

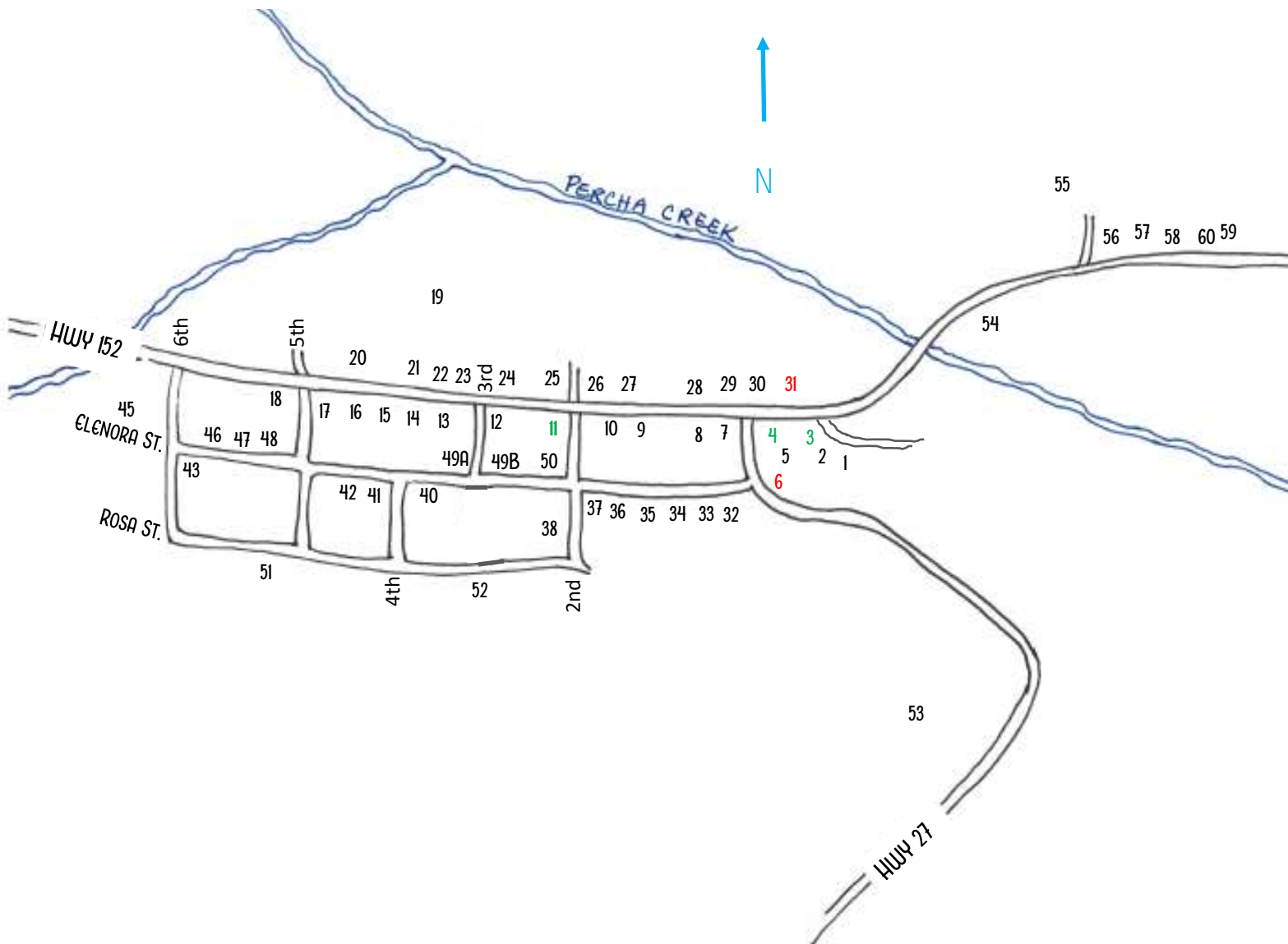
Hillsboro Historical Society Walking Tour

Lay of the land: To the east, and a thousand feet lower in elevation are the Rio Grande River and I-25. To the West are mountains known as the Black Range. The creek running from the mountains to the Rio Grande through Hillsboro is Percha Creek. Just above the Hillsboro on the west, three branches of the Percha have joined and become one creek. In Hillsboro, the creek passes under two bridges: one on the west, and one on the east end.

Hillsboro was founded in 1877. The main concentration of historic buildings is clustered between the two bridges, near Hillsboro’s downtown area.

Sanborn-Perris insurance maps from 1893, 1898, and 1930 were useful in dating sites. Only the structures between the two bridges are included in the historic Sanborn-Perris maps. The area east of the east bridge and containing many historic adobe homes and structures dates to the earliest settlement of Hillsboro, by families of Mexican descent. This neighborhood is known as Happy Flats.

- Color coding:
- Historic building on the National Register of Historic Places
 - Public building
 - Business (currently operating)



1. **Red Barn.** Jessica Wertz Ceramics. Built after the 1972 flood and recently upgraded. Since its beginning the building has functioned primarily as a creative working space.



2. **Disinger house,** known as **This Old House.** This pre-1893 Victorian frame home was possibly built by Willard Hopewell. Long owned by George and Eva Disinger who operated a barbershop and jewelry store just across Main Street, which was destroyed in the 1972 flood. Restoration began in 2010 by Terry Miller to be used as an antique shop. During these renovations, the house was found to have insulation of horsehair, fabric, and newspaper.



3. Black Range Museum. Built before 1883 for the Hillsboro Hydraulic Mining Company. By 1900, it became Sadie Orchard's Ocean Grove Hotel. Sadie Orchard and her husband owned the Lake Valley-Hillsboro-Kingston stagecoach line. An entrepreneur, Sadie provided customers lodging, food, transportation, and entertainment. Tom Ying, a Chinese immigrant, cooked for Sadie in the Ocean Grove, and came to own the building. After Tom Ying's death in 1959, the building became a privately owned museum run by Lydia Key. It was purchased by the Hillsboro Historical Society in 2016, and has been restored and renovated.



Behind the Museum is the newly-built Coach House that will house the Mountain Pride stagecoach that was manufactured for the line in 1889. The Mountain Pride is a southern style thorough-brace suspended coach built in the "concord fashion" and upholstered in red leather on the inside. It was built for seven passengers. It left Lake Valley at noon and arrived in Hillsboro about 3:00 p.m.



4. **Sue's Antiques.** Built before 1893. Over time, this building has been a general store, mercantile, pool hall, dance hall, oil storage warehouse, fire station, and more. A remnant of the "Purple Block" —the original Commercial District. The 1972 flood destroyed Sue's original antiques store across the highway.



5. Solomon Luna house. Built before 1893, this adobe has been a newspaper office housing the Sierra County Advocate, a private home, a meat market, and more. It housed the Black Range Museum and the community library before 1961.



6. **Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department.** This space was once occupied by historical buildings including a general store, livery stable, and from 1904 by Sadie Orchard's second hotel, the Orchard Hotel. The fire station includes a siren (pictured in the up left quadrant of the photo) which is set off to call emergency personnel together.



7. **Welcome to Hillsboro sign.** Built by Sue Bason, owner of the antique shop across the street. The Union Bar and Hotel once stood on this corner for almost a block along Main Street. The Union Bar and Hotel was destroyed by fire in 1904.



8. Slease Garage. Built before 1930. This building sits on the site of what was once the county offices and jail, and part of the Union Hotel, which was destroyed by fire in 1904. This long-time garage is now a private residence.



9. Donahoe-Lamb house. Built before 1893. This building and the next one appear to be a single long structure as viewed from Main Street, but there has been a space between the two since their appearance on Hillsboro's first insurance map in 1893. This part has been a general store, lodging house, and café. Once the home of international adventurers Dana and Ginger Lamb. After landing their airplane on the hill above town while on a scouting trip in the 1960s for a place to retire, they walked into town and on first sight declared, "This is the place!"



10. Alert-Hatcher Building. Hillsboro Trading Post. Built before 1893 apparently as a general mercantile by José Alert. This building served for many years as Dr. Hatcher's hospital and then by his widow, as the Hatcher Hotel. Classic adobe row house with street entrances and private yard and gardens in the rear. This town-center building has housed many businesses, including cafés, Percha Creek Traders artists' cooperative and gallery, and the Black Range Winery, serving wine made by grapes grown in Hillsboro. Current occupants are the **Hillsboro Trading Post** on the east, and a private residence to the west.



11. General Store Café. Built before 1893. This building is said to have been built in 1879, just two years after the founding of Hillsboro. It long served as the Miller Drugstore. An adjacent post office and the brick front of the drug store were ripped away in the 1914 flood. It continued in the Miller family as a drugstore and general store for many years and housed the first telephone switchboard. Retaining its pre-1900 ambience, it has for a long time been a popular eatery.



12. Padilla-Kerr house. Deeded to Anute and Anastasia Padilla in 1884.



13. William H. Bucher house. Constructed in 1892 and purchased by W.H. and Carrie Bucher in 1894. William Bucher was cashier at the Sierra County Bank, located across Main Street (Highway 152 now). Principals of the early Ladder Ranch, the Buchers owned ranches, banks, and parts of downtown El Paso. Their only child, Anne, became a New York socialite and later a successful El Paso businesswoman. When she died in 1973, the house passed to her cousin, Caroline Hopewill Ostertag, and husband Edward Ostertag, who remodeled it to its present form.



14. Tittmann house. Built before 1893. The structure is actually two houses—the Keller and Murphy homes—joined together in 1918 by Edward O. Tittmann and his wife Margaret to make room for her parents. They named the combined structure “Casa Sal Si Puedes” (Leave if you can). Tittman was a prominent lawyer and delegate to the New Mexico Constitutional Convention, who first came to Hillsboro in 1908 from New York City to manage the Ready Pay Mine (unfortunately known to locals as the Never Pay Mine.)



15. Shellenberger house. This house, likely built before 1893, was purchased as a second home in the 1940's by Harriet Shellenberger Dorsey, a famous Los Angeles interior decorator who fell in love with Hillsboro while furnishing Sir Victor Sassoon's El Refugio across the street. She remodeled the house and called it her “Casa del Bosque.”



16. "Pink Adobe" Possibly built before 1893 in the Italianate style. Once known as the "pink adobe," now spring green and sunny yellow.



17. John Webster house. Built before 1893, and perhaps as early as 1886 by Webster, a prominent miner and politician. Later the home of Shepard and Robinson families. Adobe maintained in the original Victorian style.



18. Will Robins house. Built before 1893, possibly by Robins in 1884. Later the home of D. M. Miller and L. C. Latham families of Lake Valley. Adobe in original Victorian style is retained.



19. Hillsboro Schoolhouse on Schoolhouse Hill. *Note: View the schoolhouse from the location of the courthouse ruins and jail, #38.* The original building with a bell tower on the east was built before 1879, but was replaced with this south-facing building in 1911 and then again in 1914 after being destroyed by fire. This adobe building served as Hillsboro's elementary school until 1937 and has been privately owned since after WW II.



20. Meyers/Ingram house. Built before 1893, by the Meyers brothers, this adobe was built in Victorian cottage style. The Meyers brothers utilized the same floor plan as several other homes built on Elenora Street. This home and its owner survived the 1972 flood. Restored in 1970s by Bill and Betty Ingram. Bill Ingram was on the volunteer fire department and helped obtain a new fire truck that was needed at the time.



21. Enchanted Villa Bed & Breakfast. This modern adobe home was built as “El Refugio” in 1941 by Sir Victor Sassoon, a wealthy real estate mogul from Shanghai. He was close to Sandy Tittmann, who grew up across the street. Miss Tittmann had met Sir Victor while visiting her aunt and uncle in China in 1935. Her father Edward sold Sir Victor the land, and Edward and Sandy together designed the house. It became famous for the elaborate style of “gracious living” which Sassoon brought with him when he came to town. It has been the Enchanted Villa Bed and Breakfast since 1988.



22. Nusom house. Possibly built pre-1893. At one time, Edward Tittmann had his law office in this house. In the 2000s the carport was converted into a restaurant named for its owner, “Lynn Nusom’s Kitchen.” Nusom was a well-known southwestern food writer, and author of numerous cookbooks..



23. Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. The first church was built in the 1880's, with the adobe structure facing east, and later adorned with two matching towers. The original building collapsed after the 1972 flood. Local townspeople rebuilt the church at their own expense according to the same plan, but facing south. Some of the interior fixtures such as the pews are from the old church. It features a small outdoor shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



24. García house. Built before 1893, this home started as a commercial building with a stable. Early occupants were the Hernández and Padilla families. H. A. Wolford used the house for his law office c 1905-25. The García family has owned the property for over 85 years.



25. Crews house. Built in 1879, this home is said to be the oldest home in Hillsboro. Built by Confederate Brigadier General Dr. C.C. Crews when he moved from placer mining in Gold Dust to establish his medical practice here. Interred in the Hillsboro Cemetery, Dr. Crews is the highest ranking Confederate officer to be buried in New Mexico.



26. On the site of his 1892 blacksmith shop, **A.J. Hirsch** built this partly two-story classic adobe structure in 1903 as a hall for dances and community events. Kingston Lodge 16 AF&AM began meeting there that same year and purchased the building in 1922; the second floor has served as the Masonic Lodge since. The single story on the west is now the **Hillsboro Post Office** while the bottom east part has served as general stores and other businesses.



27. S-Bar-X Saloon. Built before 1893. This line of large adobe buildings has housed general stores, bars, saloons, barbershops, cafes, and varied other businesses. The motel on the east is a recent addition. Live music and many a dance took place in the S-Bar-X. It is said that riders on horses sometimes came in the front and rode out the back door. The S-Bar-X closed in 2003. At this time the S-Bar-X is privately owned and awaiting renovation.



28. The Square Adobe. Built before 1893. This building, originally square before the addition on the west side, has been home to a bank, saloons, wine bar, art gallery, and hotels, including Sadie Orchard's third hotel from 1905, called the Hillsboro Hotel. The rooms to the west, towards the back of the property, may have been individual brothel rooms.



29. Rio Abajo Rio. Most buildings dating back to the 1880s along the north side of Main Street from here to the East bridge were destroyed in the 1972 flood. Included were a mercantile, grocery stores, a barbershop, a jewelry store, and the home of Luiz Terrazas, who was drowned. This stretch was once a block of the central commercial area, located on 1st and Main. 1st Street no longer exists as a named street. Main Street is now Highway 152. The structure once housed Ross Bell's apple pie shop, open only once per year, but with a pie menu posted at all times, building the anticipation. Regional residents remember Hillsboro's annual Labor Day Apple Festival, the highlight of many a family's fall day trip.



30. Old ruins of Gas station and repair shop. Built before 1930, and one of at least four service stations that have operated in Hillsboro over the years. These remains now serve as a stable and corral for horses. Adjacent is the location for a Saturday musicians' gathering which has been ongoing for several decades.



31. Percha Creek Park Located at the crossroads of Highways 152 and 27, Percha Creek Park offers picnic tables, shade, public toilets, spaces for campers, and parking space for those who come up to join or listen to the musicians on Saturdays. Bicyclists who come through on Adventure Cycling Association's Southern Tier route enjoy a break here. Adjacent to the park is the **Farm Market** that takes place every Saturday in spring and summer.



32. Hidalgo-Milton house. Built before 1893. Early owners were Sam Hidalgo and James Moore. In the 1930s and 1940s it was the home of General Hugh Milton, who served as president of NMSU and later Secretary of the Army. The Sterling Roberts family lived here later.



33. Hillsboro High School. This was the first high school in Sierra County. Designed and built in 1922 by Trost & Trost of El Paso, using 20,000 adobe bricks. This building served high school students until 1944 and then elementary students until 1971. Dolores Springer was instrumental in restoring and registering this structure. The structure was again restored in the 90's and is now the **Hillsboro Community Center**, it also houses the **Hillsboro Community Library**.



34. Cornelius ("Neal") Sullivan house. Built in 1893. Sullivan was a Sierra County sheriff. His adobe home was stabilized and restored by the Shufelts in the 1990s. The private residence with vineyards in back belongs to owners of the Black Range Winery. **Laundry and Herbs** is located here.



35. Hillsboro Union Church. Built in 1892. This property was donated by Judge Parker to serve all denominations. It features a hanging chandelier of twelve kerosene lanterns under a metal reflector, ordered from the American Reflector & Lighting Company in Chicago in 1893 and brought by stagecoach from Lake Valley to Hillsboro. The chandelier is now traditionally illuminated every Christmas Eve. A rare brick building in Hillsboro, this church with its unusual circular apse has been in continuous service over 130 years.



36. George T. and Ninette Stocker Miller house. Built in 1894 by George Miller. One of the most distinctive homes in Hillsboro, this Victorian house is built of smelter slag cast into 110-pound bricks.



37. Judge Frank W. Parker house. Built before 1898. An early frame home of Judge Parker, the presiding judge for the 1899 Fountain murder trial held in the courthouse next door. He became a Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1912.



38. Sierra County Courthouse Ruins. Built in 1892, this elegant three-story brick building was torn down in 1939 after an election in 1936 to move the county seat to Hot Springs (now Truth of Consequences). The **Sierra County Jail** in back was built of stone and mortar in 1906. The Hillsboro Historical Society bought the property in 2019 with the intent to stabilize what remains.

Note: This location is the best place to view #19, the Old Grammar School, which is across the highway on the hill behind town.



40. Ringer-Tirey house. Built before 1898. Turn of the century adobe architecture with Victorian elements on street side. May have been built by Harvey Ringer, an early rancher. Later the home was occupied by Roy Tirey, a ranch and prominent manager of mines in silver-rich Lake Valley to the south.



41. **Deer Crossing Airbnb.** Built in 1926, this adobe was hidden from sight in a forest of trees of heaven for many years. After renovation it became an Airbnb.



42. **Sheriff Thomas Murphy house.** Built before 1898, this is a classic New Mexico adobe with hipped roof and wrap-around porch. Murphy was Sierra County's first sheriff, appointed by governor in 1884. Sheriff Murphy drowned in the 1914 flood trying to rescue his wife, who was at an Eastern Star meeting in the Masonic Hall.



43. **Jacob Dines home.** Built in 1897. This home, built by Missouri settlers, was inherited by Jacob's granddaughter Georgia. Georgia and her husband, Embree Hale Sr., occupied the home until 1974. The flood of 1972 destroyed many of the houses in this area but this home withstood it, having been built onto a raised foundation and having trap doors under the foundation on the east and west, so that floodwaters flow under the house.



45. Wilken ranch. Built in the 1960s, this was once site of the Young boarding house. Lefty & Barbara Wilken and their children were a professional rodeo family. To help make ends meet, Barbara ran the popular Percha Villa Café, first in a building downtown and then in this small structure on the west side of town which included an outdoor kiva oven for baking bread. Known as a vivacious cook, one of her favorite jingles was, “Hamburg, pickle on top—makes your heart go flippity flop.”



46. **Meyers House.** All three were built before 1898. One of three homes side-by-side built by George and Charlie Meyers. All three houses have the same L-shaped floor plan. For many years, the Fourth of July has been celebrated with a ballgame and community potluck in the field west of this adobe home.



47. Richmond house, a frame house built by the Meyers brothers 1898.



48. Frame home built by Meyers brothers, one of four with same L-shaped floor plan.



49a. And 49b. Rubio complex. Built before 1893, on the east side of 3rd Street and later on both sides. The Rubios maintained 82 miles of state roads stretching in all directions from Hillsboro for two generations, beginning in 1933 with Lonjino (Lonnie, Sr.) from when the Black Range Highway had just been completed over Emory Pass, up until Lonnie, Jr. retired in 1999 after 43 years of service. The old gas pump and workshop were used as a County Roads Yard for many years.



50. Old Adobe Guest House Airbnb Built in 1883. Later rooms were added one at a time until the home was complete with kitchen and bathroom by the 1940's.



51. Hughes-Mackey house. Built about 1895, for English mining entrepreneur Arthur Hughes and wife Edna Crews Hughes, who in 1898 he abandoned and disappeared after gambling away mining company money. The James Mackey family lived here in the 1930's. This unusual home is the second surviving home built of slag blocks from the smelter. Each block weighs approximately 110 pounds.



52. Burke-King house. Built before 1906. An unusual two-story adobe home, unique in the region, built by Jack Burke. Renovated in 1990s by Hollywood script writers and directors Zalman King and wife Patsy King.



53. Hillsboro Cemetery. The Hillsboro Cemetery is a short hike up on Highway 27. The cemetery is resting place for a Medal of Honor recipient, many of the earliest Mexican settlers, a Confederate general, Sheriff Murphy who died while rescuing people during the 1914 flood, children taken by the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic, and beloved members of many local families. The cemetery is divided into two sections, Masonic on the west and Community on the east.



54. Slag pile. A large mill and smelter once sat just to the north, across the highway. The slag pile was cut through when the highway was reconstructed after the 1972 flood.



55. Old power plant. Construction started in 1931, to enclose the diesel generator that provided power. It was completed in 1935. Hillsboro's electric generating facility was later a coal-fired electric generating plant managed by the Rural Electrical Agency. Rock exterior is original; in the 1980's the interior was reworked as a private dwelling.



56. Chávez-Luna house. This adobe was home to Romelia Chavez Luna who lived here nearly 100 years. She birthed three children and reared five more who had been orphaned by the 1918 flu epidemic. This classic old style three room home and the two adobes to the east were built in 1880-1885 by her father, Abel Chavez. Romie was a cook for Sadie Orchard's café. The house survived three major floods. Renovation began in 2024.



57. Chavez family house. One of three family homes in a row built of adobe by Abel Chavez. Abel's ancestor came to what is now New Mexico with Juan de Onate's expedition bringing hundreds of settlers in 1598.



58. Chavez family house. a third adobe built by Abel Chavez for his family. Abel Chaves was on the Fountain murder trial jury here in Hillsboro.



59. Hillsboro Court. Formerly known as “Bill’s Camp” this complex provided hotel and automobile service to early motorists. The adobe home in the rear of the property was built about 1918, with a store and garage added after 1935. Purchased by Oliver-Schoenrad family in the late 1930s. The general store (now occupied by **PINTO**) operated into the 1990’s.



60. PINTO—a desert-modern art shop. Part of the Hillsboro Court Motel complex, this building was once owned by a Presbyterian minister, whose wife taught school here. Children of Mexican descent, many being the earliest families in Hillsboro, attended the school. This family added the general store, a service garage and gas pumps to the property. The general store closed in 1999. The PINTO opened in its location in 2024.

