

THE CITIZENS BA

HISTORIC **AZTEC** self-guided walking & biking tours

OLD GROCERIES



Aztec Museum Association



Pioneer Village at the Aztec Museum

For a thousand years men and women have settled along the Animas River, building structures to meet the community's needs for food, trade, transportation, entertainment, and spiritual observances.

Historic Aztec Self-Guided Walking & Biking Tours

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Aztec Museum Association

125 North Main Avenue • Aztec, New Mexico 87410

www.aztecmuseum.org

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Explore Our Community

Starting with Aztec Ruins National Monument, this booklet takes you to the heart of Aztec's Historic Downtown, then to homes, churches and irrigation ditches built by early settlers. Much of this booklet focuses on historic structures built in the early 1900s. It was an exciting time as New Mexico gained statehood on January 6, 1912 to become the 47th state. A century later, as we stroll past the works of these early men and women, we experience the one constant that remains: we are still engaged in community building.

The points of interest included in this booklet are a sampling of the architecture, influential citizens and natural features that give Aztec its distinct character. Aztec contains four historic districts encompassing multiple properties and 17 individual properties listed on the New Mexico and/or National Register of Historic Places.



Main Avenue looking north ~ early 1900s

KEY TO HISTORIC DESIGNATION

NHR = National Historic Register

SHR = State Historic Register

N&SHR = both National and State

The map in the center of this booklet guides the explorer along the Main Avenue and Historic Homes Loop, and the Lovers Lane Loop.

Aztec Ruins National Monument



Aztec Ruins Central Plaza ~ 2010

Aztec Ruins National Monument was established in 1923 to preserve and protect a remarkable community built along the banks of the Animas River during the late 1000s to the late 1200s by ancestral Puebloan people. Early Euro-American explorers mistakenly assumed these remnants of occupation were related to the Aztec Indians of central Mexico. The area became known as Aztec – referring both to the ruins and the growing town of Aztec on the opposite side of the Animas River.

Designated a World Heritage Site in 1987, visitors from around the world are awed by the organization, complexity, and building skill of these early inhabitants. Using available materials of stone, wood and earth, the ancestral Puebloans built multi-story structures. The largest structure, now known as West Ruin, had more than 500 rooms and several ceremonial kivas. When we stand on its central plaza today, it is easy to imagine how this built environment reflected the ancestral Puebloans everyday life, traditions and culture.



Aztec Ruins Visitors ~ 1908

Some nine hundred years later, Earl Morris, working for the American Museum of Natural History as archeologist in charge of excavation, used materials salvaged from the ruins to build his home in 1920 next to his work site. He adopted the then trendy Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. His home is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. It is now used as the Aztec Ruins Visitor Center.



Earl Morris House, now the Aztec Ruins Visitor Center ~ 1926

Aztec Town History

The community of Aztec was well established as a commercial center for the surrounding farmers and ranchers by the late 1880s. In 1890, a group of citizens purchased 40 acres of land from early settler John Koontz for the purpose of establishing the Aztec Town Company. Aztec was incorporated as a town under the laws of the Territory of New Mexico in 1905. A telephone line was constructed from Durango in 1903; the railroad arrived in 1905.



*Train Depot
1949*



*Uptegrove
Cafe
1920*

“At the close of the first decade, Aztec had over 30 business houses, general merchandise, grocery, meat market, two newspapers, a bank, two lawyers, a confectionery and bake shop, three doctors, two dentists, several carpenters, painters and wall paper hangers. It was a busy town with well stocked stores and offering many services such as jewelry and clock repair, shoe repair, and a tailor shop.”

The Bowra Legacy, p. 39

Starting Your Tour

125 N. Main Avenue - Aztec Museum - Old City Hall

The building now housing the Aztec Museum was the brand new Aztec City Hall in 1940. Its twin is the Firehouse next door. City business was conducted here through the World War II era and during the oil and gas boom of the 1950s.

The Aztec Museum brings history alive for residents of the Four Corners and visitors from across the country and around the world. Museum collections include objects related to settlers from a thousand years ago to the present. The Pioneer Village contains 12 structures, all reconstructed from original buildings.



Old Firehouse

The original doors were at street level and swung open for fire trucks to make a fast exit. The firemen were all community-minded volunteers. When a fire alarm sounded, it wasn't uncommon to see half-dressed men running down Main Avenue toward the firehouse, pulling on trousers and shirts.



TOUR PATH - From the Museum, cross North Main Avenue and turn south towards the Historic Downtown District.

North Main Avenue



112 N. Main Avenue - Jarvis Hotel

One of Aztec's first buildings began life here as a one-story adobe building. By 1890 it was owned by James William Jarvis who was born in England in 1798 and died in 1903, having lived across three centuries. In 1894, his daughter-in-law, Mrs. George (Ingo Mary) Jarvis ran a restaurant here. The house was remodeled and a second story was added in 1906.



108 N. Main Avenue - Turn-of-Century Building

J. M. Palmer, one of Aztec's first attorneys, had his office in this building in the 1890s. Circa 1912, it was occupied by Aztec's second newspaper, The Democrat, and in the 1930s by Mr. Palmer's son, Attorney J. Murray Palmer. It has stucco over original adobe.



104 N. Main Avenue Aztec Theater

Built in 1927 by J. Oscar Manning as the Mayan Theater, and later renamed Aztec Theater, this building has long been an important source of entertainment for San Juan County residents.



102 N. Main Street - Uptegrove Building

Tucked between the Aztec Theater and the building on the corner is one of the most popular spots in Aztec for nearly a quarter of a century. Two brothers, Clare and Tom Uptegrove built here in 1913, and with their wives, Ora and Lela, operated a bakery and confectionery for years.

100 N. Main Avenue - Corner Building

Built in 1910, this building was operated by D.C. Ball & Son as a dry goods store. It features brick walls covered with a more recent stucco façade.



TOUR PATH - Cross Chaco Street to enter Aztec's distinguished historic district. Chaco Street is the dividing boundary between north and south avenues.

Main Avenue Historic District



Main Avenue ~ 1910

These handsome brick buildings established Aztec as an up-and-coming commercial center at the turn of the twentieth century. Just as the Puebloan people before them, these builders relied on readily available materials, such as locally fired bricks manufactured by several kilns in town. However, influences from the East and the coming of the railroad caused Aztec's bustling businessmen to adopt an assortment of architectural styles popular at that time, such as Italianate and Neo-Classical, and to incorporate embellishments such as stained glass windows and pressed metal siding carried in by rail. Still, the brick mason's pride in craftsmanship is evident on these structures' decorative but functional features.



"The Main Street District is a particularly well-preserved segment of a typical New Mexican commercial street developed from 1900 to 1915. It reflects Aztec's position as the leading marketing center of northwestern San Juan County, an area including the fertile Animas River Valley in New Mexico. This small district includes two of the best preserved examples of Italianate commercial architecture in the state [The Randall Building, #117 and Odd Fellows Hall #107]. ...the district appears much as it did in 1915, except that concrete sidewalks have replaced the earlier boardwalk."

NM Historic Preservation Division HPD ID#879,
1984 Nomination Aztec Main Street National Register Historic District.

Aztec's Main Street was designated as a Historic District by the state in 1982 and added to the National Register in 1985. Historic Districts are made up of a collection of individual buildings, sites, structures, and objects.

South Main Avenue



101 S. Main Avenue Col. Williams' General Store

One of the oldest buildings in Aztec, by 1890 it housed a general merchandise store operated by Civil War veteran Col. W. H. Williams. The building was made of adobe, then faced with brick in 1919 to house the Aztec State Bank. Col. Williams was a member of the Aztec Town Company.



103 S. Main Avenue Waring-Hubbard Building, N&SHR

Built in 1910 by Edmund C. (Ted) Waring, a jeweler and watchmaker. The building was sold in 1933 to Clyde C. Hubbard who operated a grocery store.
Decorative Brick Style



105 S. Main Avenue Citizens Bank Building, N&SHR

T. A. Pierce moved to Aztec in 1903 and brought a safe with him, qualifying him to begin the first "bank". He built the Citizens Bank by 1910. Law offices were on the second floor.
Neo-Classical Style with typical carved columns, windows have stained glass transoms (A portion of the original interior is reconstructed in the Pioneer Village)



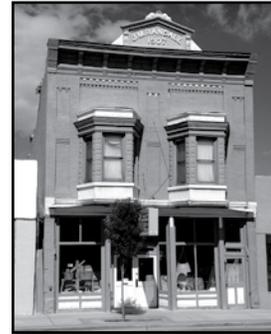
107 S. Main Avenue Odd Fellows Hall, N&SHR

Odd Fellows Lodge members built this structure in 1903 and have occupied the upper floor ever since. The lower floor was first occupied by the San Juan Stores Company, Joe Prewitt, agent, dealers in General Merchandise.
Italianate/Decorative Brick style, stone sills and lintels



109 S. Main Avenue Townsend Building, N&SHR

Built by Fred W. Townsend to replace a one-story structure destroyed by fire in 1910. Mr. Townsend operated a meat market on the lower floor and the family lived on the upper floor.
Neo-Classical, pressed metal sheathing and cornice on second story



117 S. Main Avenue Randall Building, N&SHR

J. M. Randall first built a frame building here in 1900. Randall, one of the city's leading merchants, operated a dry goods store. In 1907, he built around the frame building adding living quarters on the second floor.
Italianate/Decorative Brick Style



119 S. Main Avenue Hubbard Building

One-story brick building, built in 1906 by A. M. Hubbard for his meat market. In later years, J. W. Dial operated Aztec's first funeral parlor here. Succeeding uses were a restaurant, a saloon, and a variety store.



121 S. Main Avenue Taylor Building, N&SHR

Dr. M. D. Taylor was practicing in Aztec and expanded his enterprise with this building in 1908. He opened a drug store on the first floor and saw patients upstairs. In 1919, he was elected to serve as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention working for statehood.
Neo-Classical Style



**123 S. Main Avenue
Pinkstaff Building, N&SHR**

Built approximately in 1908 by Samuel O. Pinkstaff, a member of Aztec's first Town Board. First occupants were C. S. Bailey and Sherman Howe, who ran a dry goods store.
Neo-Classical/Decorative Brick Style, note side of building with segmented arches and continuation of decorative brickwork



**200 S. Main Avenue
Thomas Building, N&SHR**

This two-story brick building was built in 1906 as a general merchandise store by J. M. Thomas. Upper rooms were living quarters with some rooms rented to overnight guests. Mr. Thomas added scales in the street in front of the store for the use of draymen, coal haulers, and grain dealers. Note the decorative brick coping and arched windows on the side.



**201 S. Main Avenue
Brewer Building**

Established sometime before 1925. C. G. Brewer and his son, Truman, built a combination business building/living quarters on this corner. Their previous home located between Bloomfield and Blanco was destroyed by high waters of the

San Juan River. They salvaged the bricks for this new structure. It functioned as a hardware store for the first half century. Note the stepped parapet.



**301 S. Main Avenue
McClure Building, N&SHR**

Walker and Frank McClure built a livery stable and feed store at this location in the early 1900s. Later it was occupied by The Index, a newspaper published by C. S. Bailey, and for a brief time in 1919 by The Empress Theater. In 1926, Carl Neitzel bought the building, built an addition on

the south side and established a Chevrolet dealership.



**300 S. Main Avenue
American Hotel, N&SHR**

The American hotel held its grand opening in March 1907. The one-story attachment at the rear served as the dining room, kitchen and laundry room. The hotel was acclaimed for its excellent meals. Note the segmented arches of the windows, some still having original glass.

The arrival of the railroad in 1905 stimulated trade and commerce, creating a demand for accommodations for increasing numbers of travelers. Guests were met at the train station and transported to the American Hotel by a horse drawn buggy, the Red Apple Flyer Taxi. The hotel's comfortable porch heard news of the world exchanged, and saw business deals being made.



American Hotel ~ 1920s



TOUR PATH - Turn east on Zia Street, then north on South Church Avenue.

**AZTEC MUSEUM
& PIONEER VILLAGE**



Minium Park

N. Main Ave

N. Church Ave

N. Mesa Verde Ave

Bunker Ave

Lovers Lane

Rio Grande Ave

Park Ave

S. Main Ave

S. Church Ave

S. Mesa Verde Ave

Blanco St

Chaco St

Chuscka St

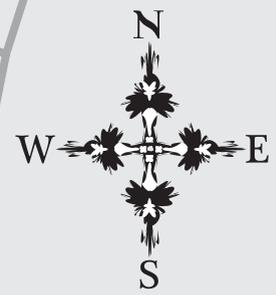
Zia St

Altrurian Library



**HISTORIC AZTEC
Walking & Bike Tour Map**

-  Main Avenue and Historic Homes Loop .7 miles
-  Lovers Lane Loop .4 miles
-  Streets



South Church Avenue - 200 Block

Just one block from Main Avenue, Church Avenue was part of the original 40 acre Town of Aztec plat filed in 1890. Many of the town's founders built homes on this street. The street derives its name from the churches long established here.



219 and 217 S. Church Avenue - Twin Brick Houses

Identical houses built before 1908 in a simplified Queen Anne style. Note the fish scale shingles.



218 S. Church Avenue Bell-Abrams House

Jesse Bell built this simplified Queen Anne circa 1906. During World War I, Rhoda Pinkstaff earned enough money to buy the home for herself and her fiancé, Boyd Abrams. Note the turned posts with decorative brackets, and fish scale shingles.



214 S. Church Avenue Goulding House

This bungalow-style house was built in 1926. The builder was Charlie Goulding, brother of the Gouldings of Monument Valley, Arizona.



213 S. Church Avenue Whitford-Uptegrove House

This territorial style house was built circa 1895. It was occupied by the builder, R. B. Whitford, and later by his daughter, Ora Uptegrove.



209 S. Church Avenue Ray Current House

At 19 years of age, Ray Current bought a barbershop and practiced his trade for 65 years, giving haircuts to generations of Aztec families. This New Mexico Vernacular house was built prior to 1908 and bought by the Currents in 1916. It has been modified with extensive additions.



206 S. Church Avenue Kennedy-Schutz House

This simplified Queen Anne style house was built by Truman Brewer prior to 1908.



205 S. Church Avenue Brick House

This house is built of gable frieze board with a catalogue of eight decorative shingle types that were used on other houses in town. This house is similar to the "Twin Houses" a few doors south at 217 and 219 South Church Avenue.



201 S. Church Avenue Bailey House

This home was built before 1908 and owned by C. S. Bailey. Bailey was a merchant, a member of the 1908 Aztec Town Board, and the publisher and editor of the community newspaper.

South Church Avenue - 100 Block



120 S. Church Avenue Vaughan-Eubanks House

This simplified Queen Anne home was built circa 1906 by Boone Vaughan who was San Juan County Sheriff 1904-1908. It was purchased by the James F. Eubanks family in the early 1920s.



116 S. Church Avenue Old Trading Post

(Set well back from street) Built in the 1870s as a trading post, this structure originally faced east. It was later converted to a residence in the New Mexico Vernacular style.



114 S. Church Avenue Old Telephone Office

This bungalow, built circa 1913, was used by the telephone company until after World War II. Now converted to a home.



123 E. Chaco - United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church on the corner of Chaco Street and Church Avenue is a Gothic Revival style church built in 1906-07. It is still in use as the United Methodist Church. Note the Gothic arch windows and steeple bell.

TOUR PATH - Turn east and follow Chaco Street to Mesa Verde Avenue. Arriving at the corner of Chaco and Mesa Verde, look right to find the small Altrurian Library structure, and a few steps south is the Lobato house. Proceed north along Mesa Verde Avenue.



Altrurian Library , SHR Aztec's first library building

As early as 1908, a group of young women formed the Aztec Altrurian Club, Altrurian meaning "unselfish interest in humanity." The organizers held a social and book shower in the upstairs room of the Pinkstaff building to raise funds to establish a library. Eventually with more fund raising, community progress, and WPA assistance, Aztec celebrated the opening of this first dedicated library building in 1938. It served as the community's library until 1962.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was a New Deal program created during the 1930s depression to give employment to millions to carry out public works projects. Almost every locale in the United States benefited from WPA projects, especially rural and western communities. Expenditures from 1936 to 1939 totaled nearly \$7 billion.



109 S. Mesa Verde Avenue Lobato House

David E. Lobato was born in 1852. He became the first public school teacher in San Juan County. In 1887, when the New Mexico Territorial Government created San Juan County out of the western half of Rio Arriba County, David Lobato was appointed as one of the first county commissioners. He bought this lot from the Aztec Town Company in 1892 for \$20.00. His seventh of 15 children, Guillermo H. (Willie), was born in this house. Guillermo led an adventurous life, as attested to by the Aztec Museum's Lobato Room. The Lobato donations to the museum range from seashells to minerals to memorabilia collections.

North Mesa Verde Avenue



103 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Case House, SHR

This house was built in 1907 for E. G. Eblen, early County Clerk. Railroad station agent, Maurice Case purchased it in 1916. He remained the agent for 53 years until 1968 when the railroad station closed. Mr. and Mrs. Case lived here until 1985. The house was placed on the historic register because of its fine Queen Anne detailing, featuring a mansard roof with

four hipped roof dormers, two polygonal turrets, and an open porch with wood Tuscan columns.



102 N. Mesa Verde Avenue John Pierce House

Owned by John Pierce, son of T. A. Pierce who established the Citizens Bank building on Main Avenue. John Pierce succeeded his father as president of the bank. This simplified Queen Anne was built circa 1910.



115 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Bunker-Beaver House, SHR

Built by Fred Bunker circa 1907, it became the home of Dr. Edgar Beaver in the 1920s. It is a fine representative of the Queen Anne architectural style as it was adapted in northern New Mexico. Fred Bunker previously lived on Lovers Lane, where a cross street was named for him. He played an active role in shaping Aztec's history. He accumulated several properties in and around Aztec, and operated various businesses.

Bunker was one of the original members of the Aztec Town Company which purchased

40 acres of John A. Koontz's homestead to establish the town of Aztec in 1890. Bunker also owned the town saloon and was its proprietor for some years.



116 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Hipped Cottage

This stucco over brick home, built circa 1906, is a good example of the hipped cottage style.



122 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Bungalow

This bungalow style home was built circa 1915.



123 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Hillstrom House

The home of Frank Hillstrom, who for many years ran a hardware store with M. M. Fisher. The house was built circa 1900. Its facing is now stucco over rock and brick.



202 N. Mesa Verde Avenue Pierce Mansion

This was the home of T. A. Pierce, founder of the Citizens Bank on South Main Avenue (#105). It was situated in the middle of a half-acre lot and had the first indoor plumbing in Aztec.

Georgian Revival - Prairie Style, built in 1906

TOUR PATH - To take the Lovers Lane Loop, continue on North Mesa Verde and turn east on Lovers Lane, just after the Pierce Mansion. To keep on the Historic Main Avenue Loop (p. 26), turn west and go one block on Blanco Street to reach North Church Avenue.

Lovers Lane Loop

Properties on the surrounding eight block area, including Lovers Lane and Church Avenue, were placed on the state and national historic registers in 1984-85. Lovers Lane linked Main Avenue and the railroad depot. Fine homes made Lovers Lane an impressive approach to the city from the depot. The Animas Ditch ensured lush gardens and landscaping.



309 Lovers Lane Wood-Townsend House

Fred Bunker built this home in the late 1890s. Bunker later moved to the North Mesa Verde home (#115). James Franklin Wood purchased it in 1906 and added the second story. Frank G. Townsend, who had operated a trading post at Largo, New Mexico, bought the house in 1918 and moved his family here. It is a simplified Queen Anne with two dormer windows.



401 Lovers Lane Sherman Howe House

Mr. Randall's son-in-law, Sherman Howe and his family, were the first occupants. Note the second story balcony with railing. In 1881-82, Sherman Howe was among a group of schoolboys exploring the mounded earth on the west side of the Animas River. Being one of the smallest boys, he was lowered into a hole and

discovered a warren of rooms, well preserved but abandoned for hundreds of years. Howe later assisted with the excavation of the Aztec Ruins and authored *My Story of the Aztec Ruins*.

"I remember visiting my great grandfather, Sherman Howe, at his residence on Lovers Lane. I was very young and he was quite elderly. Gaunt and tall, he stood at the top of a long staircase. He was flooded in the sunlight that came streaming through the window on the landing. As I climbed up the stairs with my hand in my mother's, he smiled benignly at me and pulled from his pocket a shiny new penny which he held out for me to take. Both he and the house were simply grand."

Linda Williams, March, 2010.



405 Lovers Lane Randall-Ransom House

J. M. Randall sold this house to C. A. Ransom in 1907. Ransom accumulated many houses and business buildings in Aztec.

Original porch and picket fence



407 Lovers Lane Pitts-Coon House

This two-story brick house was built circa 1910. It was owned by Albert Pitts and his daughter, Ethel Coon.

During the 1920s and 1930s, lots along Lovers Lane became filled in with bungalow style homes. A good example is #507.



507 Lovers Lane Clyde Hubbard House

This bungalow was built circa 1930, affording Mr. Hubbard with a short walk to the grocery store he operated in the Waring Building at 103 South Main Avenue.



TOUR PATH - On Lovers Lane, pass the Animas Irrigation Ditch by the huge cottonwoods trees, then cross Rio Grande Avenue to view reminders of Aztec's railroad era.

Lovers Lane Loop - Continued

Lower Animas Ditch, N&SHR

Extensive irrigation systems funneled water from the Animas River allowing development of orchards which triggered rapid growth in Aztec. The Animas Ditch was completed in 1889.



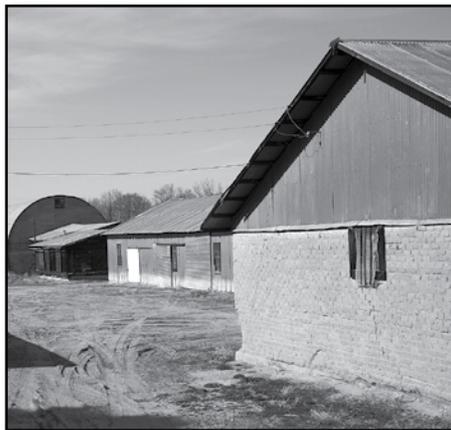
"Aztec, in keeping up with the progress, built laterals from the main canal down each street so that homes would have irrigating water for their gardens, and in those days nearly everyone raised a garden."

...These ditches were neighborhood projects built to cover the lands of the owners under a share agreement with water proportioned to the amount of land that each shareholder held for irrigation."

...Each shareholder contributed labor according to his assessed share to maintain the ditch..."

The Bowra Legacy, p. 4

Remnants of these early gardens and orchards can still be seen. Lush yards, flower gardens and shade trees attest to continuing use by many residents of the blessings of irrigation rights.



Hare Warehouses

This complex evolved over the decades, as indicated from its building materials which range from adobe walls to sheet metal. Goods and oil field equipment were unloaded from incoming trains. Outgoing cars were loaded with produce from Aztec's many orchards, or sheep and cattle gathered from outlying ranches.

Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad

The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad arrived in Aztec in 1905. Commerce bourgeoned and permanent buildings in Eastern styles began to appear in both the business and residential sections of town. The railroad line connected Gallup to Durango through Farmington and Aztec.



"Those were the years when Aztec held the self-claimed distinction of being the best apple country on earth. Because of this recognition, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad train that hauled apples from here to Durango, was named 'The Red Apple Flyer'."

The Bowra Legacy, p. 177

During the 1950s gas boom, the train ran daily bringing in pipe and equipment for the gas patch. The last train ran August 31, 1968.



TOUR PATH - Return back along Lovers Lane, veer left and follow Blanco Street west one block. At the Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Blanco and Church Avenue, turn north.

North Church Avenue



201 N. Church Avenue Presbyterian Church, SHR

This church was built in 1889 on land donated by John A. Koontz. Originally a small adobe rectangle, it has been variously modified and an addition put on the north side. It has been in continuous use as the Presbyterian Church since 1889. Note the cross above the simple front entrance door.



200 N. Church Avenue Hubbard-Lenfesty House

A Simplified Queen Anne house built circa 1904.



208 and 212 N. Church Avenue - Hipped Cottages

These hipped box style houses were built circa 1910.



216 N. Church Avenue Rev. Marvin Johnson

This is a Simplified Queen Anne style home of pre-1907. Reverend Marvin Johnson was pastor of the Methodist Church here in 1910. Note the bay window and turned wooden posts on the porch.



308 N. Church Avenue McWilliams House

Thought to be built around a barn that was moved to this site, this home dates to circa 1908. Members of the McWilliams family lived here from 1929 until Harry McWilliams died in 1979 at the age of 97.



314 N. Church Avenue Brewer House

C. G. Brewer was a prominent merchant, builder and town mayor in 1906. He established the Brewer Building on South Main Avenue (#201). Note the fish scale tiles, the original wood porch, and the decorative brick arch over the windows.



403 N. Church Avenue Abrams House, N&SHR

H. D. Abrams built this house circa 1906. It is a well-preserved example of the Free Classic style.

The Abrams family moved to Aztec in 1904 and purchased a 160 acre homestead. The land contained scattered artifacts and ruins, which turned out to be buried structures left by Ancient Pueblos. Another of Aztec's active civic leaders, H. D. Abrams, served on the school board, the town board and as mayor. Also significant were his efforts to protect the Aztec Ruins from being vandalized. He granted permission for excavation to the American Museum of Natural History, which later bought the site. Protection and preservation were assured when the site was transferred to the National Park Service and established as Aztec Ruins National Monument in 1923.

TOUR PATH - The Abrams House can be viewed from the corner of Safford and North Church Avenue. Retrace your path back along North Church to Blanco Street. Turn west at the Presbyterian Church, follow Blanco Street back to the Aztec Museum.

Explore More

Aztec Trails and Open Space

Aztec Trails and Open Space (ATOS) is an action-oriented group of individuals dedicated to trail development and open space preservation for the Aztec community. ATOS purpose is to promote and develop public awareness of our natural and cultural resources with dedication to establishing, protecting, and maintaining trails, river restoration and wildlife habitat within Aztec and San Juan County. ATOS accomplishments are many, especially development of the Riverside Park walking and bicycling trail.

The ATOS website contains walking and biking trail information for Aztec and surrounding areas. It has downloadable maps, brochures, photos, information and videos of Aztec area trails and outdoor recreation.

Aztec Trails & Open Space
PO Box 724 Aztec, NM
www.aztectrails.com

Riverside Park Loop

A pleasant walk, up to 1 ½ miles, with asphalt paved trail segments connected with woodchip trail segments. The trail follows along the Animas River, the Elidge Irrigation Ditch and around the fishing pond. It wanders through wooded wild land sections and open grassy park settings.

Directions: Turn left (south) at the junction of Aztec Boulevard, Highway 516 and Light Plant Road (approximately 1 mile west of stoplight by Safeway going toward Farmington).

Alien Run Mountain Bike Trail

This trail gives hikers and mountain bikers a one-of-a-kind experience, as the 9 mile loop circles the alleged 1948 UFO crash site in Hart Canyon. Some believe a large metallic object with more than a dozen humanoid aliens was secretly removed by the military. A plaque about mid-way along the trail marks the alleged crash site. (Ask locally for a more direct hike to the site.)

Directions: From stoplight by Safeway in Aztec, drive 4 miles north on US 550 towards Durango, CO. Turn right on County Road 2770, stay left and drive 3 miles. Turn left near a small pumping station and travel .5 mi to the top of the hill. Turn right, following a fence for .5 mi and park. Open and close barbwire gate. Follow signs, tracks and red tags on trees.

Latitude: 36.83223340490181, Longitude: -107.97346115112304

The Alien Run Mountain Bike race occurs each year in conjunction with the Four Corners Cup Series and the UFO Symposium hosted by Aztec Public Library.

Stay in Aztec

Aztec has many lodging and dining options. Aztec invites visitors to stay and experience the stress-free, slow-paced relaxation that our community offers. Aztec Chamber of Commerce - www.azteccchamber.com.

Resources

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The Bowra Legacy, A Journalistic History of Aztec & San Juan County, New Mexico, edited by Willa Bowra Hampton and Marilu Waybourn, Aztec Museum Association, 1998.

Content for this brochure is derived mainly from secondary sources, especially the 1981 historic properties survey and the resulting Walking Tour leaflet produced in 1986 by the Aztec Museum. When there was conflicting information, the resource closest to the primary source was generally used.