, which were all dwellings, Anders and Sze chose seven buildings which appeared eligible for consideration. It was decided to limit this first phase of the nomination to dwellings. Documentation of the buildings was based on information developed in the original survey, further documentary research, and interviews.

All of the buildings in this first group were nominated for architectural significance, and property types were identified based on architectural style. Those properties associated with the history of Hillsboro as developed in the historic context are also nominated under Criterion A, those associated with a person of particular significance to that context under Criterion B. The buildings chosen for individual nomination are representative of a greater whole. Other eligible examples which meet registration requirements may be identified and nominated in the future.

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"Hillsboro." WPA City File. Quoted by Museum of New Mexico
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Part 1: Domestic Architecture

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County and State

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