

City of Socorro Historic Walking Tour



Main Streets
&
Back Roads



Welcome to Socorro's Walking Tour

The walking tour has been divided into three historic districts: (a) *San Miguel Church*, (b) *Church-McCutcheon*, and (c) *Kittrel Park-Manzanares*. Each district tour begins at the Plaza. Also included in this brochure are some historic sights of Socorro in the *Beyond the Plaza Areas of Historic Interest* section.

Look at the MAP on page 23 to guide you. Walking the tour will allow you a glimpse of Socorro's unique past. You may also drive.

Plazas in New Mexico provide public space for the community. Most had their beginnings near the church, with homes, businesses and courthouses built in close proximity. Socorro's current Plaza encompasses Kittrel Park, Elfego Baca Heritage Park, and Isidro Baca Park (also known as the Veterans Memorial and Park).

Kittrel Park is believed to have been an empty Army field in the 1850's. It was south of the original Plaza, but by the 1880's the park became known as "The Plaza." It was once enclosed by a picket fence and had a small



bandstand on it. Dr. L. W. Kittrel, a Socorro dentist and postmaster, worked to maintain the park during the end of the nineteenth century. It is believed that when Dr. Kittrel passed away in 1916, he was buried under the park, and the park was named after him.

It is now a pleasant grassy area with trees, walkways, metal and other seating areas, a gazebo, and artistic metal sculpture signs that display past and present attractions for Socorro and the surrounding areas.



The *Elfego Baca Heritage Park* is the treed and renovated block north of Kittrel Park. It is named after the famous Elfego Baca (1865-1945), who was born in Socorro, served as county clerk, mayor, school superintendent, Sheriff, U.S. Marshal, lawyer, and district attorney. In October of 1884, Elfego

Baca gained a tough reputation in his efforts to fight for justice for the Hispanic community of Frisco (now Reserve) from the ill behavior of some Texas cowboys. The ensuing battle was the Frisco shootout which lasted over 33 hours, with 4,000 shots fired by 80 cowboys against the single Elfego Baca. It ended with 4 dead and 8 wounded.

The park displays history tiles, children's art tiles, and the bronze sculpture called the Wheel of History. The Wheel shows a pictorial history of over four hundred years in Socorro, showing Piro Indian pueblos, Spanish Colonial settlement, agriculture, the railroad, mining, science, and technology.

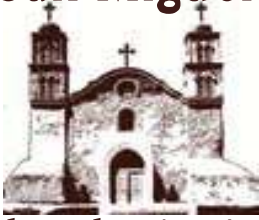


Isidro Baca Park (Veterans Memorial and Park) runs south of Kittrel Park to the courthouse. The park was dedicated to the memory of Pfc. Isidro Baca, U.S. Marine Corps, on November 11, 1967. He was the first soldier from Socorro to lose his life in Vietnam. The park now displays memorials for local veterans, both men and women. There is, also, an anti-aircraft gun and a fragment of Jumbo, the structure used at the first atomic bomb detonation on the Trinity Site. On the southern end of the park is a play area for children, with military themed equipment.



Socorro's Historic Plaza is still the spot for community events, like Hot August, SocorroFest, Farmer's Market, Veteran's events, Luminarias on the Plaza Art Stroll, Electric Light Parade destination with Santa, car shows, weddings, sports, and summer music & dancing.

San Miguel



Church District

attacks. Most of the houses were built close together and close to the street, eliminating front yards. The streets were narrow and irregular.

(1a) East of Elfego Baca Heritage Park is the *Juan Nepomuceno Garcia House*. It is New Mexican Territorial style architecture and represents a type of

Spanish adobe dwellings, with rooms built around a courtyard (*placita*). The enclosed courtyard offered space for fruit trees, privacy, protection, animals, and sometimes, even a well. The adobe walls are about 20 inches thick. Note the long covered walkway.



(2a) Looking to the north, is the *Juan José Baca House*, built around 1870. The walls of the house are 18 inches thick and there is a courtyard. As was common in that time, the family operated a business at their home. The two-story end of the dwelling was used for a general merchandise store. Juan José Baca was the grandson of one of the original Socorro settlers. He was, also, a rancher and politician.

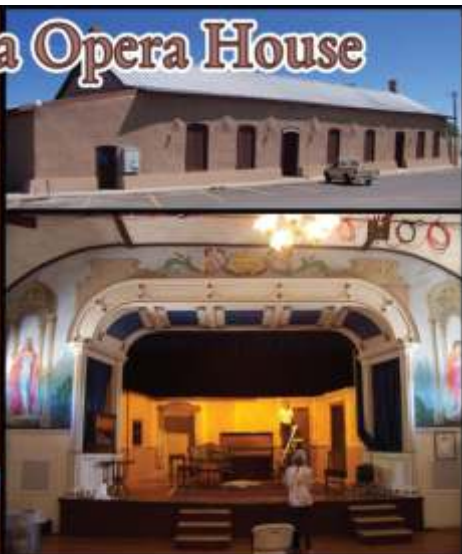


Socorro adobe brick yard, early 20th century

Stacked adobes from the Garcia House courtyard



Garcia Opera House



Slanted walls for acoustics

“Raked” stage

(3a) Turning right and traveling east towards California St., you will find the *Garcia Opera House*, one of Socorro’s grand historic landmarks. Francesca Garcia, widow of Juan Nepomuceno Garcia, built the opera house and dedicated it to his memory. Construction was begun in 1884 and was completed in 1887. The adobe walls are 34 inches thick and are curved to add strength and acoustics to the building. The inside 40-foot wide space has an open-trussed roof system. The flooring is wood. The stage takes up one third of the building. It is a “raked” stage, which is slanted to give the audience a better view. The back of the stage is one foot higher than the front. The proscenium arch curves to both sides of the stage, is supported by fluted columns, and the

Road race on California St. by the Opera House. (circa 1930)

panels are decorated with a blue and gold design. The Garcia Opera House was used for many community events, including dances, masquerade balls, musical and theatrical productions, political rallies, marriages, Christmas parties, commencement



exercises, and basketball games.

(4a) Head back west on Abeyta Avenue and turn right onto a narrow street to view the house at 202 *San Miguel*. It shows a traditional linear style adobe, with small doors and windows set back into the walls.





(5a) *Historic Plaques of San Miguel Church.* Starting at the corner of Abeyta Ave. and Bernard and on down Bernard to the church, is a “picture walk” of commemorative granite plaques depicting changes to San Miguel Church from Territorial times leading to present, including the Corpus Christi Procession and the San Miguel Procession of 1886.

(6a) The *Anastacio Sedillo House* at 114 Baca Street is estimated to be about 161 years old. The house was built in an L-shaped adobe Territorial design that reflects Socorro’s past. The added Victorian details show the architectural changes that came to Socorro with the railroad.



(7a) *Jacabo Sedillo House* at 348 Bernard was built between 1902 and 1913. The Sedillo family built the house with adobe, even though different types of architecture and materials had become popular in other parts of Socorro. View the unique details of the porch and roof dormers.



(8a) In 1598, the Piro Indians offered assistance to the colonists of the Don Juan de Oñate expedition as they traveled through the area. In his documents, Oñate attributed the name, “*Socorro*” (help) to the pueblo for their kindness and generous gifts of corn and supplies. The Pilabo Pueblo was later named, “*Nuestra Señora de Perpetuo Socorro*” (Our Lady of Perpetual Help).

It is believed that the mission was built between 1615 and

1626. The massive adobe walls are about five feet thick. The *vigas* (beams) were hand carved in wood that had been hauled down from the mountains miles away from Socorro. Part of the foundation from the original church building can be viewed through a floor window inside the church.

During the Pueblo uprising of 1680, the Piros and Spanish fled south. It wasn't until 1816, that a small group of Spaniards resettled Socorro and rebuilt the church.

There are an estimated 100-200 people buried under the church. Tradition tells us that General Manuel Armijo, the last governor of the Territory of New Mexico, is among those buried.

Some descendants of the early settlers say that in the early 1800's, an Apache Indian raid was halted when they saw a man with wings and shining sword hovering over the church door. Shortly afterward, a petition was made to the Bishop to change the name of the church to San Miguel (St. Michael), the Angelic Protector of the people.

The most current restoration of the church was in the years 2010 through 2014. The 400th Year-long Anniversary of faith for San Miguel was celebrated from the re-dedication of the newly restored church on September 26, 2014 until September 27, 2015.

The church is one of the oldest Catholic churches in the nation.

(9a) The *Lupe Torres House*, 347 Bernard, was originally two dwellings built around 1898. They were later joined together and during renovations, an *Emborregado* style of plastering was applied to the house. It is a special technique that smoothes the squared corners and gives the panels a "wooly" looking texture. *En borregos* means in sheep.



(10a) The *Zingerle House* on the corner of Bernard & Mt. Carmel, was built by Manuel Abeyta in 1871. He was a Socorro businessman, whose family was among the first of the Socorro settlers. The house is a one and half story adobe, with a gabled roof. It was built in an L-shaped linear design, sitting close to the street. After the 1880's, a brick facing was added to the north and east adobe walls.

(11a) Turn on Mt. Carmel Rd. to view the *Delfine Zimmerly House*. It shows a style of adding rooms in a



linear pattern as they were needed for growth. Entry to the additional rooms was created by cutting through the walls. The new rooms were entered by walking through the preceding rooms or through exterior doorways. The house was built in 1882-83. It shows a transition from flat-roofed adobe to pitched roof.

(12a) On the corner of Mt. Carmel and School of Mines Rd. are history tiles about the School of Mines Rd. and more children's art tiles.



(13a) The *Edward S. Stapleton, Sr. House* is at 313 Mt. Carmel Road. It is a nicely maintained U-shaped house, with

simplified Queen Anne style bays at each end. Underneath the eaves, there are arched, louvered vents.



(14a) At 321 Mt. Carmel Rd. is the *Vivian Stapleton House*, an L-shaped adobe built in Territorial and Eastern designs, with a veranda, Queen Anne details, wood lintels, and pitched metal roof. Mr. Stapleton was the butcher in the family-owned business.

(15a) The *A. B. Baca House* located at 210 School of Mines Road, was built in approximately 1910 and was the first house to show the use of the *Emborregado* style of plastering in Socorro. The house is a rectangular-shaped adobe with a pitched roof and four gable wall dormers.



Church~McCutcheon District

The Church/McCutcheon district from the County Courthouse
circa 1920

Socorro started to grow in population, business, and prosperity in 1880 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway came to town. The silver mines were prospering and the Indian hostilities were ending.

New people came from different backgrounds and places. Many of the new merchants built homes in the area southwest of the Plaza. The homes mostly represented the Victorian era of architecture, using brick, stone, and wood, with Queen Anne details in trim.

The houses were set back from the street, with front, side, and back yards. Low picket and stone fences and hedges were often used to define the front property borders. The area includes one-story Bungalow style houses, 19th century high fashion two-story houses, and other intriguing designs.

(1b) The *Chambon House*, 324 Church Street, was built in the Eastlake architectural style, which is known for geometrical, angular shapes, with notched and carved design work. It was built in 1888 by Socorro builder, William Watson, who also built the neighboring *Bursum House*, which is similar, but more elaborate. In 1921 and later, additions were made to this house.



(2b) The *Bursum House*, 326 Church Street, was built for Candelario Garcia in 1887. It was later the home of Holm O. Bursum, a Socorro Mayor and Sheriff. Both men became prominent territorial political leaders. The house is an excellent example of ornate Eastlake architecture, which is rare in New Mexico. It is a rectangular shaped brick two-story, with elaborate ornate detailing. The roof gables have detailed insets and the veranda porch is decorated with turned posts and banisters and Victorian design.





(3b) Since 1898, the house at 303 *Eaton Ave.* has been a combination of 2 distinct architectural styles. The northern end is a linear, Spanish colonial

design. The southern part is a square plan with a hipped roof. On the roof is an ornamental Victorian roof cresting made with metal poles and wire mesh, and topped with iron fleur-de-lis ornamentation. The porch has wooden posts & scroll brackets.

(4b) The *Eaton House* at 403 *Eaton Avenue* is a pre-1898 adobe house in a linear style, with an imposing front facade and a small Spanish Pueblo Revival style porch.



After the 1906 earthquake, the owner, Col. Ethan W. Eaton devised an earthquake protection plan. He installed one inch rods through the thick adobe walls and exterior boards and secured them with bolts on the inside and star shaped washers on the outside. Mr. Eaton was a leader of a vigilante group from 1881-1884, and was elected Mayor in 1885.



(5b) Turn east to 327 *McCutcheon Avenue*. The *Cortesy House* was built in 1881 by Anthony Cortesy, a Socorro businessman from Switzerland. The house is a two story Queen Anne style brick house, which is the largest on the block, and similar in style to the *Casa de Flecha* on *Park Street*. Note the stone lintels and sills.

(6b) The house at 315 *McCutcheon Avenue* was built sometime between 1913 and 1930. It is a one and half story Bungalow style house constructed mostly of stone. The stone front of the house is coursed



rubble, similar to the short wall along the front yard. The square columns at the front entrance are characteristic Bungalow style. The house was designed by the chief engineer of the Kelly Mine. His engineering skills are evident in the straight lines of this house and in the use of solar gain and temperature control by calculated window placement on the south front of the house and a single window on the north back side.



Eaton Darr House, (left), & Fitch House, (right)

(7b) The *Eaton/Darr House*, 313 McCutcheon, was built around 1893. It features fancy fretwork on the east gable and a bracketed porch.

(8b) The *Fitch House* at 311 McCutcheon is a one-story, gabled, brick structure that was built in 1888. The porch has wooden Corinthian columns. It was the first house in Socorro to have a water closet, and the novelty and newness attracted visitors for an opportunity to pull the chain and make a flush. James Fitch was a lawyer, who was active in mining and banking, and served as a trustee at NM School of Mines, now called NM Institute of Mining and Technology.

(9b) The *Captain Cooney House* was built around the 1880's. It is a one-story brick house with a gable roof, bracketed entry porch, arched windows, and a three-sided bay window facing the street. Captain Cooney was a military man who sought success in mining & civil service.



(10b) Turning right to 405 *Park Street*, you will find an unusual turn-of-the-century Bungalow style house. It was built between 1902 and 1903 with interlocking concrete blocks that were mechanically constructed to fit together.

(11b) The *Abeytia y Armijo House*, 407 Park Street, known as the Casa de Flecha, was built in 1885. It is Socorro's most impressive Boom-era residence, due to its size & detailing. It is a massive two-story Queen Anne style brick house with an ornamental three-story tower, topped by an arrow-shaped weather vane, giving it the name, *Casa de la Flecha*, or House of the Arrow.





Park Street early 1930's. Casa de Flecha can be seen (upper right) and the County Courthouse (not shown) is across the street. Even main streets of the day were unpaved. The sidewalks in this area were constructed by the WPA (Work Projects Administration) during the Great Depression.

(12b) Turning back north to the Plaza, you will see an old school building on your right. The building and enclosed gymnasium are used for youth activities, art festivals, and other community events. *(photograph circa 1940)*



(13b) *El Torreón* (below) is located on Park Street to your left. The U-shaped building is an adobe that dates back to the early 1800's. The circular rooms on each end were added during renovations by the historic Socorro area photographer, Joseph E. Smith. The house is named after the rounded rooms, as they are much like the old round Torreón towers that were used by the Spaniards for defense. *(photograph circa 1930)*



(14b) The *Park Street House* next to the El Torreón was a square block house that was remodeled by J. E. Smith for his mother from Massachusetts. An adobe addition was added and by 1909 the house was shingled in Queen Anne style to remind his mother of New England and make her feel more at home in Socorro. *(photograph circa 1900)*





(15b) The *Socorro County Courthouse* is a Spanish/Pueblo Revival style building that was constructed in 1940. It has projecting vigas and wood lintels. (*photo circa 1940*)



The original courthouse, built in 1884, was High Victorian architecture with an octagonal shaped jailhouse behind. It was damaged by an earthquake in 1906. This photo was taken during a rare late April snowstorm in 1907.



Stylish Socorro motorists on Park Street



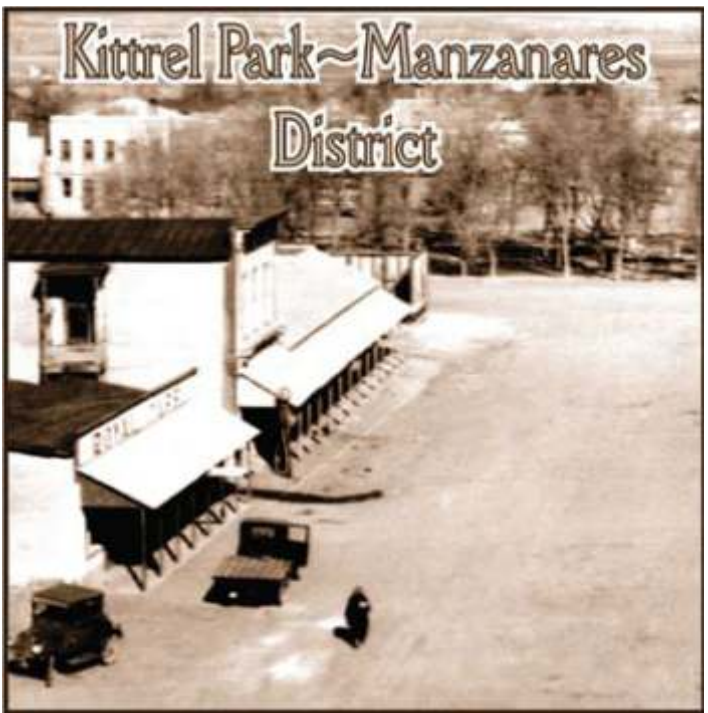
Cows strolling across the street from the courthouse

(16b) *300-306 Center Street*. This adobe dwelling was built around 1886 with a flat earth roof. Note the long porch.



(17b) The *Transportation Building*, on Church Street, once housed the City Hall. It was built in 1940. Records show that it was a WPA project.





View of Kittrel Park & businesses - circa 1930

Note San Miguel Church in the upper right and the Crabtree & Fitch buildings in the upper left. Isidro Baca Park (Veterans Memorial & Park) now fills the open space showing in right foreground of photograph.



Manzanares Ave. from Kittrel Park looking east towards the train station, between 1890 & 1900

Kittrel Park, known as “The Plaza,” was the center for social and political events, religious parades, and commerce. The businesses of Socorro grew around the Plaza and eastward down Manzanares Avenue towards the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway Depot.

(1c) *Socorro City Hall*, 111 School of Mines Road. Outside is a portrait display of Socorro Mayors. Inside is a photo collection of historical works by the photographer, Joseph E. Smith, with modern comparison photos taken by his great granddaughter, Suzanne Smith.



(2c) The *Fitch Building* (right, below) was built by Crabtree for James Fitch in 1914. It is a steel reinforced concrete building that was the first one of its kind in Socorro and one of the earliest in the state. Note the facade of recessed panels and raised columns.



(3c) The *Crabtree Building* (left, above) is at 211 Fisher Avenue. The original iron structure of this building was hauled down from the smelter that had operated on the mesa west of town. The building housed a blacksmith shop and then a hardware store for many years.

(4c) The *City Water Commission*, 217 Fisher Avenue, now houses the Socorro Heritage and Visitors Center. It was built between 1913 and 1930 to house the offices of the City Water



Commission and was later used for the Police Department. It is the only commercial building in the Plaza area built with coursed, ashlar stones. Inside there is a display of historic photographs and fascinating artifacts collected from local citizens.

(5c) The *Church of the Epiphany*, at 219 Fisher Avenue, was built between 1886 and 1898. It is an adobe building with a simplified Gothic Revival style architecture. It has a steep, gable roof and pointed Gothic lancet arches on the windows and entrance.





(6c) *Jesus Maria Torres House*, 225 Fisher Avenue, is a square adobe house with a hipped roof of corrugated metal. It was built after 1913. It has been said that the trim, windows, and doors were purchased by mail-order

through Crabtree Lumber Company. The turned columns on the front porch, which are unlike any others in Socorro, are the historical highlight for this house.



(7c) Across the street is the *Socorro Fire Station*. The Socorro Volunteer Fire Department was established in 1887 and the original Socorro Hose Company was built on this spot in 1907. Fire and rescue services are now city operated. The *La France fire truck*, photographed in the late 1930's, is now owned by a local citizen and is seen in parades on special occasions.



(8c) The *Fortune Property* is the oldest existing structure on the southern side of the Plaza. Others were destroyed by fire. Patrick and Theresa Fortune were originally from Ireland. Mr. Fortune was stationed in New Mexico while in the military in the 1850's, and like many others, he decided to stay.

(9c) The *Capitol Bar* is the only drinking establishment still in existence from the mining Boom era. It has brick coping and large arched windows. Giovanni Biavaschi, a native of Italy, built the business and sold wine made from his own



vineyard. Socorro was once a bountiful grape growing and wine making area.



Socorro was once a bountiful grape growing and wine making area.

(10c) On the corner of Plaza and Manzanaras Ave. is the *Abeytia Block*. The two story brick building was built in 1880. It housed the Hilton Drugstore and the Masonic Lodge. The drugstore was founded in the late 1890's by a relative of Conrad Hilton, and is known as having been the oldest operating drugstore in the state. In the 1930's, the building was remodeled with a California Mission Revival style, and the first floor lost its arched windows. The drugstore corner is now the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce.



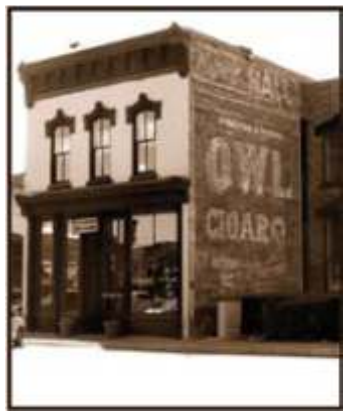
(11c) The *Torres Block* was the mercantile block in 1886. It was built between 1881 and 1886, and was once several different businesses in separate one and two-story, flat roofed buildings. The

businesses sold a variety of items from hardware to groceries. The separate buildings have now been joined together and the front has been stuccoed over.

(12c) Traveling east on Manzanaras Avenue and crossing California Street will bring you to the *First State Bank*. The bank has an extensive collection and display of historic photographs from Socorro, Magdalena, San Marcial, San Antonio, and Elephant butte. A tour can be arranged by appointment with Cindy Lam-Chavez (575) 835-8250.

(13c) Next to the bank is the *Loma Cinema building*. It has been renovated through the years, but remains an historical link to Socorro's Boom period of business growth. It was built in 1885 by the Price Bros. It was later purchased by the Lowenstein Bros. and housed Price-Lowenstein Mercantile. Then, from 1926 to about 1956, it was the National Guard Armory. After that, it housed the Loma Theater.





(14c) Across the street is the *Knights of Pythias Hall*. The two-story brick building was built in the 1880's. A metal cornice separates the first and second floors and there are pressed metal hood moldings on the second story windows. There is a metal bracketed cornice along the top front. The old photograph shows that this building once was topped with a fancy pointed parapet. Notice the lettering on the walls, with K of P Hall and Owl Cigar 5¢.



(15c) The *brick building* next door was built between 1881 and 1886. It shows the commercial store front use of large windows and doors, framed in wood, that was popular during Socorro's Boom era and made possible by the railway services. A laundry business once operated in this place.

(16c) *124 Manzanares* appears to be one building, but was originally individual structures. From 1886 until about 1913, there were two structures with false fronts and wooden trim. A third building was added sometime between 1913 and 1930 using concrete and brick.



(17c) The *Val Verde Hotel* was constructed in 1919 of yellow concrete brick in Spanish Mission Revival style. The beautiful U-shaped building, with courtyard, was a hotel for tourists and a social gathering place. Since the hotel closed, the structure has housed fine dining, a drinking establishment, apartments, book stores, hair salons, and other entities.

Beyond the Plaza Areas of Historic Interest



■ The *Smith House* at 603 Central Avenue was the first home owned by the J. E. Smith family. It is now the J. E. Smith Museum, exhibiting the glass plate negatives and historic photography collection of J. E. Smith. The museum is open for scheduled showings and events during the Festival of the Cranes each year. (*Call 575-835-8090 for special appointment*). It is located one block west of the Hilton House.



Interior view of the J. E. Smith house

▲ The *Hilton House* is located at 601 Park Street. August H. Hilton, the father of the famous hotel owner, Conrad Hilton, built the house in 1912. It is a California Bungalow style house that has been made of cast concrete blocks. The gabled roof slopes down to cover the front porch and has a shed dormer above. The low wall in front of the porch is also constructed with the interlocking cast blocks.





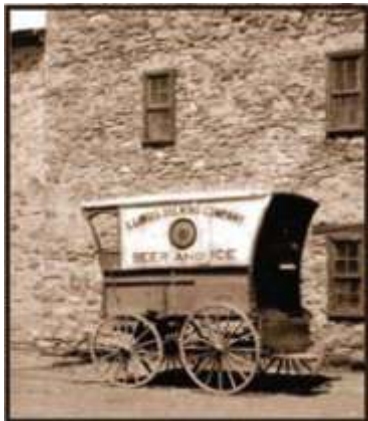
403 California Street is the *Lowenstein/Torres House*. The original building was adobe and is believed to be over 200 years old. It has been said that this was once a stagecoach and wagon stop along the Camino Real and was known as the entrance to Socorro. The Lowenstein brothers purchased the property and built a large addition. In the late 1800's, Adolfo and Luz Torres purchased the house and made another addition. The house displays a blend of NM Territorial with Greek revival architecture. The exterior adobe walls have a masonry coating of mortar with pebbles. The front gate to this property once stood where the median is today, but the property was cut back twice for the highway.



The *Hammel Museum* is located at 600 Sixth Street. Jacob Hammel immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1848 and started the Illinois Brewery in Lebanon, Illinois. Two of his sons, William and Gustav, came to Socorro in the 1880's and opened a beer garden, started brewing beer, then added an ice plant and soft drink bottling. In 1887, dad joined the sons and the business name was changed from Hammel Bros. & Co. to Illinois Brewing Company. During the prohibition years, they were able to stay open selling soda and ice. The museum has been named in honor of the Hammel family. It is open on the first Saturday morning of every month, from 9 am to 12 noon and



for the yearly Oktoberfest. Visitors may view the different rooms used for the operation of the business & see much of the old equipment, plus other eclectic collections.



The Crown Mill, a three-story brick mill, was built in 1892 by John Greenwald. The height of the mill allowed for the gravity processing method of milling. The mill processed wheat from the farms along the Rio Grande and imported wheat from Kansas to mill. Crown Mill flour was shipped all over



the United States, but the majority was used in New Mexico and Arizona. There were times when the mill operated both day and night to satisfy the high demand for flour.

Mine entrance above Socorro, with the Billing Smelter in the upper mid-right. The dark line along the top of the photo is the Rio Grande valley & Socorro 2-3 miles away.

Photo date probably around 1900.



City of Socorro Historic Walking Tour Map Legend



San Miguel Church District



Kittrel Park ~ Manzanares District



Church ~ McCutcheon District



Illinois Brewing Company ~ Hammel Museum
Open 1st Saturday of month 9am-12, and
annual Oktoberfest



Crown Mill (not open to the public)



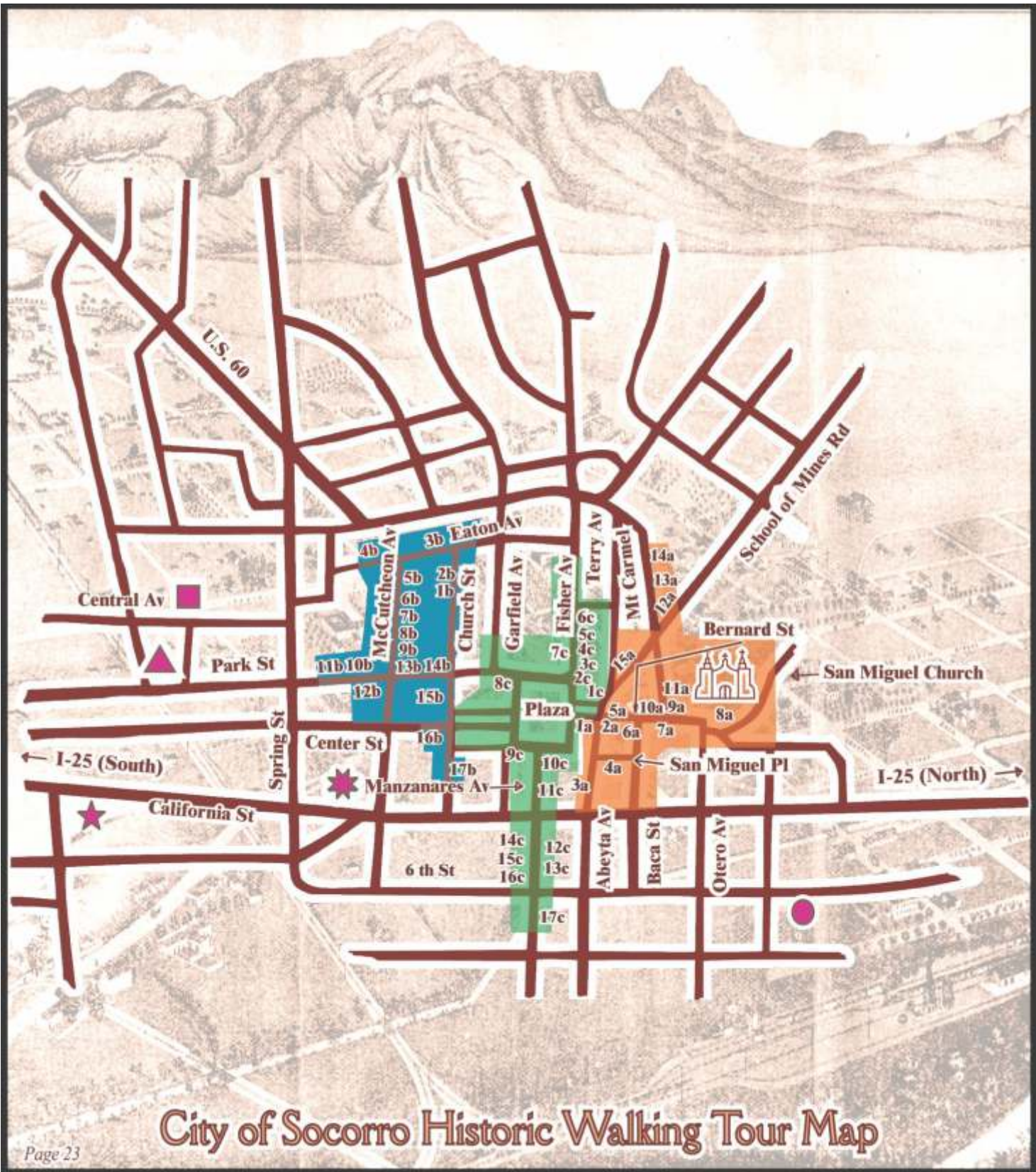
Hilton House



Joseph E. Smith House & Museum
(ph 575-835-8090 for appointment)



The Lowenstein/Torres House



City of Socorro Historic Walking Tour Map



Resources:

J. E. Smith Historical Photo Collection (used by permission)
 Irene J. Smith-Keen family photos (used by permission)
 Past Socorro County Guidebooks & Walking Tours,
 El Defensor Chieftain, & Socorro citizens
 San Miguel Church: website, brochure, & Rev. Andrew Pavlak
 Garcia Opera House: information from First State Bank
 Hammel Museum: Socorro Historical Society
 "Socorro, A Historic Survey," John P. Conron
 "The Territorial History of Socorro, New Mexico,"
 Bruce Ashcroft
 "The Leading Facts of New Mexico History," Chap. VI,
 Vol. IV, Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq.
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<http://www.socorronm.org>

NEW MEXICO True