

Gateways



Jardin de Mesquite - The northern gateway to the Historic District at the corner of Spruce and Tornillo features eight 6' x 8' tiled murals commemorating historic events, landmarks and the multi-cultural settlers of the area.



Entrada del Sol - The eastern gateway at Manzanita and Hadley Ave. frames the Organ Mountains. Tile panels and trim were handmade by the community under the direction of a local artist. The lighting at Entrada del Sol is solar powered.

Mesquite Street - Original Townsite

A few blocks east of Downtown Las Cruces, *Mesquite Street* and the surrounding historic district is marked by old-fashioned street lights and medallions. The historic appearance of the area is protected by an overlay ordinance.

Camino del Arte

2nd Saturday of every month
11 am - 3 pm

Art Galleries, Studio Openings, Restaurants
Map & information at www.caminodelarte.org

Walking & Bike Tours

Sponsored and self-guided tours of historic homes dating from the 1800s. Learn what vernacular architecture really means.
www.las-esperanzas.com

Klein Park

A centrally located neighborhood park at Griggs and Mesquite Street with a recreation area, picnic and game tables, trees, and summer concerts sponsored by the City of Las Cruces.

Special Events

Day of the Dead Masks & Altars - Nov 2
WinterFest - 2nd Friday in December
Luminarias, carriages, arts & craft vendors

Over Ten Great Restaurants
"open daily"

El Camino Real (The Royal Road)

Mesquite Street, the main street in the District, was recently designated by the National Trails System as part of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Royal Road of the Interior Lands). In use for over 300 years, it is the earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States connecting Mexico City, Spain's colonial capital, to the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo north of Santa Fe.

www.caminorealcarta.org



Historic Architecture



Sunshine Grocery - A landmark since the 1930s, this neighborhood grocery at the corner of Hadley & Mesquite St. was a community meeting place and at one time supported its neighbors with a clothing bank, health resource center and active book lending library.



Phillips Chapel CME Church - Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this Chapel at 638 N. Tornillo was the center for the African-American community in the neighborhood. Currently, it's under renovation by an adobe restoration class offered at Doña Ana Community College.



Restored Home Built around 1885, this historic adobe on Mesquite Street has been completely renovated.

A Brief History of the Original Townsite

Inhabited by the Mogollon and Anasazi (Ancestral Puebloan People) long before written history, this valley saw Spanish conquistadors, missionaries, adventurers, Spanish and Mexican settlers, come and go for centuries before Las Cruces was established.

In 1848, the Mexican War with the United States ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Land that once was part of Mexico became part of the United States territory. The First Dragoon of Company H of the U.S. Army arrived to protect the communities from Apache raids.

The small village of Doña Ana, settled by Mexican colonists, had survived Indian attacks and starvation and began to grow at a rapid pace. The mayor of the village, Don Pablo Melendres, asked Lt. Sackett to survey a townsite further south, to relieve overcrowding in Doña Ana.

In the spring of 1849, using a rawhide rope, the town of Las Cruces was platted in 84 city blocks; blocks of land were designated for a business district, a church and a camp santo (cemetery) and the eastern portion was designated for family homes. Under a large cottonwood the heads of families drew lots from a hat to determine what land they would own in the Original Townsite.

The Mesquite Street-Original Townsite in present day Las Cruces has homes that were built from the lots drawn that day. The histories of the people that were woven together in this District over the centuries have created a unique culture, architecture and community.



Las Esperanzas, Inc. is a grassroots, community-based, nonprofit organization created to facilitate the preservation, revitalization, renovation and protection of the Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District in Las Cruces, New Mexico.
www.las-esperanzas.com

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Mesquite Street - Original Townsite Historic District

The oldest neighborhood in Las Cruces, the Historic District has numerous adobe houses dating from the 1800s.

Listed on the State and National Historic Registers, the District is still home to some of the descendants of the original settlers.

The architecture of the neighborhood reflects the unique culture of the area with Traditional Adobe, Mission, Spanish Revival and Territorial styles.