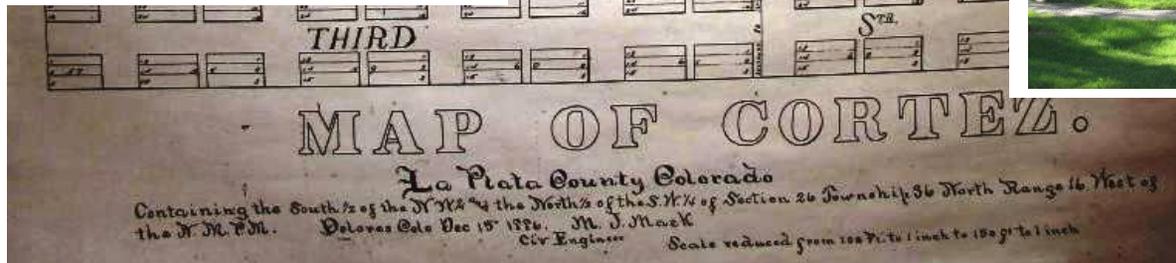
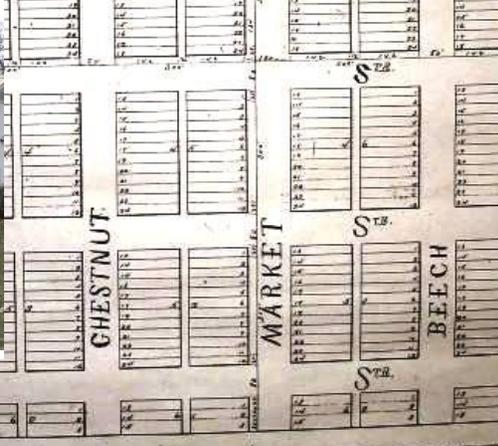
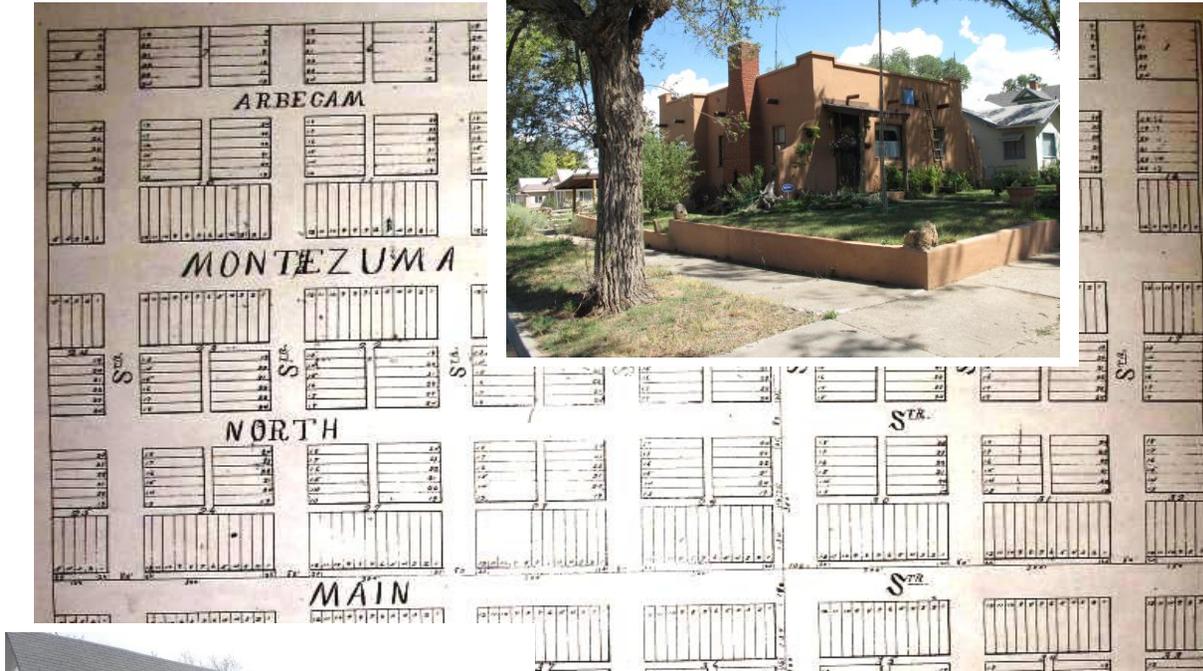


Walking Along Montezuma Avenue

By
June Head

2013



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June Head, April 2010.

Additional information (shown with an *) was compiled by Jill Seyfarth of Cultural Resource Planning in Durango under contract to the City of Cortez. In 2011 and 2012, the City received a grant from the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program to complete an Historic Buildings Survey of Montezuma Avenue, Ash St. and North St.. Eighty-two properties were inventoried with this funding. Funding for the CLG Program comes from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, to the Colorado Historical Society, which in turn contracted with the City of Cortez.

Property addresses highlight in red were recently listed on the Cortez Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts. The current property owners requested this honorary designation for their properties. Some of these properties are also eligible for the Colorado State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

Walking along Montezuma Avenue in 2013

This tour begins at the Cortez Cultural Center, 25 North Market St.

Walk north on N. Market St., cross E. North St., and continue to the corner of Montezuma Ave.

Did you know? A news article in the Durango Herald on January 1st, 1888, titled Cortez as the “Second Town in La Plata County”. Excerpts from this article regarding the formation of Cortez are:

“Cortez was surveyed and platted by J. M. Mack, December 15th, 1886. Its streets are laid out at right angles, or as we may say, square with the world. Main Street, which is laid out east and west and Market Street, which crosses Main in the very center of town, are each 100 feet wide and will probably be the principal business streets.

Montezuma Avenue is also an East and West Street and lays along the highest ridge in Cortez, is 120 feet wide; through its center will be a running stream of water, on either side of which are to be planted rows of shade trees, with side walks along the water edge and drive ways on each side of the avenue similar to Cleveland, Ohio. From this main street of water all other streets will be watered the same as Salt Lake City, Utah. The water for this purpose is being brought from the main canal from the Montezuma Valley Water Supply Company through an immense flume or aqueduct nearly three miles long, in places 35 feet from the ground. This structure is well under way. D. H. Lemmon, the contractor, informs us it will be completed by March 1st, 1888. This work reminds us of those magnificent aqueducts found by the conqueror of New Mexico, Cortez, in his march on the beautiful city of Mexico, the home of the Montezumas.”

Many of the properties referred to are in the “**Cortez Original Townsite**”. In 1888, when Cortez was platted it contained only a total of ten blocks in the town. The Cortez Land and Investment Company filed this plat in the Records of Montezuma County on 20 August 1890. One half portions of each of the blocks at the boundary lines appear to have been used.

Turn left onto Montezuma Ave.

Montezuma Park area: In the early formation of Cortez, this park was the center of many activities of the Town. **A well was drilled at this location in hopes of finding water but was not a success. A water tank was located in this area where the people of Cortez could bring their buckets to obtain water for drinking and household purposes. There is a possibility this big water tank would have been filled by water from the big flume that came into Cortez and ended in the area of the Congregational Church and this park.**

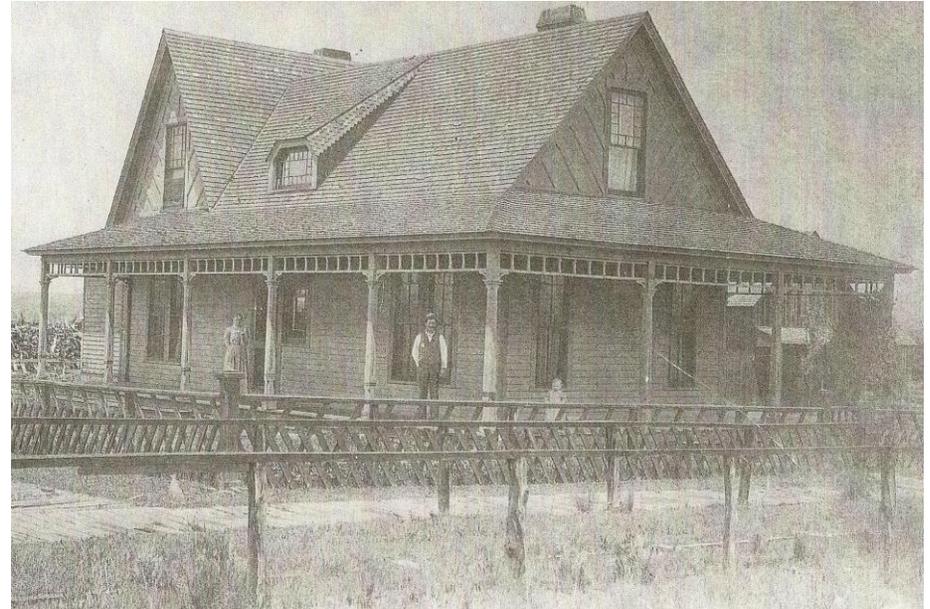
Walk west on Montezuma to N. Chestnut St.

At the west end of the park there was a very nice house owned by C. H. Rudy and his wife, Ellen. Mr. Rudy was a very prominent sheep rancher. He was also involved with the early banking business in Cortez. After the death of Mr. Rudy, his widow continued to live there for several years. Many young people will remember Mrs. Rudy as she was very kind to the school children that stopped by to “visit a little”. After the death of Mrs. Rudy, the house was sold and moved. The location of the house was across the street from the Hickman home at 30 W. Montezuma Avenue.

Turn Right at N. Chestnut St., and cross to the north side of Montezuma Ave.

112 West Montezuma (at NW corner of N. Chestnut and W. Montezuma): This was the location of the home known as the “Herm Guillet Home” or the “Add Wheeler Home”. The house was moved in later years to a location on the Willden Road, northeast of the Vo-Tech School. This house was built in 1888 by Emery S. Turner, one of the first businessmen of the new Town. He was one of the men who founded the Town. His company was a large property owner and sold town lots to the new prospective business owners and the new homeowners. Many early history stories relate to the Herm Guillet home in Cortez. Other owners were: J. W. Hanna who brought water into the Town and area; Stephen J. Smith, prominent man in early Cortez business and associated with Mr. Turner; Herman Guillet and Add Wheeler.

48 West Montezuma: Frank McNeill built this home about 1938. It was a frame and stucco home. Mr. McNeill owned restaurants in Cortez – a well-known café was the “Owl Café” located at 121 East Main Street. Mr. McNeill purchased this business in May 1934 and it became the “cafeteria for the school kids who needed a place to eat their lunch.” Many students remember eating at the “Owl” for a cup of soup, ½ sandwich with milk or “Mac and Cheese”.



Because of his care and treatment of the young people in Cortez, Frank McNeill is a familiar name to many. Mr. McNeill later sold his home to T. A. Cresto. Ross Aiken purchased the property from Mr. Cresto. Later owners are unknown. (*Maurine McNeill, daughter in law of Frank McNeill*).

*Bill Watson was a builder and a businessman, perhaps best known for starting the Cortez Sale Barn (East of Swimming Pool/City Park) in 1938 that he operated for a period of time. He built his family a home at **38 West Montezuma** in 1937. The next year, he built the house at **48 West Montezuma** for Frank and Emma McNeill. The **Pueblo Revival style** is a design that seems most appropriate for Cortez. This style incorporates

the flat roofs and the massive stucco walls of the historic homes of the Pueblo people. Vigas, straight headed windows and stepped or terraced levels are also common characteristics (see photo on cover).

This building is eligible for the Colorado Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

38 West Montezuma: House built about 1936 by W. D. (Bill) and Claire Watson. Mr. Watson built several homes in the area in the next few years. This was the 4th house in that block that was built. Mr. and Mrs. Watson and their daughter, Willa-Don, lived in this home. Other known owners were: Mrs. Anna Gawith, Judge & Mrs. W. W. Rusk, Frank Jones, co-owner of Denny and Jones. (*Willa-Don Holmes, daughter of W. D. Watson.*)

This building is eligible for the Colorado Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

30 West Montezuma: Many people identify this home as the “Clark Hickman” home. This house was built about 1908 by Charlie Ross, a skilled carpenter. Clark & Edna Hickman bought his home about 1927 and this was the only house in the entire square block. (Allene Gibson, daughter, gave this information). Mr. Hickman was known as a “Fisherman, Philosopher, and Friend”. He was a very active businessman in Montezuma County serving as: Secretary of Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company (1915); Elected Montezuma County Judge (1917-1921); County Assessor (1921-resigned term early); Mercantile business-Valley Supply (1924- 1937?); County Judge (1938-1943); Montezuma County Commissioner (1953-1957); Manager of Western Abstract Company (1948-1952). He was also general manager of the Montezuma Dolores Title Company. His expertise on the end of a fly rod and fishing on the Dolores River above Stoner was known to “one and all”. After the death of Mrs. Edna Hickman, Mr. Hickman married a widow, Mrs. Minnie Gilliam. After Mr. Hickman’s death, Mrs. Minnie Gilliam Hickman lived there several years. House possibly sold upon the death of his second wife, Minnie. She was a sister to Mrs. Anna Gawith, who lived one door west in the home built by W. D. Watson.

*John Wesch lived at this address for many years. He worked for the Montezuma Valley Irrigation District and held numerous public offices during his life. He was the Montezuma County Clerk from 1897 to 1901, and the County Treasurer from 1906-1910 and again in 1928-1930. He was a Cortez Town Trustee from 1909-1917. He was the president of the school board in 1914. He also raised sheep in partnership with others. Clark and Edna Hickman lived here after 1927.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites and the Colorado Register of Historic Places.

18 West Montezuma: Usually identify this home as the Violet and Jim Garrison home. This house was built in 1908 for Charles and Nina Heaton who moved in from Dove Creek to make Cortez their home. It was the 3rd house built in that block. Per Mrs. Garrison: in 1942 the Garrison’s bought the home from Mr. Waters who had the furniture store. The Garrison family remodeled the home by adding the “dormer windows” in the front of the house. Mrs. Garrison remained in the Garrison home after the death of Jim Garrison, a local attorney. She was a well-known educator in the Cortez School system. After the death of Mrs. Garrison, the home was sold. (*Violet Garrison.*)

* Violet and Jim Garrison moved to Cortez in 1942 and bought this house. He was the County Attorney, and was killed in an automobile accident near Rico, Colorado in July of 1953. Violet was principal of the Manaugh School in the Cortez school system from 1954 until 1976.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

2 West Montezuma: For the past few years, this house has been identified as the Charles Searle home. This house built in 1929-30 by Dungan and Allene (Hickman) Gibson. This was the second house in that block. Mr. and Mrs. Gibson purchased the Mead-Hengstler Lumber Company (on the corner where “Bru’s House of Color” is now located) and ran the lumberyard for several years. Gibson sold the business and

the house to Ira and Edah Sturtevant, the parents of Irma Beaber and Fred Sturtevant. The lumberyard was changed to Cortez Lumber. Mr. and Mrs. Sturtevant also built the apartments at South Ash and East First. Mrs. Sturtevant later married Bill Peterson and this house was known as the Bill Peterson home. When the house was sold, probably to Charles & Betty Searle, Bill and Edah built a home on the Dolores Highway where they lived until their deaths. (*Allene Hickman Gibson letter to June Head, friend of the Sturtevant, Peterson and Searle families*).

*The Tudor Revival style was employed for this house and the one at **205 East Montezuma**. The style was introduced to the United States in the late 1800s and might be characterized as a romantic interpretation of Medieval English buildings. Typical elements of a Tudor Revival building are very steeply pitched front gables, ornamental false half-timbering and stucco or masonry walls that suggest a rustic, countryside setting. Tudor Revival styles did not catch on with the American public until new masonry veneering techniques were developed after World War I. The style became wildly popular in the 1920s and up into the early 1930s.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

Cross N. Market St. and turn south across Montezuma Ave. Turn left and begin walking east on Montezuma Ave.

Corner of North Market and East Montezuma: This building faces on North Market Street. It was the dental building of Dr. Russell Smith for several years and was built about 1934. In later years, Dr. Martin J. Dale had his optical office in the same quarters and at the present time this is the optical office of Dr. Bill Mollenkopf. Only the south part of the building was the original office building of Dr. Russell Smith. (*Personal knowledge of June Head, patient of Dr. Smith's (about 1936-7) and friend of his daughter, Sue.*)

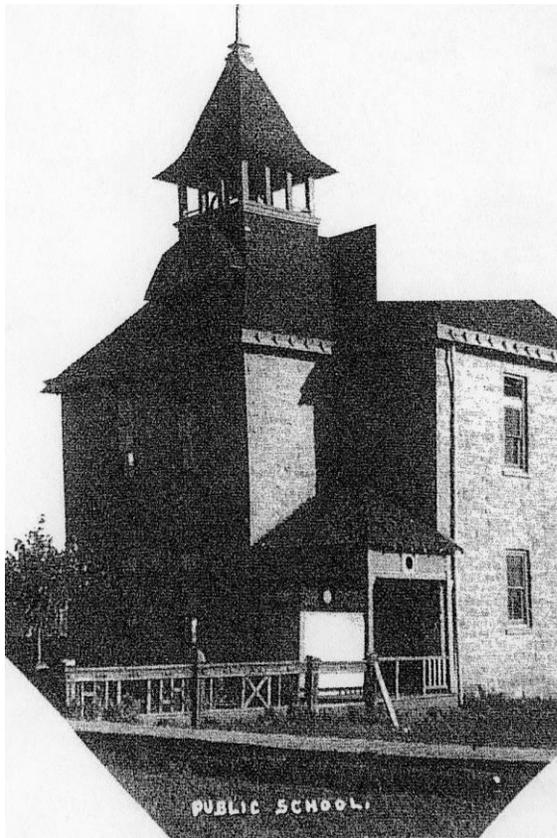
9 East Montezuma: William and Lair Vencil home built in 1935-36 on land purchased from Mrs. Maude Bryce. The Vencil family lived in McElmo Canyon but felt the children should attend school in Cortez. Mr. Vencil built this home of railroad ties. The home was remodeled in 1960 and extended east. Only the west end of the house is railroad ties. During this time (1935's) many homes were being built of railroad ties as it was an affordable way to put up a house. This probably was the time when the railroad was discontinued and the railroad ties used for train tracks had to be removed. This house has a basement that Mr. Vencil dug after the house was completed. Cameron C. Secrist now has his law office at this location. (Information from Vivienne Vencil Kenyon.)

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites, and the Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

23 East Montezuma: THE HOUSE WITH THE HISTORY: Known for many years as the "Aunt Maude Bryce Home". This home was previously the 1st Public School in Cortez and was a two and one-half story building. It was built of rock by Mr. Peter Baxstrom in 1890. At the time when this building was no longer needed as a school, the upper story was removed but the original walls of the ground floor still stand. Mr. Robert Bryce took off the 2nd floor and made it a residence about 1925/6, shortly after his marriage to Mrs. Maude McLin. Mr. McLin died of flu in 1918 and Mrs. McLin then married Mr. Bryce in 1925. For many years this was the home of "Aunt Maude", a favorite lady among the young people of her area. Throughout the years this property has had several owners. (*Personal knowledge of Vivienne Kenyon and June Head.*)

*The Cortez School District #17 formed in 1887 and offered school in makeshift locations. In 1890, the District purchased property from the Cortez townsite company for \$1 and hired local master stone mason, Peter Baxstrom to build a two-story school house. He completed the job for \$13,374. The school housed 5th-8th grades. A Mrs. Chase was one of the earliest teachers. School was held in this building for many years. In 1923 the School District added classrooms to the high school building and sold the stone school building to Robert J. Bryce.

Robert and Maude Bryce remodeled the schoolhouse into their home. Bryce was born in Iowa in 1861. He came to Montezuma County and established himself in the mercantile business. He married Rose Guillet, the daughter of the prominent Guillet mercantile and banking family, in 1908, and they ran a store in Towaoc, among their various business dealings. Rose may have died soon after the 1920 census was taken.



Robert married Maude O. McLin in 1925. She came to the Mancos area as a young bride in the late 1890s with her husband, Wilke McLin. They ranched in the area and then moved to Cortez where they managed the Clifton House Hotel in 1906. Wilke also had a butcher shop in Cortez that burned in the same fire in 1908 that took out the Clifton House. Wilke died in the influenza epidemic, on November 7, 1918, leaving Maude a widow. After she married Robert, she lived in the schoolhouse/home until the mid 1950s.

33 East Montezuma: Know as the Henry Thorpe home. The house built about 1926 and occupied by Henry and Virginia Thorpe and their son, Gene. After the death of Virginia Thorpe, Mr. Thorpe remarried and Ellen Thorpe and their two daughters resided in the home. Mrs. Ellen Thorpe still resides in the home as of this date. Mr. Thorpe served as Montezuma County Clerk, was a restaurant owner in Cortez, and was Chief of the Cortez Fire Department for many years.

*Bungalows on Montezuma Avenue reflect a variety of building materials, ranging from this wood frame house to the stone house at **101 East Montezuma**. Simplified, one-story Craftsman style bungalow designs were offered in pattern books for builders and were even provided in packages with pre-cut lumber and detailing, so Craftsman architectural elements are commonly seen on bungalows. The Bungalow building type was identified in twenty three homes in the survey area. Bungalows gained popularity as Americans rejected the aesthetics of the Victorian era, and moved toward more simplified, utilitarian designs. Many versions of these one or one-and-a-half story homes with large front porches, and broad tapered porch columns were built throughout the country. The form was very popular in Colorado between 1900 and 1930.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

37 E. Montezuma:

*This building is set farther back from the street than the neighboring houses, providing a sense that this building is subordinate to the others. The building was probably constructed by Bill and Ethel Lenz who owned the property in the 1930s. Two very slightly recessed bays are evident on the first floor, suggesting there might have originally been large (possibly garage) doors on the first floor. It appears this duplex was intended as a rental property associated with the next door property (**45 East Montezuma**).

In the 1940s, the property belonged to JW Ertel, Ethel's brother, along with the adjacent property to the east. Ertel had been farming property in the Ackerman area and going to Denver in the winter to learn the mortuary business. In 1921 Ertel bought the Ames and Omo Funeral Home and established the Ertel Funeral Home. He managed the funeral home until 1956, when his son, Walter E. Ertel took over. The Ertels did not live in the duplex.

This property is eligible for the Colorado Register of Historic Places.

45 East Montezuma: Bill and Ethel Lenz built the rock sided house around 1930. She was a sister of J. W. Ertel. Bill Lenz also built the building presently owned by Ertel Funeral Home as a crematorium and used for the storage of funeral home vehicles. (*Information from Walter Ertel, nephew of Bill and Ethel Lenz.*)

*This is one of four houses in the survey area that was constructed of an ornamental concrete block. Concrete block was an inexpensive and popular fire-resistant building material used on many buildings in the first decades of the twentieth century. Concrete block machines could readily be obtained from mail order catalogs. Many individual home owners fabricated all the ornamental concrete blocks necessary to construct their own houses.

This building is eligible for the Colorado Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Cross N. Beech St. and continue walking east on Montezuma Ave.

101 E. Montezuma: This home was built by Ted and Louida Henry about 1928. Ted Henry was co-owner of Henry Brothers with his brother, James. The Henry Bros. had several different automobile ownerships throughout the years. Louida served as the Town Clerk for several years also. (*Personal knowledge of June Head and interview with Genevra Omo in 1998.*)

*Ted and Louida (Marr) Henry built this stone house. Ted was a partner, with his brother, James, in the Henry Brothers who owned and operated automobile dealerships and garages in Cortez. The 1932 City Directory also lists Ted as a "sheepman". Louida was a member of the Ute Mountain Study Group and active in the establishment of Cortez's library. Louida was the Cortez City Clerk from the mid 1950s to at least 1967.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites and the Colorado Register of Historic Places.

121 E. Montezuma: Known as the "Downey Home". Judge John Downey came to Cortez in 1910. He purchased two town lots (per news article 5-20-1915) when he traded his buzz wagon to C. H. Bopp for the two lots. The house was built by Tom Omo about 1915. John Downey was a practicing attorney for 20 years in Cortez. He was elected as a Judge in Montezuma County in 1912. He was a Civic Leader, Public Spirited Gentleman, and Great Public Speaker. The "John J. Downey" elementary school was named after him because of his service to the citizens of Cortez.

Records at County Clerk's office indicated Lots 4, 5, & 6, Blk 18 was sold by American Water Supply to J. D. Howell of Vina Grove, Hardin Co., KY for \$225.00 on Sept. 20, 1909. In 1909 the American Water Supply was selling lots in the Original Townsite but do not know when they came in. Mr. Walter M. Lovejoy was President of this company. On January 3, 1911, J. D. Howell sold to H. W. Berger the same lots for \$235.00. No further search was made but assume Berger may have sold to C. H. Bopp. Mr. Bopp sold two lots to Downey and Judge Downey built a home on two lots in 1915.

*John Julian Downey and his wife Florence Carlson Downey came to Cortez from Windsor, Colorado, in 1910. Downey, an attorney, held numerous local offices and professional positions. He was the Town Attorney in the early 1910s and elected the County Judge in 1914. He served on the School Board for many years and voluntarily taught one class a week at the high school. He was president of the Cortez Literary Society, the founding secretary of the Cortez Commercial Club and held various offices in the Masonic Lodge.

The Downey Home may have introduced the concept of bungalow design to Cortez. It was originally constructed for Renaldo J. and Ada Eunice Rockwell Huff. Ada Huff, who had moved west with her family from New York to Colorado Springs before she met Renaldo, designed the house. The *Montezuma Journal* commented on the couple's new home in an article on April 7, 1910, noting it was near completion and "in the bungalow

style of architecture, and is a pleasant relief to the eye in comparison to the stereotyped style that has been used in the construction of many other cottages.”

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites, and the Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

129 East Montezuma: This property was sold to Mr. John P. Soens in 1910. This house was probably built by Tom Omo. This was the home of Mrs. Mabel Waldron for many years. Mrs. Waldron was elected as Montezuma County Clerk and Recorder in 1926 and continued to serve in this office until 1936. (*Information on Mrs. Waldron from Geneva Omo, 1998.*)

*Lotta Manaugh also lived in this house. She taught in the Cortez schools and served as the Superintendent of the Cortez School District from 1938 to 1954. An elementary school in Cortez is named for her.

Tom Omo built at least six of the eighty-four houses in the survey area. He was born in Iowa in 1874. He grew up as one of seven siblings in Kansas, where his parents moved soon after he was born. He travelled west to Colorado, and came to the Montezuma Valley from Paonia in 1907, where he joined others in real estate development and construction work. By 1909, Omo had also established a partnership in an undertaking business, the Ames and Omo Funeral Homes of Cortez, Dolores and Mancos. He built a number of houses in and around Cortez. He also built other structures, including bridges located in the county and the containers placed on the beds of new freight trucks that came to Cortez in 1919. He married George Emma Guillet either in December 1908 or January 1909. The Omos were active in local social and community causes. He served as mayor and on various political committees and was the first secretary of the Volunteer Fire Department when it formed in 1911. Tom Omo was an active member of the Cortez community up to his death in 1932.

Tom's first commission on Montezuma Avenue was in 1908 for his partner in real estate development, C.J. Closson. The house at **130 East Montezuma** was quickly followed by Omo's own home in 1909 at **116 East Montezuma** for himself and his new bride. In 1909, he also built the house at **230 East Montezuma**. Two other houses followed, on the south side at **121 East Montezuma** in 1910 and **129 East Montezuma** in 1912. Omo later built a second home on his property that he used as a rental (**112 East Montezuma**).

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

137 East Montezuma: This property was part of the property purchased by John P. Soens in 1910. This house may also have been built by Tom Omo after 1910. In 1909 there was a shortage of homes in Cortez for rent or for purchase; therefore, it is possible Mr. Soens may have hired Tom Omo to build all three homes on the three lots he purchased. In 1949, Fred Sutton may have owned the property.

147 East Montezuma: John P. Soens was one of the earliest businessman in Cortez. He had a meat market probably on the corner of Main and Beech Streets. He purchased the three lots in 1910. The house (see photo on cover) may also have been a Tom Omo built home in the 1910's. Mr. Soens probably watched the town grow and this may have been the reason for his purchase of three lots and the probable building of three homes. After John Soens moved, Mr. Eaton, paint store owner and partner of Hays and Eaton, moved into the property in September 1915. Other owners through the years were Chet Maynes owner of Star Grocery, Jim Barrett, and R. F. Gilpin.

A newspaper article in the Montezuma Journal on December 13, 1906, under *Local Items* describes the housing situation in the new town. “When a house is sold in Cortez and a family has to move it starts a string of buying and moving and somebody gets left as every house is full. We are in sad need of cottages. A good tent would rent quick.” (*Interview with Geneva Omo.*)

*John Soens lived in one of two buildings in the survey area to have survived from the 1800s. John P. Soens was living in Durango by 1880, where he was a founding member of the Durango chapter of Woodmen of the World. By 1893 he had the Old Reliable Market, a meat and grocery

store, in Mancos. The *Montezuma Journal* noted in an item on April 20, 1894 that Soens and his wife, Bertha, had moved to Cortez. They had three sons; William who was born in 1888, Frank who was born in 1890 and Adolph who was born in 1892. Soens did business as a stockman and mercantile owner throughout Southwestern Colorado and for at least a brief period leased ranch land in Montezuma County. On October 23, 1909, the Soens family had a "household sale" at their home and then moved to Durango. The Cortez High School held a going away party for their popular son, Adolph, before the family left. John died in Durango in December of 1919 at the age of 59.

Cross N. Ash St. and continue walking east on Montezuma Ave.

205 East Montezuma: This house (see photo on cover) probably built by Fred Johnson who moved to Cortez in 1928/9 to become the new manager of the J. C. Penney Store on Main Street. Dan Milenski, a local attorney, may have purchased the property from Mr. Johnson. After Mr. Milenski's death, new owners were Paul and Billie Posner, owners of "Posner Clothing Store" on Main Street. Mr. Vencil Lester, Superintendent of Schools in Cortez, was also an owner of the property.

213 East Montezuma: Age of the house is not known. For many years Francis Griswold lived in this house and he may have built the home. In later years, it became known as the "Matt Wolff" home. In 1940 Mr. Griswold was the owner of the Towaoc Trading Post. After the sale of the post, he moved to Cortez and owned a curio store on Main Street. In later years he was associated with Werner Helms in the implement business and a car dealership. Mr. Wolff was elected Montezuma County Assessor after World War II. This home has had additional owners throughout the years.

219 East Montezuma: Age of the home and original builder is not known. For many years this was the home of Daisy and Avon Denham. Mr. Denham was employed by the Forest Service and was well known in the area.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

This is the end of the Original Townsite; we are now entering the **Coffins Addition**.

*In 1888 the F. R. Coffin's Addition expanded Cortez to the east. Coffin later sold off unplatted portions of homestead to local developers, including C. J. Closson. Clinton J. (CJ) Closson was born in Varian County, Michigan, where his father was a successful fruit grower. He moved to Farmington, New Mexico and then to Paonia, Colorado, where he developed orchards. An item in the July 18, 1907 *Montezuma Journal* said Closson visited the Montezuma Valley and was prepared to promote the region as a great fruit growing opportunity. Beginning in July of 1907, Closson rigorously advertised real estate in the Montezuma Valley in the *Montezuma Journal*. He had established residency in Cortez by 1908, the same year he purchased and promoted sales of lots in ten acres in the Coffin Addition which abutted the original Cortez town site. Closson continued his successful real estate career and was also known for his expertise in growing fruit and managing orchards. The Clossons left Cortez in 1920 for Clinton to pursue his career in horticulture.

225 East Montezuma: This residence was built by my grandfather, Rev. C. W. Smith in 1929. The house was built of cement blocks. A news article dated April 25, 1929 reported "that Cortez is making a rapid growth is evidenced by the building of residence properties. The article stated these houses are all first class properties and will probably cost an average of \$2500.00 each. There are also a good number of other dwellings planned a little later on. We believe it is safe to estimate the number of dwellings to be built here in 1929 will total not less than thirty." (Rev. C. W. Smith house listed in article). (*There was a possibility this newly constructed house had an "outdoor toilet facility" as the house at 237 E. Montezuma had this facility. This residence may also have used a septic tank system since many of the homes constructed during that time used septic systems.*)

*Four houses in the survey area were constructed of ornamental concrete block, but two of these houses are now clad in wood and stucco. These include this house and the one at [237 East Montezuma](#).

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

237 East Montezuma: This residence was built by Carl Rosencrans for Carl Gregory, a Main Street businessman and owner of a clothing store. House may have been built about 1929 also. It has been reported this house did not have any bathroom facilities for several years. Later owners of this property were Warren Pyle and Judge George Armstrong.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

245 East Montezuma: Known as the “Helen Duncan” home. Mrs. Duncan also had a beauty shop at this residence. Age of home is not known. Mr. Will Veach may have built this home.

*Helen Duncan opened a beauty parlor on Main St. in the early 1930s. In the 1950s, she operated her beauty shop out of her home.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

At N. Washington St., turn left across Montezuma Ave, then turn left (west) onto the north side of Montezuma

242 E. Montezuma: This was the home of Wm. J. Blatchford. He was known as the “Father of Democracy” in Montezuma County and was elected to be representative from this area. This gentleman was born in England and his mother was a cousin of the Duke of Wellington. Prior to moving to Cortez he owned a sawmill at Millwood in Lost Canyon, near Dolores. In 1932, the Tom Coppinger family was living in this house. There was also a large barn located at the rear of this property. The “Coppinger Barn” caught on fire in 1932. It was reported that due to the extreme cold, water froze coming out of the fire truck and the firemen had to try to obtain water from the house in order to help control the blaze.

*William J. Blatchford was born in 1848 in England and moved to Canada with his parents in 1849. He grew up in Canada where he married Clara Keays. They immigrated to the United States in 1886 and homesteaded land in Montezuma County in 1888. Blatchford developed and operated a sawmill and an irrigation system, later to be known as the Puett-Rentz Ditch.

He served as a county commissioner and was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives for 1907-1908. He was also very active in real estate and formed various partnerships with developers, including a well-known collaboration with the Bozman family during which they purchased two of the first automobiles in Montezuma County to transport real estate clients and to offer a taxi service. Blatchford and Bozman also had the postal delivery contract for the Cortez-Dolores route.

Newspaper advertisements indicated Blatchford and Bozman began marketing lots in the Coffins addition in about 1906, suggesting that Blatchford had moved into the addition himself at about that time. He died on December 29, 1911. His widow, Clara, remained in the area at least into the 1920s. Upon her death, the property passed to Tom Coppinger, who was living there in 1932, when a barn on the lot burned down.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

230 E. Montezuma: Known for many years as the “Englehart House”. There was a large barn located at the rear of the property, known as the “Englehart Barn.” Not certain when this two story house was built but Charles Reid sold the property to Seth Englehart on September 12, 1918. Possibility this house may have also been a Tom Omo built house and that Charles Reid was the original owner of the house. Throughout the

years this has also been known as the Englehart Apartments as the building was made into two apartments. It has had multiple owners since Mr. Englehart owned it.

*Charles Beauford Reid lived at 230 East Montezuma from about 1909 to 1918. He was born in 1874 in Colorado. By 1910, he was married to Mary Neeley. He worked for the Montezuma Valley Bank, rising from Assistant Cashier, to Cashier. He was also the Montezuma County Treasurer from 1910-1916. While the Reids were living in the house, Mary's brother, Will C. Neeley, started an ornamental concrete block yard in the Reid's back yard in August of 1910. Neeley advertised his business in the local paper until he died in 1913.

The Reids sold the house to Seth Englehart in 1918. Seth Englehart was born in Brown County, Kansas, in 1862. He married Austa Harmon in 1897 in Kansas. They moved to the Cortez area with their five children in 1907 and purchased land in the Beulah area where they farmed and raised sheep. They moved into the house in Cortez in time for their youngest child to attend Cortez schools. Seth was a county commissioner from 1929-1933. Seth died in 1944 and Austa sold the property in 1947.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

218 –222 E. Montezuma: This is the site of a home that was won in a poker game about 1907 in Rico, Colorado, by George McEwen, a Cortez resident. The house was transported to Dolores and then pulled by mules to the present location. I believe that George McEwen and his wife, Willie, may have lived in this home. For many years it was the home of Freed and Faye Kelly and their family.

It has been my understanding that poker games were very frequent in Montezuma and in Dolores Counties in the 1900's. As I understand it, there was a group of men who played cards together. When a poker game was going on, it was a serious matter that might last for several hours (or days). The men traveled to Rico, Dolores, Mancos and Cortez. At the time that George McEwen won this house in Rico, it was rumored that he won a total of 5 homes in Rico and had them all transported to our area, at least one located on land between Dolores and Cortez. A remark made by one of the wives of the players was: "When my husband comes home, I don't know if we have a home to live in and a lot of money or if I need to look for a place to live." This may have been the time when Mr. McEwen also won the building in Rico which is located at 34 E. Main Street. When this building was won, each board was marked in one corner with a number, then dismantled and transported by train and wagon to Cortez, and rebuilt using the numbers of the boards to rebuild the building. The first movie shown in the McEwen Building (as it was known) was in April 1911.

206 E. Montezuma: Walter J. Moffitt and his wife, Caroline built the house (date unknown) and lived there several years. Mr. Moffitt was the owner of the Moffitt Stores Company (in the 1920's) and the Walter J. Moffitt Drug Store, a well-known establishment. Mr. Moffitt was a pharmacist. A few years later, Pete Schifferer, brother-in law of Mr. Moffitt, purchased the house. In 1940, Mr. Schifferer sold the house to Werner Helms for \$1,500.00. Werner was moving to Cortez from the Towaoc Trading Post to become the new owner of The Toggery, another well known business. There is a small building on the back of the property that was assumed to be a garage; however, Bob Helms stated this small building housed a cistern for the home. This home for many years was called "The Moffitt Home." (*Information from Bob Helms.*)

*Walter J. and Caroline Moffitt were the original owners of this house. Walter was a pharmacist and the owner of Moffitt's Rexall Drugstore between 1912 and 1934. Caroline Moffitt was active socially and was a founding member of the Ute Mountain Study Club. In about 1933, the Moffitts sold their house and business to Caroline's sister Louise and her husband, Peter Schifferer. Schifferer renamed the business "The Emporium" and later (in 1936) renamed it "The Toggery" clothing store to reflect a change in the inventory to just clothes and shoes. Peter and Louise lived in the house until 1940, when they offered the house and The Toggery to the Schifferer's and Moffitt's nephew, Werner Helms.

Helms came to the United States from Austria in 1923 at the age of 19 to work at the family's trading post near Towaoc. Although he spoke no English when he came to the United States, Werner quickly learned the new language, along with Ute and Navaho. Werner Helms married Mary

Griswold in 1929. She had graduated from the teachers college in Greeley, Colorado and met Werner while she was teaching at the Towaoc School. The Helms had two sons and remained at Towaoc until Uncle Peter offered both the house and The Toggery to the young couple. Schifferer sold the house to Werner Helms in 1940 for \$1,500. Helms had other business holdings including the John Deere Dealership and Helms Motors. He retired in 1971 and moved to Arizona where he died in 1999. Helms's son, Bob, bought The Toggery in 1973 and operated it until he retired in 2005.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

Cross N. Ash St. and continue walking west on Montezuma Ave.

142 East Montezuma: This house probably built by Tom Omo in the 1910's. Dr. E.P. and Mrs. Crawford lived there for many years and may have built the home. Dr. Crawford was a Dentist in Mancos. His wife, Rachel, served as Town Clerk of Cortez for many years. When the Crawfords retired, I believe they moved from the area. Later ownership of the home is not known. (*Knowledge of the home and the Crawford family from Genevra Omo.*)

*This is one of two brick houses in this survey. It was built in 1908 for a local businessman named James Finnell. He hired C.H. Bopp, who had just opened the first brickworks in Cortez. The *Montezuma Journal* reported on Bopp's progress on August 6, 1908, stating that the foundation, water table and corners of the building were cement block and the remainder would be brick. Today this house has a stucco coating. It was probably the first brick home built in Cortez.

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

130 East Montezuma: Tom Omo built this house in the 1910's for C. J. Classon, a real estate man and expert fruit grower in the area. Mr. Classon later sold to Earl Ritter, a prominent sheep man in the area. Mr. Ritter probably sold to Mrs. Leah Blackmer. This house was usually referred to as the "Blackmer House" as Mrs. Blackmer and her children lived there for many years. The front of the house has recently changed with the addition of an enclosed porch or added room. (*Information from Genevra Omo, 1998, on the homes built by her father, Tom Omo.*)

This property is eligible for the City Register of Historic Sites.

116 East Montezuma: The house was built in 1910 by Tom Omo. Mr. Omo married George Guillet, sister of Herman and Peter Guillet. They had one daughter, Genevra, who was a well know beautician for many years. A few years after the house was built, Mr. Omo added on to the front and also to the back of the house. Mr. Omo built many houses on Montezuma Avenue. He was also co-owner of Omo and Ames Mortuary in Cortez. This business was the predecessor to Ertel Funeral Home. After the death of her father, Genevra had the carport built on the house. She also moved "Genevra's Beauty Shop" in the front portion of the home with the entrance on the west side of the building. In later years, Genevra became a resident of the nursing home and the house changed ownership. (*Information on house by Genevra Omo.*)

This property is eligible for the Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

112 East Montezuma:

*Very little information could be found on this house. It appears it was originally on a parcel of land owned by Tom Omo, who built the adjacent house at **116 East Montezuma Avenue** in 1909. The house is set far back on the property in a location behind the adjacent house and was probably constructed as a rental residence. This house does not appear on a 1923 map of the area and Omo died in 1932, so the house was probably constructed between 1923 and 1930. This is an example of a simply designed, Craftsman-influenced dwelling.

This property is eligible for the Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

102 East Montezuma: Gladys Campbell built this house and moved in on 1st November, 1937, with her family. The house was built after the death of Albert Campbell's father. When the original house was built, it did not have the upstairs as this was added later. Original house built by Henry Charles and Jim Coor, two well-known carpenter/builders in the area. After Mrs. Campbell married Jess Nerhood, many local residents referred to this home as the Nerhood residence. Mrs. Campbell also owned the Campbell Furniture Store on Main Street (next to Slavens). In later years the name was changed to Nerhood Furniture. *(History of home by Eileen Keeler Campbell, wife of Albert Campbell.)*

Cross N. Beech St. and continue walking west on Montezuma Ave.

48 East Montezuma: This home was known as the "Bill Harrison Home". After the death of her parents, their daughter, Jessie lived in the home for many years. No date when house was built but no doubt in the 1920's if not before. Mr. Harrison was prominent in the banking business as was his brother, Guy O. Harrison. When the Harrison home was sold, it became the home of Mrs. Virginia (Ertel) Mosher for several years.

40 East Montezuma:

*The property sold from the American Water Supply Company to Mark Lord in 1910. The county tax assessment records indicate that a house was on the property by 1928 and the owner was Byron D. Brown, who is listed in the 1930 census as living in the area with his wife Mary and daughter Belmear. J.L. Porter owned the property in 1938. Myrtle and Mary Purcell were owners of the property by 1949. Myrtle and Dennis Purcell came to Montezuma County some time around 1909. By 1917, Myrtle was working at the Post Office and Dennis was at the Valley Supply Company. In 1919, Dennis left Valley Supply and the Purcells purchased an ice cream and confectionary store. They also showed movies across the street from their shop at their Muse-U Theater in the 1920s and 1930s. They were popularly known as Mom and Pop Purcell. She is listed as living at this address in 1952. Myrtle died in 1968. The Bishop of Pueblo acquired the building in either the late 1950s or the early 1960s and it is used as a rectory.

28 East Montezuma: Catholic Church located on this corner. This was the site of the Congregational Church built in 1889 and destroyed by fire in 1930. Mrs. Sophie Nunn occupied a small house next to the Congregational Church for many years. The Parish Center may possibly be a part of Mrs. Nunn's home. Rev. Joel Harper, 1st Pastor of the Congregational Church was buried next to the church. When the Cortez Cemetery was started, Rev. Harper was then disinterred to the Cortez Cemetery. His burial was one of the first at the Cemetery.

*St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church was built on the site of the Congregational Church in 1950. Before they built the church the Catholic congregation met at various homes and other locations in Cortez, and the priests would come from Mancos to conduct services. The Congregation purchased this land in 1943. Ground breaking was in 1949 and the church was completed in 1950 at a cost of \$29,382.24. Efforts turned to furnishing the new church. By 1958 the church had steam heat, oak pews, a Baldwin organ and a new alter. When they celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1999, the congregation had more than 350 families.



Turn left at N. Market St, cross Montezuma Ave., continue walking south on N. Market St.

42 North Market: The Ertel Funeral Home was the first building in Cortez to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Four generations of the Ertel family have run the funeral home since 1921.

8 Main St.: The Montezuma Valley National Bank, now Cornerstone and the home of KSJD, recently became the second National Register property in Cortez.

Return to the Cortez Cultural Center.