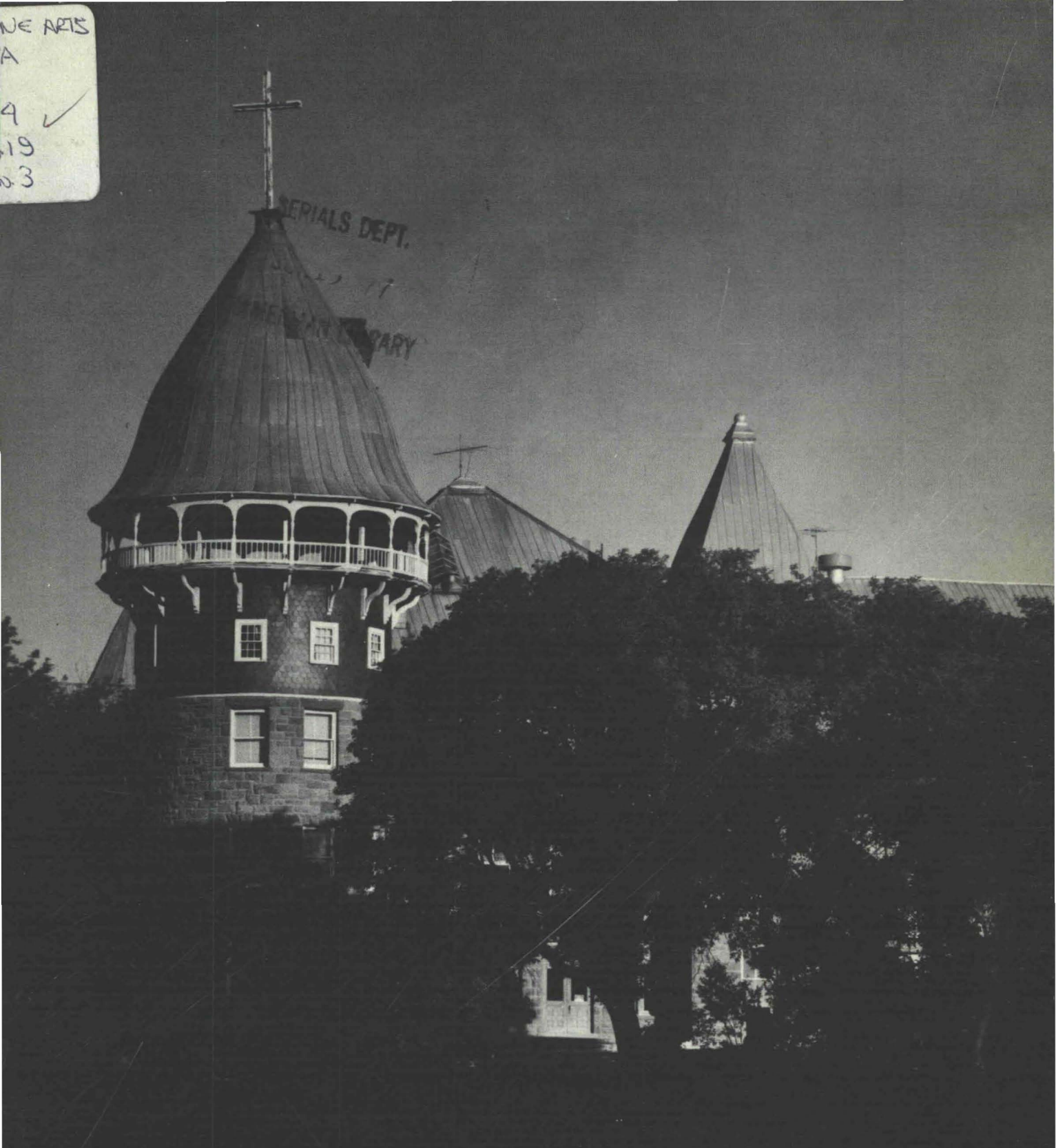


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# new mexico architecture

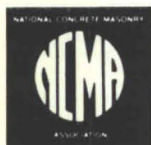
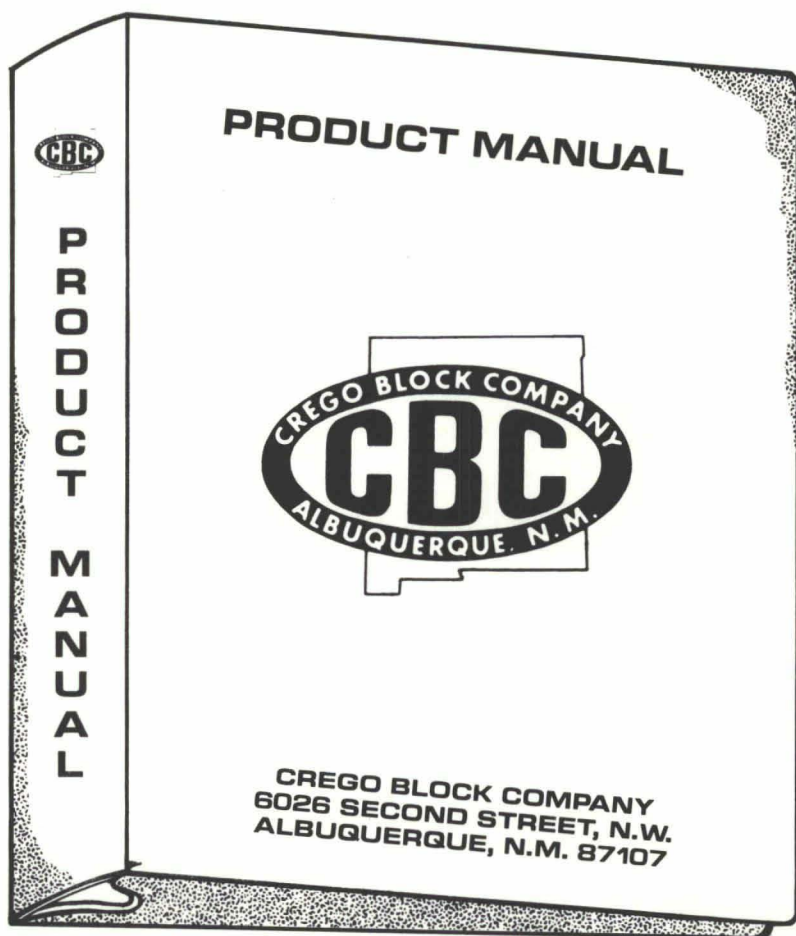
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The Montezuma Hotel - Las Vegas, New Mexico  
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vol. 19 no. 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

Louise Harris Ivers, School of Humanities and Fine Arts, California State College, Dominguez Hills, California, brings us the story of the Montezuma Hotel. Dr. Ivers, a former student of Bainbridge Bunting at the University of New Mexico, has been a contributor to these pages in past issues of NMA: *The Charles Ilfeld Building* (March/April 1970), *The Hotel Castaneda* (May/June 1974) and *The Masonic Temple* (March/April 1976). All of these buildings are important historic structures in Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Located six miles from Las Vegas, New Mexico, the Montezuma is one of the outstanding and important architectural gems of the southwestern United States. But the Montezuma stands empty and little cared for. Vandalism and looting are taking their toll. Carved grill work has been ripped from the lobby, windows are broken, the roof is beginning to leak. It cannot long endure this neglect. As the damage continues, the road to re-vitalization becomes increasingly hazardous and costly.

The Queen Anne style hotel, the nearby, older stone hotel, several nineteenth century cottages and outbuildings are all owned by the Catholic Bishops of America; the Archbishop of Santa Fe is in substantial charge of the complex at the direction of the Bishops.

For thirty-five years the Montezuma housed a seminary (1937-72). Towards the end of that period, perhaps necessary, but unsympathetic, new buildings were added at the base of the knoll on which the grand hotel structure sits.

The Church has placed the complex up for sale, but at a price which may well preclude a sale to interested persons. Further, the cost of renovation of the Montezuma and the other nineteenth century buildings into a viable complex, whether it be resort hotel, veterans center or whatever, will be in the many millions. The prospects are indeed bleak!

The Bishops might do well to offer the entire complex to any group interested in a sensitive renovation project for the sum of \$1.00. But can anyone be found at even that price?

may-june 1977 • new mexico architecture

# nma

NMA News 9

Solar Heating for State Office  
Building in Taos—  
Albuquerque Architects Win  
Award—Fabrics  
for Historic Buildings, a  
Guide, published by  
Preservation Press—  
NMSA Convention in October—  
The Ilfeld Building: Esta Muerto—  
Letter to Editor—

The Montezuma Hotel  
—Louise Harris Ivers, Ph.D. 13

Index to Advertisers 26

(Cover—the Montezuma Hotel—Robert Nugent, Photographer)

—Official Publication of the New Mexico Society of Architects, A. I. A.—

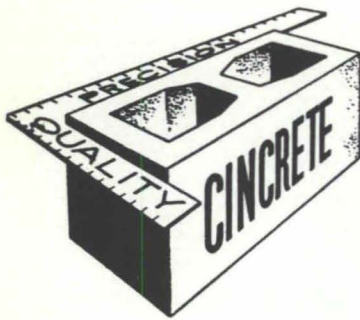
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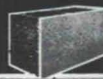
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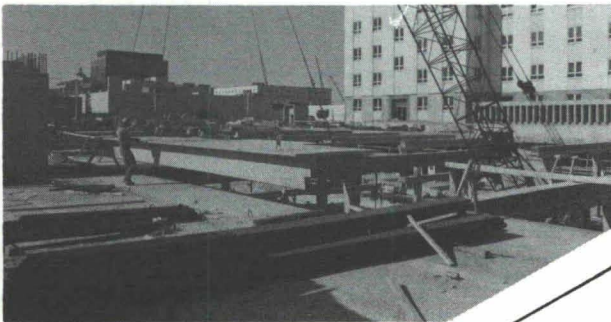
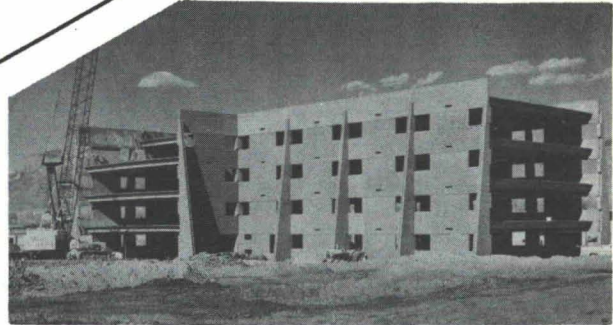
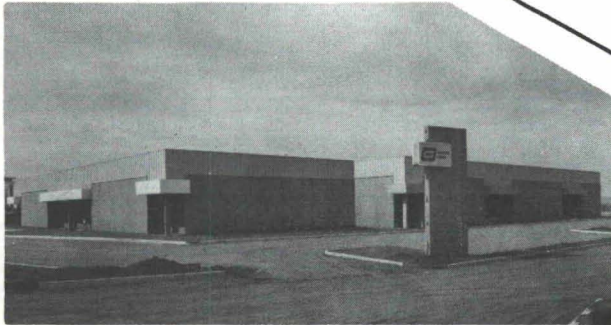
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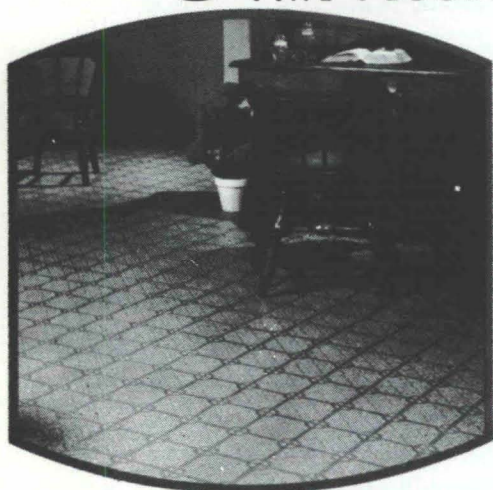
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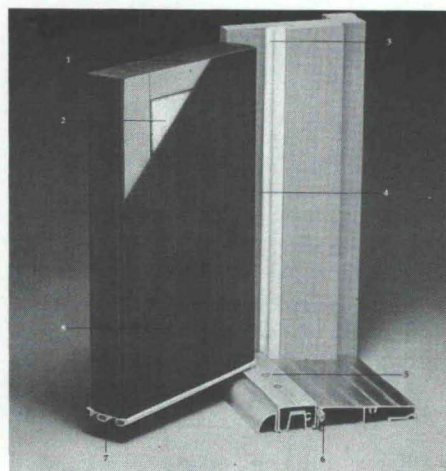


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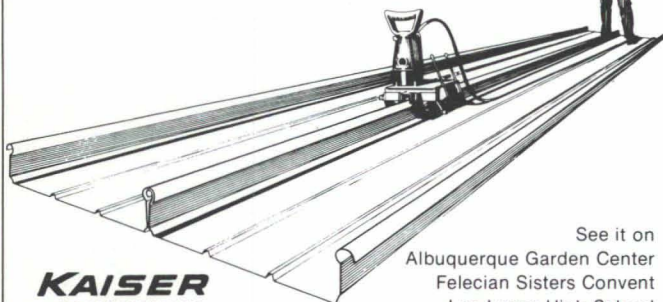


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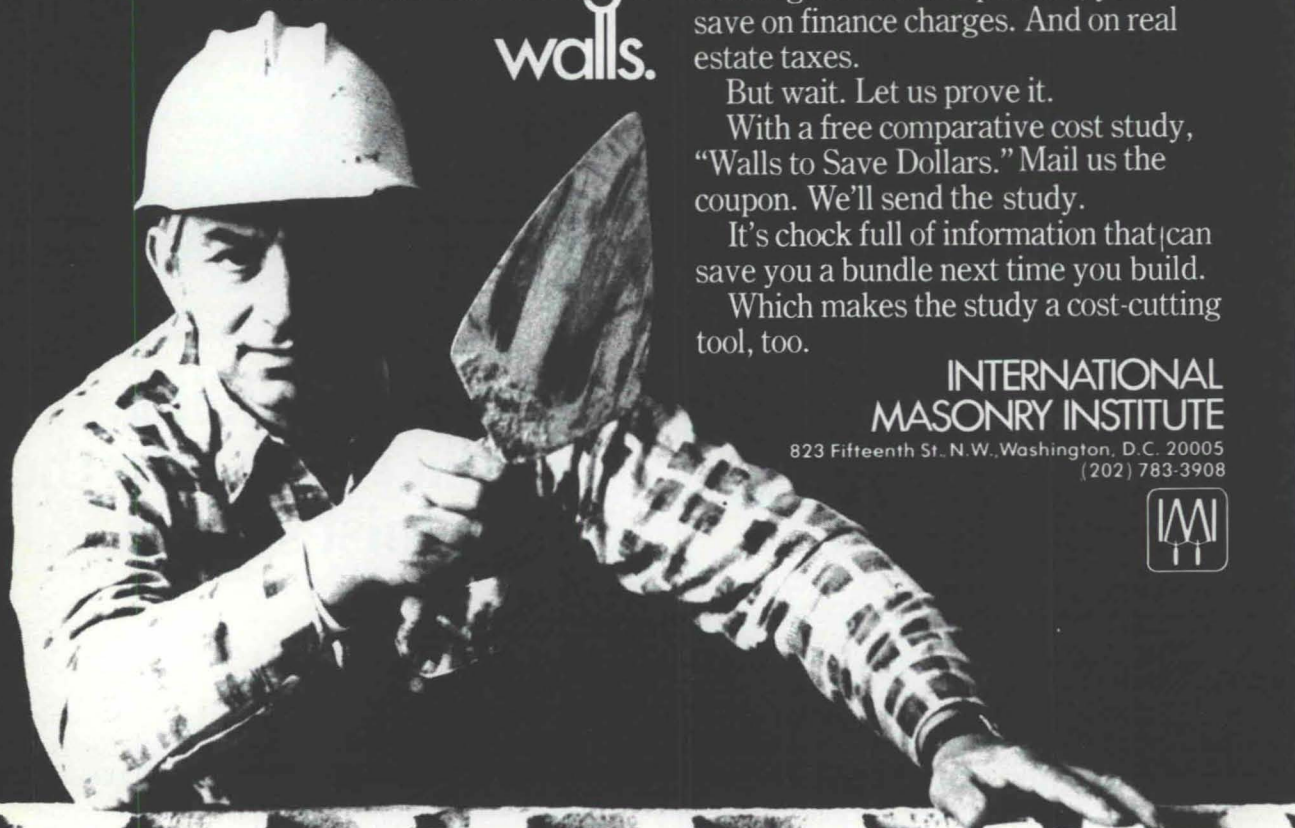
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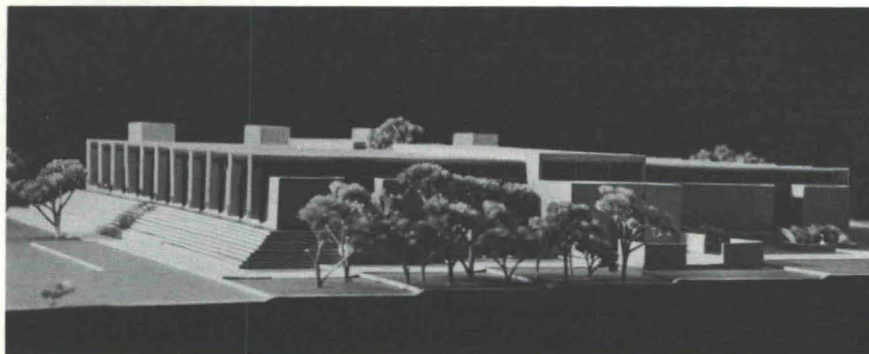
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## SOLAR HEATING FOR STATE OFFICE BUILDING IN TAOS

THE ARCHITECTS, TAOS ARE DESIGNERS



The State Office Building for the New Mexico Health and Social Services Division in Taos is presently under construction. Traditional energy conserving features such as earth berms, insulation, and solar controls have been utilized to reduce the energy demand by approximately one-half that of a conventionally built office building in the area. The "passive solar system" is designed to satisfy 60% of the heating requirements and 50% of the lighting needs. Direct gain to the interior spaces is provided by roof monitors which are modulated by thermal control panels. Water is the thermal storage medium.

The angles of the collector panels have been calculated to admit maximum sunlight in winter and to keep direct sunlight out in summer. When indirect sunshine enters for lighting purposes only, the sunlight raises room temperature less than fluorescent lights, so this feature should help keep the building cool in summer.

The thermal control panels will also be capable of being completely closed to keep heat in at night.

The building—and its collector system—will be oriented 20 degrees east of south, (most solar buildings are thought of as facing directly south). This will enable the building to start picking up sunlight in the morning before workers arrive at the office, and to get its strongest energy early in the day—keeping it warm during the hours when it is normally occupied. Unless there is a special event scheduled in the evening, the building can be permitted to cool down somewhat during the night—another energy-saving measure.

A "back-up" electrical heating system will be provided, to ensure that the building is comfortable at all times. The design makes use of the fact that building is an office building, which will mostly be used in the daytime. The actual efficiency — and the savings in power costs—will depend on how

frequently the building is used at night. Night time use will require more electricity.

This state office building in Taos is one of eighty projects in the nation to have received a grant from ERDA (U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration). The federal program intends to demonstrate the practicality of solar installations and to encourage the development of solar technology. Approximately sixty percent of the cost of the installation of the solar system will be funded.

The office building is expected to be ready for occupancy next fall, according to Ben Benson of The Architects. It is located on a two-acre site at Cruz Alta and Gusdorf Roads, within sight of Taos High School. The completed building will have about 12,000 square feet of floor space, plus parking for about 120 cars. It will contain about 60 private offices, plus reception areas, waiting rooms, and conference rooms, with the Welfare and Social Services divisions having separate areas and separate entrances.

## ALBUQUERQUE ARCHITECTS WIN AWARD

Mastin-Fletcher, Architects Ltd. was the first recipient of the architectural - engineering excellence award presented by the New Mexico building branch of the Associated General Contractors, J. R. Cox, chapter president, announced.

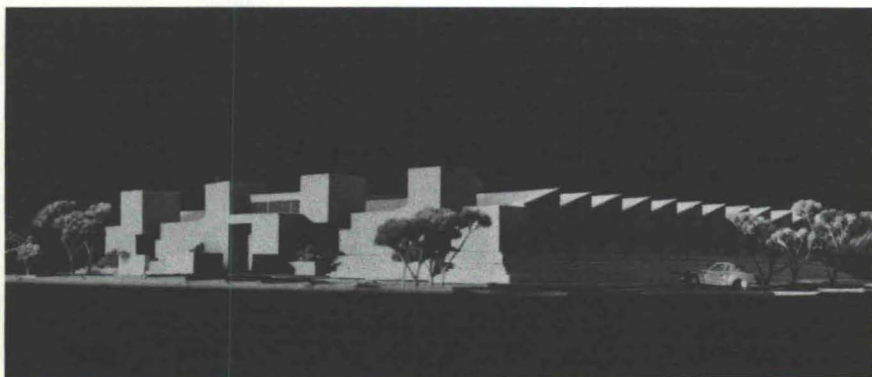
The firm was given the award for its Northside Elementary School project for the Gallup Public Schools.

The award honors the architect or engineer who submits an outstanding set of building plans judged clear, readable and precise by a panel of contractors and suppliers.

## GUIDE PUBLISHED BY PRESERVATION PRESS

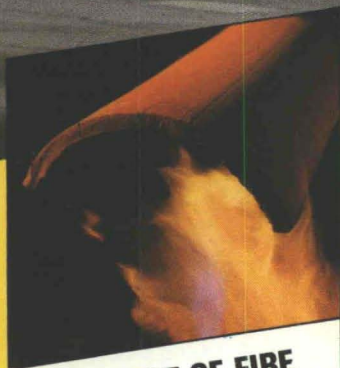
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Continued on page 11





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Continued from page 9

do you go about selecting draperies for a 100-year-old house?

Now there's help from *Fabrics for Historic Buildings*, a new book from the Preservation Press of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Written by Jane C. Nylander, curator of textiles and ceramics at Old Sturbridge Village, Mass., the guide is both a readable introduction to fabrics used in the United States from the 18th century to 1900 as well as a catalogue listing 225 reproductions available from 16 manufacturers.

Professional restorationists, decorators, old-house owners and anyone interested in the history of fabrics and design will find the book an indispensable reference tool.

The 64-page book covers such topics as reasons for using reproduction fabrics even when the originals are available, undertaking

documentary research before picking a fabric, pointers for ordering custom reproductions and the construction and installation of fabric furnishings.

The catalogue provides information about the original fabrics as well as the reproductions. It is organized into five periods, each of which is introduced by a discussion of its characteristic fabrics. Through 37 photographs, readers can see the evolution of technology and changing tastes.

Included are such fabrics as tobacco cloth, an inexpensive cotton similar to muslin, and *Urn Damask*, a reproduction of an 18th-century French design that is woven from the original cards. Among other listings are the earliest known signed product of an American textile printer, commemorative designs celebrating American independence and fabrics from Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home in Virginia. Fabrics repro-

duced from 18th-century quilts, examples of popular Indian and Chinese imports, and printed chintzes and embroideries from the 19th century are represented.

*Fabrics for Historic Buildings* includes a selected bibliography and a glossary of fabric terms.

Copies may be ordered at \$5 each (plus 50 cents postage) from the Preservation Bookshop, National Trust, 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit organization that encourages the preservation of architecturally and historically significant buildings, neighborhoods, sites and objects. The National Trust has 115,000 members, sponsors educational programs and owns 19 historic properties, nine of which are open to the public as historic house museums.



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- Item: The gala Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday evening.



## The Ilfeld Building: Esta Muerto



The Charles Ilfeld Warehouse in Albuquerque is being torn down! During 1974 a long hard fight to save the building was mounted by citizens of Albuquerque. (A blow-by-blow report of that fight is in the September-October 1974 issue of *New Mexico Architecture* magazine.) Although saved by positive action of a lame-duck City Commission in June 1974, the building is now being destroyed by action of the current City Council.

### LETTER TO EDITOR

May 17, 1977

Dear Sir:

I wish to call attention to the caption under the picture on page 9 of the March-April issue of your magazine.

Never in my memory was the hotel, post office and store pictured there called "Brothers". It was The Baldwin Place, built by Fred Baldwin who was an early settler in the Datils.

There was an Old Baldwin Place about a mile north run by Levi Baldwin in the 80's. Fred Baldwin was the father-in-law of Claude Graham.

Ask any old-timer!

Loraine Cleaveland Lavender

### REMARKS: SAGE AND OTHERWISE

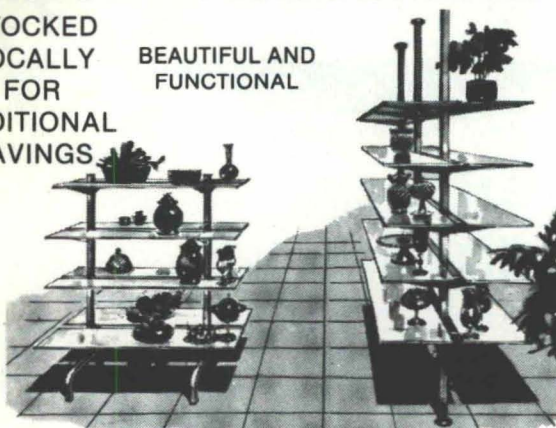
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# The Montezuma Hotel

Louise Harris Ivers



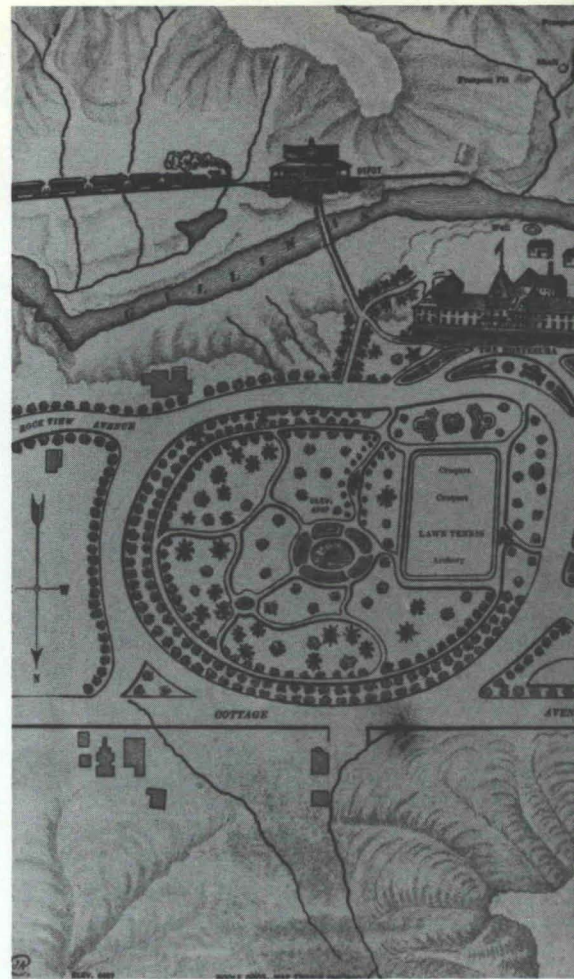
SITUATED six miles north of Las Vegas is Las Vegas Hot Springs, once a fashionable resort area. Las Vegas itself has both an Old Town and a New Town, the former established by a Mexican land grant in 1835 and the latter a typical western boom town that sprang up a few months before the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway reached the new Las Vegas depot in 1879. After the American annexation of New Mexico in 1846, a United States Army hospital was built at Las Vegas Hot Springs. This one-story adobe building was converted into a hotel called The Adobe in 1862.<sup>1</sup>

In 1879, the Hot Springs Hotel was constructed with funds raised by "a group of eastern promoters" who bought a tract of land next to the Adobe Hotel that year.<sup>2</sup> This hotel was a sandstone structure with a slightly projecting central tower capped by a mansard roof. It also had a two-story balustraded veranda on which guests could sun themselves. The Hot Springs Hotel was built by F. C. Martsoff, a contractor who apparently made his fortune by following the railroad from boom town to boom town.<sup>3</sup> Two bath houses, one for mud and the other for mineral water baths, were also under construction in 1879.<sup>4</sup> The mud bath house was nothing more than a long, low wood shed, while the other building was of native sandstone. Neo-Classic in style, this stone bath house had a veranda with paired columns and triangular pediments.<sup>5</sup>

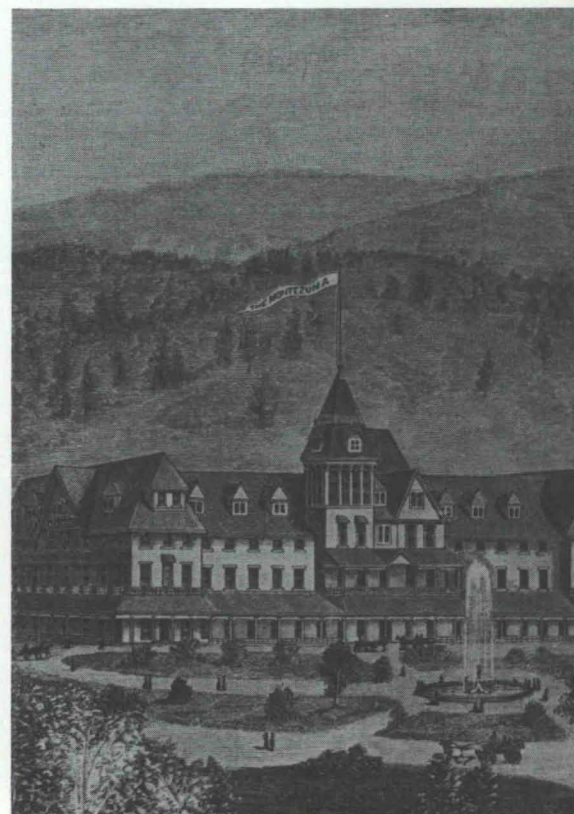
The construction of the Hot Springs Hotel and bath houses caused a wave of cottage building. In 1880, a Las Vegas newspaper reported that "several residences are in course of construction, more will follow, and there are rumors of another hotel or two."<sup>6</sup> According to the same article, a line of Concord coaches was soon to begin making the trip between Las Vegas and the Hot Springs. Also in 1880, the directors of the Santa Fe Railway formed the Las Vegas Hot Springs Company, bought the Hot Springs Hotel, bath houses, and property, and began plans for a narrow-gage track between the Las Vegas depot and the Hot Springs. Laid in 1882, the first train rode over the track on 5 April of that year.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Santa Fe Railway already owned the Hot Springs Hotel, its directors decided to build more extensive accommodations. The construction of a new hotel was begun in 1881, and the building was opened to the public on 17 April 1882. Called the Montezuma (Figs. 1-2), this hotel cost the railroad almost \$200,000.<sup>8</sup> It was larger, more luxurious, and more up-to-date than any building of its kind in New Mexico. The railroad intended the Montezuma to be a fashionable resort which would attract guests from the east. Its gala opening was celebrated by 150 people from Boston,<sup>9</sup> who were probably invited by the Santa Fe Company. The Montezuma was three stories high, 90x250' in plan,<sup>10</sup> and 270 rooms.<sup>11</sup> The railroad, trying to drum up business, published a brochure in which the structure is briefly described.

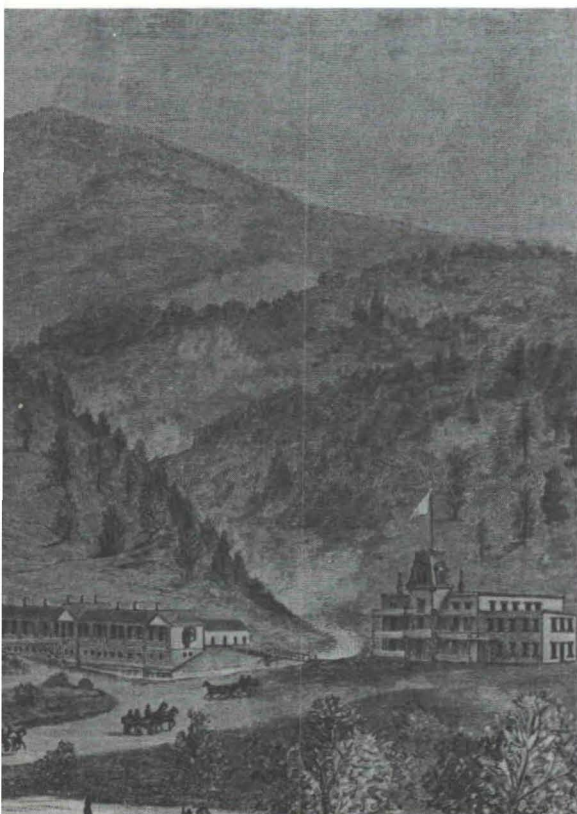
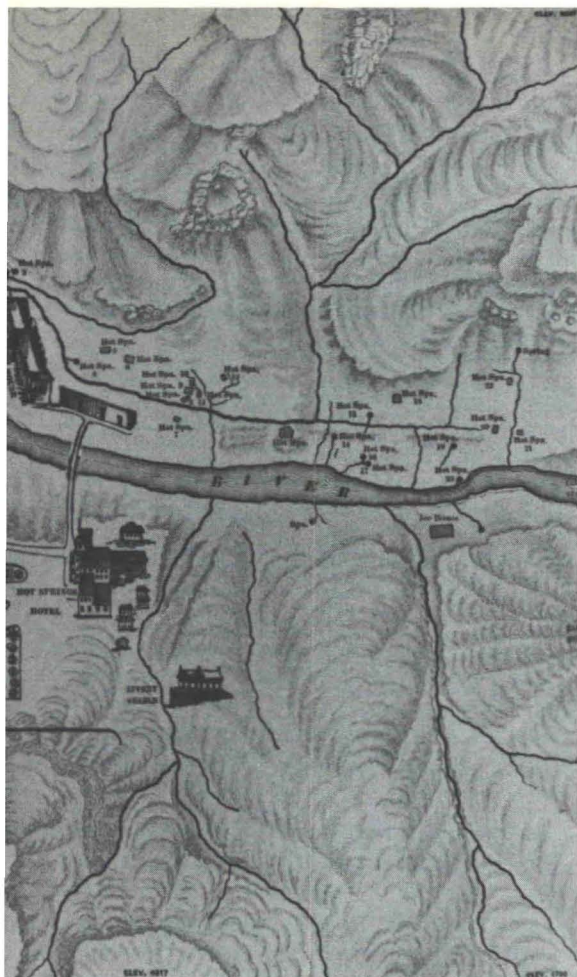
The building is of frame, Queen Anne style, three stories



Figures 1 and 2. The first Montezuma Hotel,







high, gable roofed, and so constructed that the sunlight shines through every window, and through which the tourist or invalid can beguile his lonely hours, if he has any, with views of interesting points . . . All around the front and sides of the building extend wide balconies, accommodated with every conceivable sort of easy chair to delight or ease the most helpless invalid, or anybody else. . . . Gas is manufactured on the grounds for the hotels, and Montezuma is heated by steam.<sup>12</sup>

A park (Fig. 1) was created to the north of the hotel, which turned its back toward the Gallinas River. This park was free form, and landscaped with bluegrass lawns, rare flowers, shade trees, gravelled walks,<sup>13</sup> and a large rustic fountain in the center. The carefully laid out park contrasted with the mountainous area behind the hotel, and probably caused the visitors to think that the Montezuma was the division between the civilized world and the "Wild West."

The Montezuma, whose architect is still unknown, was a typical resort hotel of the day. Described as Queen Anne, it was a combination of classical and anticlassical motifs. It was E-shaped in plan. The center of the building was emphasized by a tower complex. Complementing this central tower were projecting end pavilions and a series of regularly spaced dormer windows. The roofs of the main block and end pavilions were steep, creating gables where they intersected. Verandas with posts, segmentally arched lintels, and lattice-work balustrades depended from the building at the first story. The central tower complex, irregular and asymmetrical in elevation and massing, was picturesque, as were also the steep roofs and the gables. On the other hand, the plan was symmetrical with its centerpiece, wings, and end pavilions, and the window heads and sills were reminiscent of those built during the Greek Revival era.

The rambling quality of the Montezuma, its long verandas, and latticed balconies were characteristic of American resort architecture of the 1870s and 1880s. In general, this kind of architecture reflected an easygoing vacation atmosphere, and the hotel at Las Vegas Hot Springs was no exception in this realm. Pretension was apparently not the goal of the architect. Consequently, the Montezuma seems to have fit in with its surroundings and to have had something of the air of a comfortable yet rustic lodge about it. This rustic character was the visual embodiment of what the visitor might expect from his vacation in the Rocky Mountains.

In contrast to its rustic exterior, the interior of the Montezuma had all the modern conveniences and plush fittings a vacationer used to urban surroundings would need to feel at home. The railroad evidently had not stinted in its attempt to make the interior of the hotel redolent of Victorian splendor. The interior trappings were imported from such manufacturing centers as New York, Boston, Kansas City, and Grand Rapids. A Las Vegas newspaper, *The Daily Optic*, thought the furnishings were the "last word" on elegance:

the ladies' parlor on the second floor, displayed the most



elegant design of Axminster carpet bordered to match. The ground is cream colored with tropical figures in colors gendarme blue, olive and gold. The tapestry at the windows beggars description . . . The design is original with Mr. Jerome Rice, connected with the house of Bul-lene. Moores and Emery, Kansas City, and was placed in position by him . . . The furniture in this room is made of cocoa-bowl, Queen Anne design, heavy silk ball fringe. The piano is a baby grand Steinway in rosewood case with a grand cover, of dregs of wine silk plush, made here by Mr. Rice and his wife . . . The chandelier is of burnished brass ornamented with faience porcelain. The mirror is of French plate, ten by four feet, French walnut and gilt frame, heavily hand carved. The room is supplied with elegant imported steel engravings, the principal designs being "The Wedding Night" and "The Golden Wedding."<sup>14</sup>

These were typical of the furnishings throughout the hotel. The interior of the Montezuma must have presented an ornate and dazzling effect to the viewer.

However, ornateness was not the only characteristic of the furnishings of the Montezuma. Americans, always known for their practical inventions, made a number of domestic innovations during the Gilded Age. The Montezuma was well stocked with modern conveniences. It had not only gas light, steam heat, and water piped to every floor, but also "refrigerators with balance covers and gliding drawers," "ranges, broilers and furnaces," "soup cauldrons," "a French mangle," "a revolving steam wringer and cylinder washing machine," "the Seth W. Fuller patented electric annunciator," and "fireplugs with hose-reel attachments in the hallways."<sup>15</sup>

The Montezuma is typical of a number of large resort hotels erected during the 1870s and 1880s. A leisure class of newly rich magnates was growing up in America, and they wanted to spend their time and money at fashionable watering places. From Maine to California, hotels in what was called the Queen Anne style were built. These hotels have a number of characteristics in common. They are wooden buildings with either Stick or Shingle style detailing. They have extensive verandas, steeply pitched roofs, towers and end pavilions, lattice-work balustrades, dormers, and many windows. They are long and low, rambling in an informal fashion. The verandas allowed people who usually stayed indoors to sit outside without being directly exposed to the elements, while the many windows made the rooms sunny and pleasant. Bruce Price designed an addition to the West End Hotel at Bar Harbor, Maine,<sup>16</sup> to be like an "umbrella, the intention being that where there is a roof or a porch it shall shield to the utmost the building, and the guests from sun, wind, rain and storm."<sup>17</sup> These resort hotels were fitting structures for their surroundings, their rambling wings and wooden construction reflecting the carefree atmosphere of beach or country vacations.

The Montezuma, like the West End Hotel addition of 1878-1879, had multi-paned stained glass windows that were so popular with the champions of Queen Anne. The verandas of both structures were

similar in design and construction, and their windows had rectangular enframements. The detailing of the Montezuma was close in conception to that of the Far-ragut House at Rye Beach, New Hampshire,<sup>18</sup> designed by S. J. Thayer and probably built in 1882. This architectural modernity was unusual, if not unique, for New Mexico in 1882 when Territorial adobes were still being built. It is safe to assume that the architect of the Montezuma was not a long-time resident of New Mexico, but may have practiced in St. Louis, Chicago, or Topeka, headquarters of the Santa Fe Railway.

In spite of its fireplugs, hose-reel attachments, and water piped to every floor, the Montezuma burned to the ground less than two years after its gala opening. The fire of 17 January 1884 was started by clogged gas mains.<sup>19</sup> It reduced the hotel to a "Smouldering Mass of Ruins" within a few hours. Almost immediately, plans were begun to build a new and even grander hotel on a different site.<sup>20</sup> The Santa Fe Railway engaged the Chicago architectural firm of Burnham and Root to design the new hotel sometime between 17 and 26 January 1884. On the 26th

Mr. E. C. [sic] Burnham, of the architectural firm of Burnham and Root, came in this morning from Chicago and returned by the afternoon train. . . . [H]e said: "I have examined very closely and have considered the matter from all standpoints. It is very true that old hotel was never put in the right place first because the sun, which is most desired, does not play upon the house except in the rear, and secondly, because a building situated as the Montezuma was, does not show off to any advantage. My opinion is that the new house should be erected at or near the location of the reservoir, and it is almost safe to say that it will be put there. . . . I cannot say anything definite about the size and plan of the structure, but it will surely be a very large and commodious hotel."<sup>21</sup>

A little more than two months after Daniel Burnham visited Las Vegas Hot Springs, *The Daily Optic* reported that the architects were working on the plans for the new hotel. This structure was to be larger than the former Montezuma, built of the red sandstone indigenous to the Las Vegas area, and made "absolutely fireproof." It was to be built on Reservoir Hill to the north of the park. From the hotel veranda guests would have a "magnificent view" of Gallinas Canyon with its rugged mountain scenery.<sup>22</sup> The contractor chosen was James A. McGonigle of Leavenworth, Kansas;<sup>23</sup> the hotel officially opened its doors to the public on 20 April 1885.<sup>24</sup>

One tends to think of the architecture of Daniel Burnham and John Root in terms of such skyscrapers as the Rookery (1885-1888) and the Monadnock Block (1889-1892). However, this firm also designed smaller structures in the Queen Anne style. For example, their drawing for the Burnett house in St. Louis<sup>25</sup> shows an octagonal tower with an ogee-profiled cap, a steeply pitched roof with varied dormers, finials, large brick "English" chimneys, walls of shingles, brick, quarry-faced stone, and half-timbering, wooden porch and balustrades with turned balusters



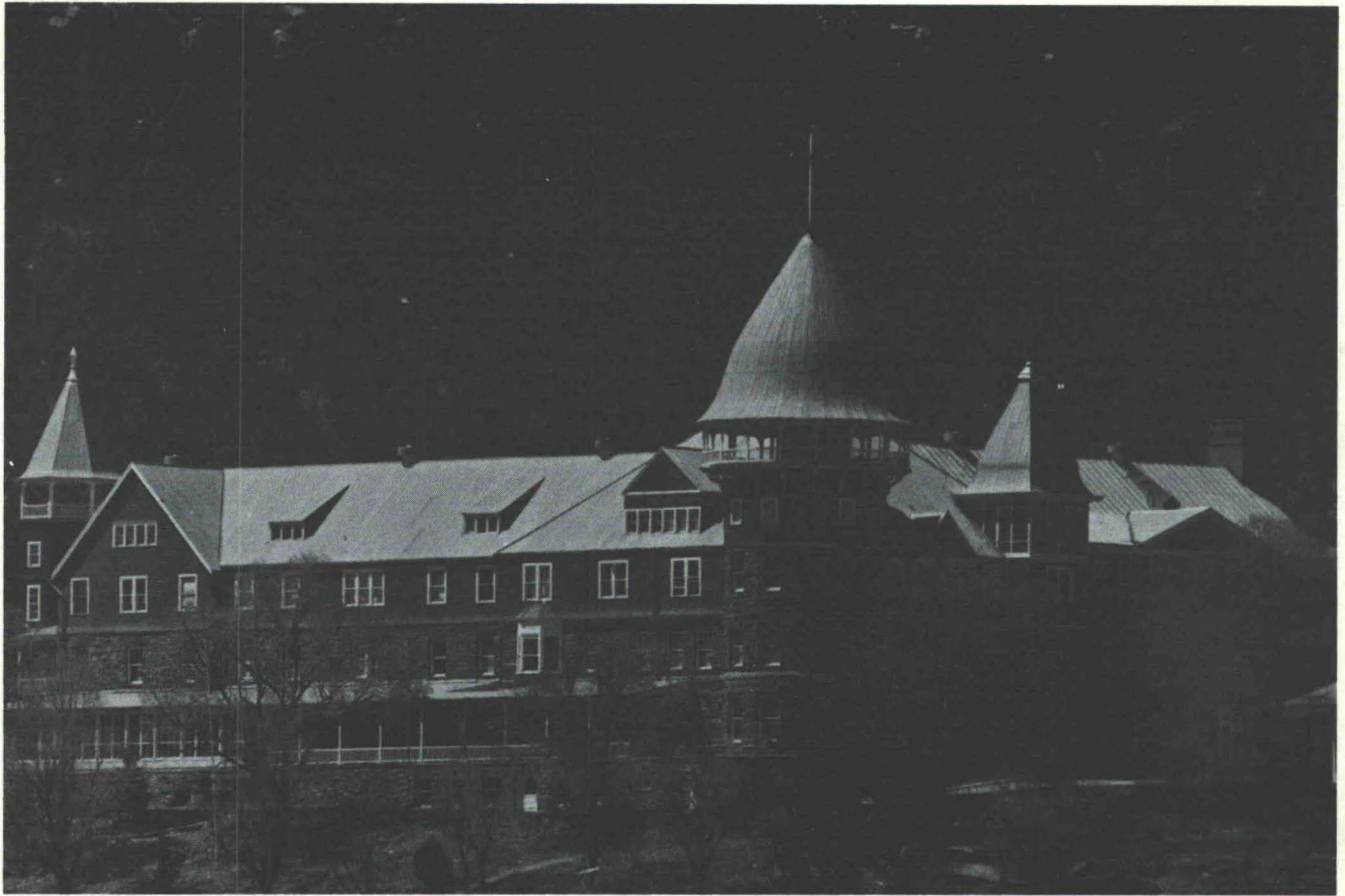


Figure 3. The present Montezuma Hotel, designed by Burnham and Root, Architects. View from the southeast.

and cut-out brackets, multi-paned stained glass windows, a rectangular composition wall panel with molded decoration in the form of a vase with flowers, and a large central hall inside. In short, Burnham and Root's Burnett house is a typical Queen Anne structure. However, it is more harmoniously composed than the average western dwelling of the period.

Although Root satirized the Queen Anne style in his writings, what he really seems to have criticized was the misuse of its various elements:

Here let us remember that the unexpected is the thing which should always happen, and that the style happily mentioned by General Sherman, "Queen Anne," is the greatest fountain source of all amenities. Here if a man wants a shelter for his front door, the courteous thing to do is to put a large bay window in his bath-room. And if he earnestly desires a place in a bedroom to put a bed, we give him an ample oriel for his flowers.<sup>26</sup>

Root thought that fitness of purpose was a necessity in architectural design. He also thought that unity of the elements was another important factor in successful architecture. The riotous rampages of real and sham decorative motifs commonly seen on provincial Queen Anne dwellings did not follow Root's principle of unity and for that reason he condemned the style:

As to the purpose of decoration it is, first, subordinate.

It should never be applied so as to conceal the outline and intent of more elementary and essential features. It can never take the place of the vital parts of the structure. It may cover them, but it must follow the form in which they best do their work, and this with a faithfulness exactly proportioned to the gravity of the work they have to do. Decoration being thus subordinate and non-essential becomes a politeness, and as such is intended "first to avoid offense, and then to confer pleasure."<sup>27</sup>

Root, like Louis Sullivan, was a proponent of that architectural bugbear, "form follows function." His principle of unity of all forms coincides with that doctrine. In the new Montezuma Hotel and in the Burnett house, the variety of decorative elements works together to produce unity of design as well as visual and textural interest.

It seems that Root was mainly responsible for the final design of the Montezuma. Burnham, who usually conceived the first rough plans of a building, was the partner who visited its site and suggested its form. Root's biographer, Harriet Monroe, states that "in the cases of the Insurance Exchange and the Montezuma Hotel, Mr. Burnham finds that the relationship between his suggestion and the final design was slight. . . ."<sup>28</sup> Although Root had never seen Las Vegas Hot Springs, he created a structure that truly fit in with the area. "The roof lines answered to the surrounding Sangre de Christo [*sic*] Mountains, and



the mass turned its corners obliquely, settling softly into the foothills."<sup>29</sup>

Harriet Monroe aptly described the Montezuma in 1896. "Here the long low building seems to grow out of the very rocks from which its wide projecting roof slants upward. The generous welcome it offers, the sense of shelter from invading storms, the absolute fitness of every line and feature of it, make this far-away inn one of the most exquisite idyls its author ever dreamed."<sup>30</sup> The second Montezuma, like its predecessor, is one of those late nineteenth-century American resort hotels whose architecture is not only appropriate for its setting, but also reflects the outdoor life adopted by its visitors. Commanding a superb view from its site on the hillside, the Montezuma is at once rustic and sophisticated. Its detailing is relatively simple, yet never severe. It looks comfortable and homelike with its wide verandas and sunlit rooms. Seen from afar, however, one can imagine that it is a storybook castle nestled amid the mountains, a surprise for the weary traveller.

The exterior of the second Montezuma (Fig. 3) is, like that of the first hotel, complex and irregular in its massing. It has changes in roof direction, gables, towers, verandas, dormers, and bay windows. The basement and first two stories are constructed of the reddish-brown sandstone indigenous to the Las Vegas area. This stone is rough-hewn or quarry-faced, and it gives the building that organic sense of growing from the hillside that Monroe observed. The upper story of the building and its towers are sheathed with dull red shingles; the trim is light in color; and the roof, at the time of its construction, was faced with gray slate. The Montezuma is richly coloristic yet subtle in tonality. Discussing color, Root wrote:

In another picture against the pure blue of a morning sky, is drawn the rough yet firm line of an old stone wall, upon which, all gray and brown, grows a profusion of morning glories. They rest upon the sober colors of the stone in deep greens and purples, gradually growing lighter toward the top of the wall, and there flash into a wealth of opals, brilliant green and rosy tints, lustrous with the glow of morning shining through, and full of the sparkle of dew.<sup>31</sup>

Root stressed the colors found in nature. The warm reds and browns of the walls of the Montezuma can be likened to the old stone wall, the shining roof and trim to the morning glories, and the many fir trees surrounding the hotel to the green leaves of the flowers. The unpolluted sky of Las Vegas Hot Springs with which the warm colors of the hotel contrast is a brilliant blue. The earthen tonality and low, rambling quality of the Montezuma make it an example of organic architecture. It does not intrude upon nature any more than do the earth-brown walls of the adobe houses of New Mexico.

The Montezuma has three towers, each of different profile and height. The largest tower at the southeast corner is the focal point of the building. The windows of the first floor of the Montezuma are varied, ranging from bay windows to arched ones with many muntins and transoms crisscrossing the

upper lights, to double rectangular-headed ones with elaborate patterns of stained glass, to single rectangular windows with flared stone lintels reminiscent of those of the Georgian period in American architecture. The basement fenestration has segmentally arched heads with the exception of a "Roman bath" window at the base of the corner tower. Rectangular window enframements predominate on the upper stories of the building, while dormers jut from the roof. In spite of their variety, these windows and towers form a harmonious and visually interesting composition.

A balustraded wooden veranda with bracketed posts runs around the west, south, and east facades of the Montezuma. There was once a gabled carriage entrance at its eastern end. This immense veranda, 330' long and 18' wide,<sup>32</sup> was well equipped with lounge chairs for less athletic guests. A brochure published by the Santa Fe Railway in 1887 describes the veranda and balconies:

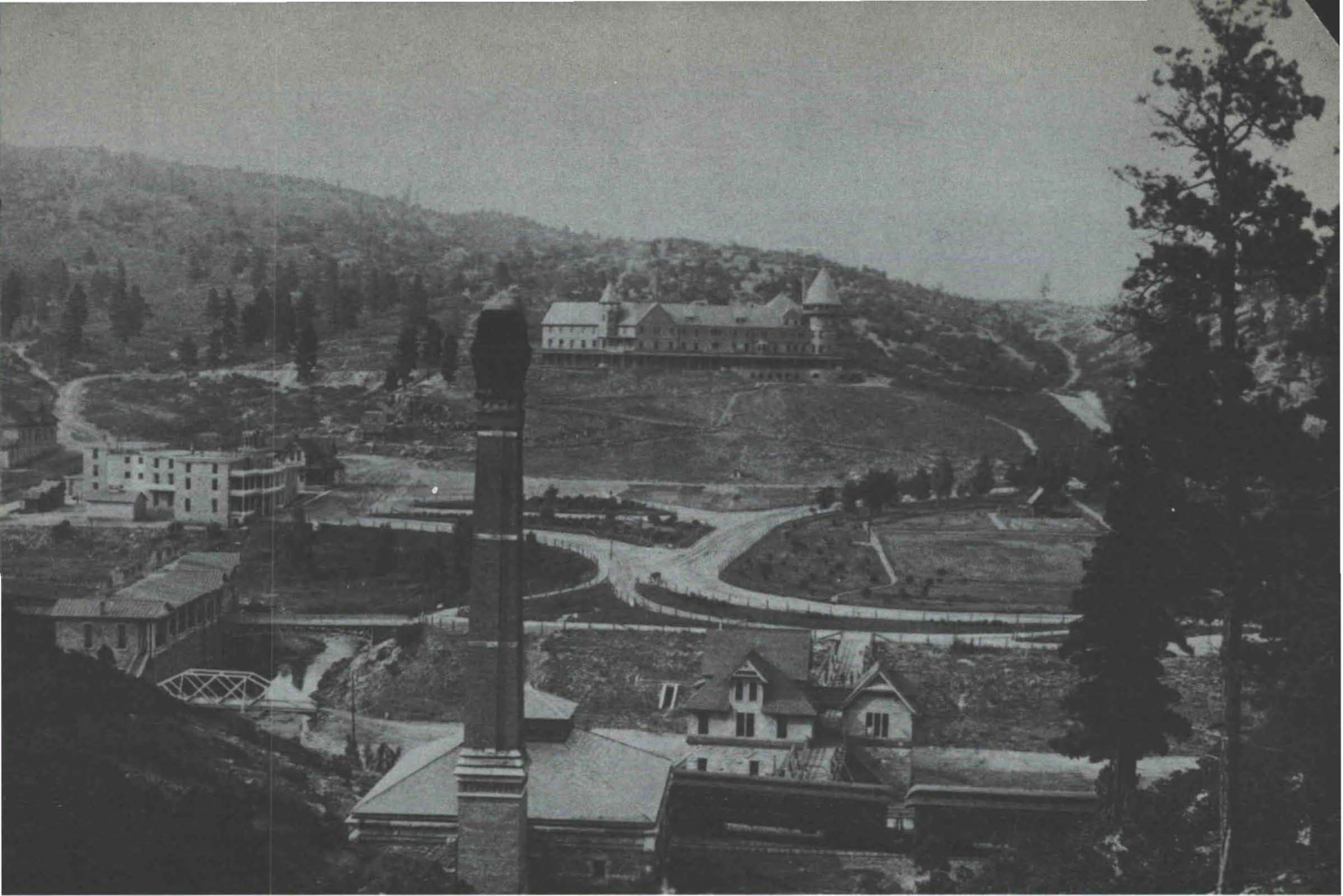
They are for those whose mood it may be not to climb or walk, or ride burros, whose youth and spirit have been tamed, or who safely know that what they get from that balcony long and wide, and without exertion, is quite enough. The sunshine falls in wide sheets all day. First, in the early morning the eastern one is flooded, and during the remainder of the day one has but to move one's chair or take another of the numerous lounging facilities scattered about.<sup>33</sup>

Also catching the sun are small balconies protruding from the east and west facades at the second story. These are similar in motif to the veranda.

Just as the first Montezuma was typical of the wooden resort hotels of the late 1870s and early 1880s, so the second Montezuma is similar in plan and elevation to many other resort hotels of the 1880s. Although Root's design was executed mostly in stone, the Montezuma with its wooden towers and verandas and shingled upper story is clearly constructed in what Vincent Scully has named the Shingle Style. The Shingle Style hotels of the eighties are asymmetrical and picturesque in massing. They have towers and long wooden verandas. Most of them were designed with a particular view of mountain or ocean scenery in mind and have observation decks for this purpose. (Fig. 6) Like their predecessors of the late 1870's described above, these resort hotels are long and low, seemingly spreading along the ground until they reach the end of what appears to be their natural growth cycle. Constructed of materials indigenous to the American building tradition, these hotels have a peculiar fitness of time and place.

These Queen Anne resort hotels have a number of "free classic" details. The Carleton House at Spring Lake, New Jersey, by Bruce Price,<sup>34</sup> the Forest Inn near Washington by M. Schneider,<sup>35</sup> and the Montezuma have half-timbering motifs applied to their towers. Franz E. Zerrahn's proposed hotel at Los Angeles<sup>36</sup> has many-paned windows reminiscent of Colonial American ones and a pedimented entrance as does the Montezuma. Hartwell and Richardson's de-





*Figures 4 and 5. Photographs taken shortly after opening of the new Montezuma Hotel in 1885.*

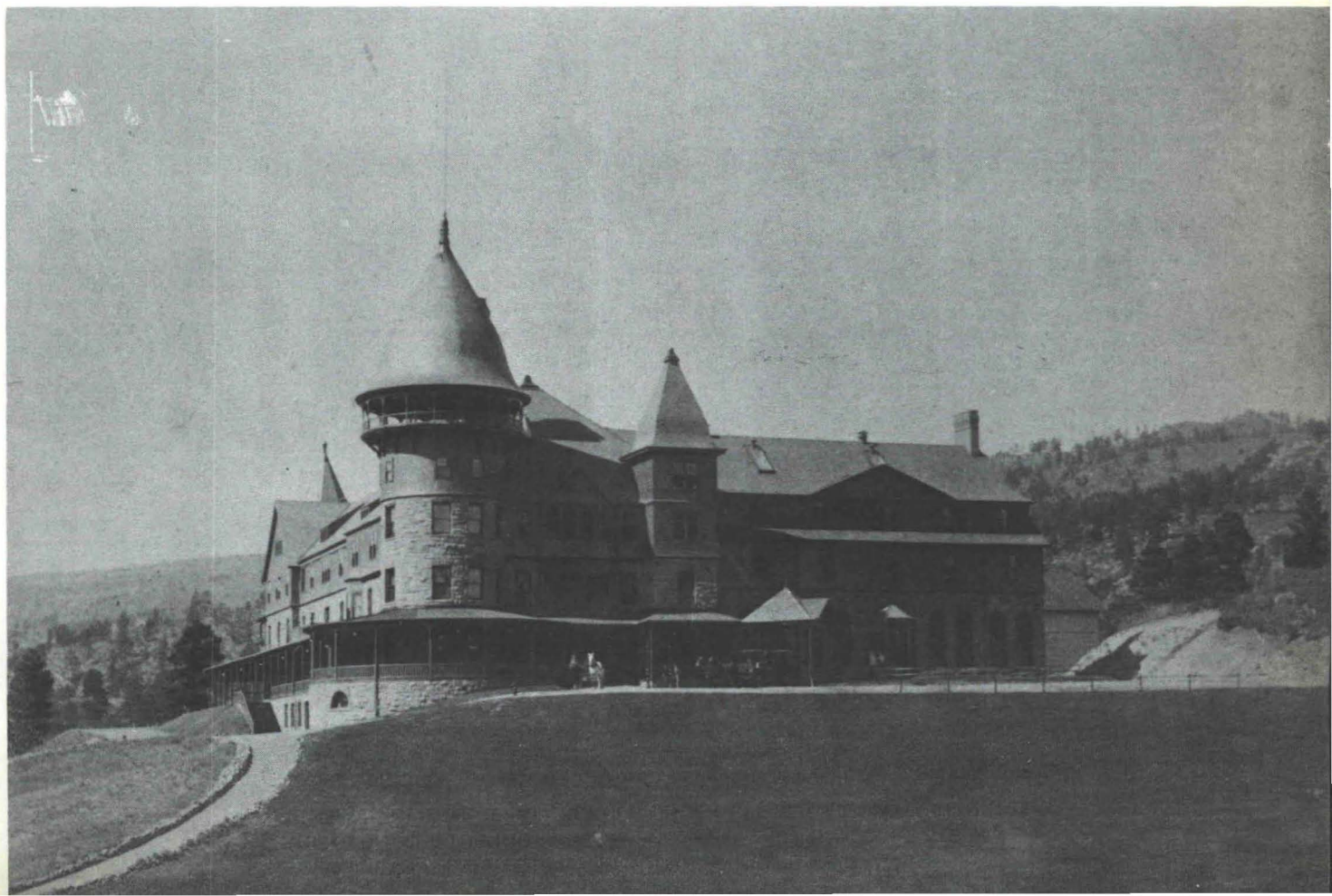






Figure 6. Looking east from the observation floor atop the main tower.

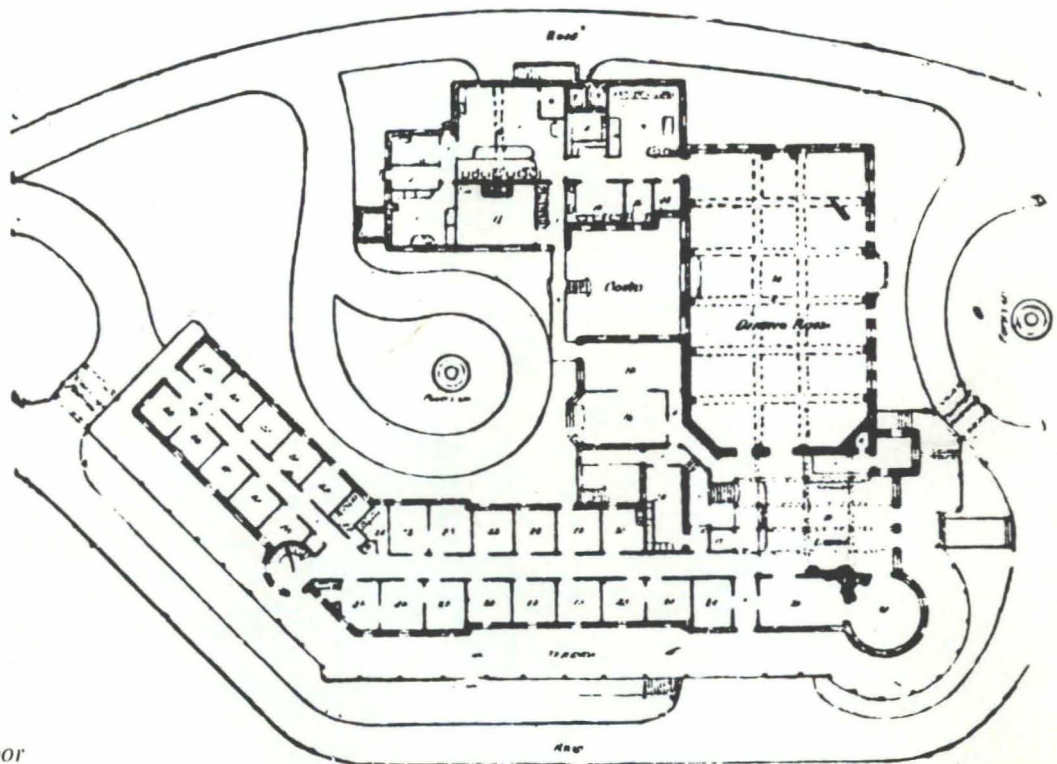


Figure 7. The first floor plan of the Burnham and Root designed hotel.

GROUND PLAN.



sign for a hotel at Mt. Kineo, Maine,<sup>37</sup> also has these tiny-paned windows. The use of shingles, too, derives essentially from American seventeenth-century houses. "Free classic" details of the Montezuma include flared and arched window heads, the "Roman bath" window in the basement, pedimented gables, and half-timbering.

It is easy to see why such advocates of Queen Anne architecture as H. Hudson Holly said that in houses of this style the "details partook strongly of the classic character, while the boldness of their outline bore striking resemblance to the picturesque and ever-varying Gothic."<sup>38</sup> In Queen Anne structures, details from classic to Gothic to home-grown jigsaw work were often felicitously combined. Purists, including John Root, scoffed at the eclecticism and multiplicity of these details, but nevertheless the style became very popular in America. Some of its more sophisticated and successful creations were the great resort hotels of the 1880s.

In plan (Fig. 7) the Montezuma is basically L-shaped, with extensions of wings at both ends of the L. It is long and narrow so that no more than two rooms separated by a corridor are placed back to back at any point in its plan. This placement allows each room to have windows and exposure to the sun. Long, narrow plans were also designed for the Faragut House and for Zerrahn's proposed hotel at Los Angeles. These hotels, like the Montezuma, were designed to maximize the intake of fresh air and sun.

Inside, the Montezuma has a comfortable yet luxurious domestic atmosphere similar to that of Queen Anne and Shingle style dwellings. Its public rooms are reminiscent of those in houses designed by H. H. Richardson and McKim, Mead and White in the early part of their careers. The office, or lobby (Fig. 8), of the Montezuma is a typical example of late nine-

teenth-century wood-panelled entrance hall. This sort of panelling derives ultimately from that in American Colonial interiors. The beamed and coffered ceiling is echoed in the panelled walls, while even the supporting piers are sheathed in panelled and carved wood. A lattice-work screen masks the elevator shaft next to the staircase (Fig's. 12, 13). This screen is reminiscent of those used by McKim, Mead and White in their Newcomb house living hall.<sup>39</sup> Another example of Queen Anne carving in the lobby is the long reception desk (Fig. 8). The furniture in the lobby was also typically Queen Anne with much carving, turning, and leather panelling. The large fireplace (Fig. 9) is Gothic Revival in style. Curvilinear, plantlike electric light fixtures hang from the ceiling and project from the walls. These are typical of the late nineteenth-century and are rather Art Nouveau in character.

*The Daily Optic* described the new Montezuma lobby on opening day:

The finish of the room is in white ash, hand rubbed and highly polished, giving a light and cheerful effect. The floor is closely laid in ash, the walls are in elegant hand-carved panels and the ceiling is girded with massive ashen timbers between which is a pretty series of panels all in the prevailing material of the house's interior finish—white ash. At the left and opposite the counter is an immense maroon colored terra cotta fireplace made from a special design by Andrews & Co., Chicago. It is in Queen Anne style fully fifteen feet wide and eight feet high. An imposing dormer of cathedral design surmounts the work . . . The furniture of the office was specially built by Charles L. Page & Co. and consists of heavy lobby chairs in leather upholstery and a long settee to match.<sup>40</sup>

The effect of the lobby with its wooden panelling and stained glass is one of warmth and hospitality.

Burnham and Root designed a number of houses with halls similar to the Montezuma lobby. Examples are the hall of the Edward E. Ayer house (1885)<sup>41</sup>

Figure 8. The lobby in those "good-old-days."

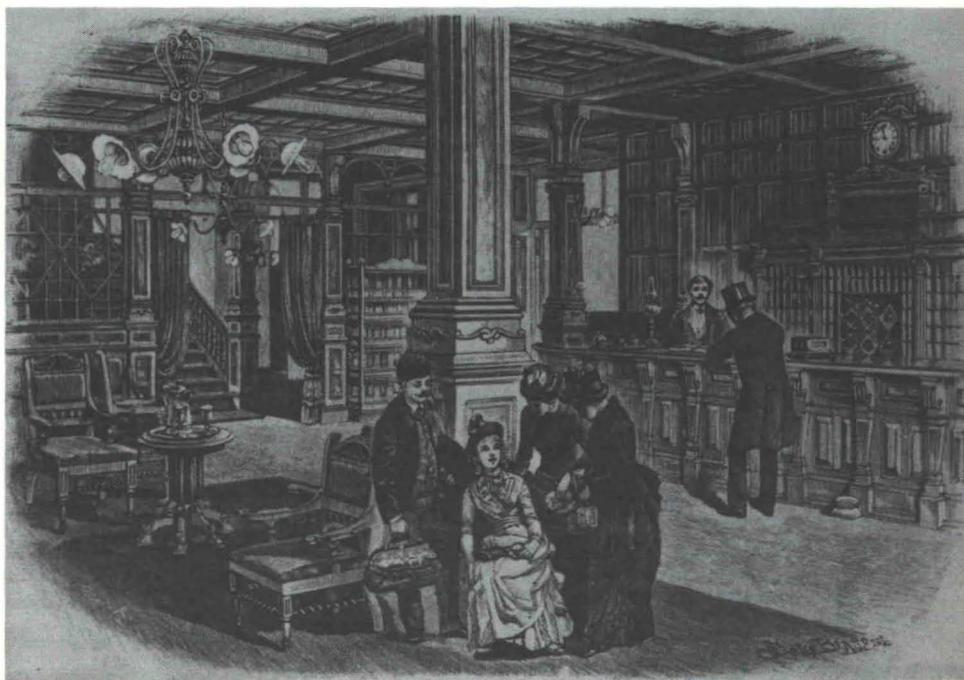






Figure 9. The majestic fireplace in the hotel lobby.

with its coffered ceiling, carved strapwork, and screenlike stair balustrade; the hall in the V. C. Turner house (1887-1888)<sup>42</sup> with its coffers, geometric panelling, and curvilinear strapwork; and the hall of the Reginald de Koven house (1888-1889)<sup>43</sup> with its Gothic Revival fireplace and interesting stair balustrade. Burnham and Root were Masters of the Queen Anne domestic idiom although Root denigrated the style in his writings.

The parlors of the Montezuma are not so complex in detail as is the lobby. Also domestic in character, these rooms are notable mainly for their Queen Anne fireplaces. The fireplace in the ground floor tower parlor has a tiled hearth and a series of wooden moldings flanked by fluted, engaged columns with elaborately carved leaf capitals. The over-mantel has an arched screen of turned balusters, again reminiscent of the early work of McKim, Mead and White. Above these elements is an entablature with varied moldings. This fireplace is a fanciful yet harmonious design. (Fig. 11).

Although large, the Montezuma's main dining room also retains a homelike quality. This room has a wood-beamed, bracketed ceiling and planked floor. Double-hung windows surmounted by arched panels

made of small stained-glass squares are in three of the walls. Two large Art Nouveau chandeliers with curling metal tendrils and blossomlike shades give an additional light to the dining area. Along the west wall of the room is a large buffet somewhat similar in character to the parlor fireplaces. The chairs and tables, on the other hand, are rather simple and utilitarian furniture. In 1885, *The Optic* had the following comments about the dining room:

It is one hundred feet long, sixty feet wide and twenty feet between floors. It is in the northeast corner of the building and is just back of the office near the grand stairway, the elevator and the flight from the basement. It is finished in ash, hardwood floor and heavily girded overhead, interlaid with panels to form the ceiling. There are thirty-six six chair ash tables and the room does not seem crowded for passageways. The crowning glory of the room is the mammoth buffet [*sic*] at the west side. . . It is a two story structure, sixteen feet high and around twenty feet wide. It is a double decked contrivance with an oblong French mirror, three feet by ten feet. At the ends are niches, while at the top are three large panels of stained glass, cathedral design.<sup>44</sup> (Fig. 10).

The Montezuma dining room, like the other rooms described, is typically Queen Anne in concept. (Fig. 14).





Figure 10. The "crowning glory of the (dining) room is the mammoth boufet ..."



Figure 11. Fireplace in the first floor tower parlor.



Figure 12. The now empty lobby with recent lighting fixtures. Figure 13, below, shows a detail of carving from the partition at rear in Figure 12. These carved panels have vanished in the three years since these photographs were taken.







Figure 14. The dining room with the "mammoth buffet" along the left wall.

The kitchen of the Montezuma was well equipped with modern conveniences. Like most of the others owned by the Santa Fe line, it was managed by Fred Harvey, the famed restaurateur. The Montezuma had its own bakery, but other culinary items were shipped from afar. Apparently the cuisine at the hotel was of high quality and occasionally exotic:

Completion of the line to Guaymas in Mexico added variety to the Harvey menus. Fresh vegetables and fruit were obtained throughout the winter. Epicurean Harvey boasted in his quiet way that canned goods were never served in the Montezuma. As a special treat for guests a buyer for Harvey contracted with the chief of a tribe of Yaqui Indians to supply green turtles and sea celery from the Gulf of Lower California. The turtles were shipped alive to Las Vegas, where they were put in a specially provided pool and fed well until needed for steaks and soup.<sup>45</sup>

The second Montezuma was made as fireproof as possible. A fire alarm system was placed in every room, the electrical wires were insulated and laid in safety strips with leaden joints at intervals, and the walls were covered with fireproof plaster. There were neither gas lamps nor stoves in the \$300,000 building, but electricity and steam heat instead.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it almost seems that the great hotel was predestined to disaster. On 9 August 1885, less than four months after it opened, the second Montezuma was

consumed by flames. Only the stone walls of the lower two stories were left standing.<sup>47</sup> However, the Montezuma was immediately rebuilt, but with a standing seam metal roof in place of the grey slate. It reopened on 16 August 1886, as the Phoenix Hotel. This name was soon replaced by its former one, Montezuma.<sup>48</sup>

In spite of its setting, architecture, and food, the Montezuma was an economic disaster. The Santa Fe Railways lost \$40,000 on it each year it was open,<sup>49</sup> and was finally forced to close it on 1 September 1893. It opened a fourth time on 20 June 1895 under new management. Another structure to the east of the hotel called the Casino, was built at this time. It had a stage, a dance floor, and a resident orchestra.<sup>50</sup> Even the new entertainment facilities seemed to have no effect on the economic plight of the Montezuma, and in 1904 the hotel permanently closed.<sup>51</sup> By this time, however, the era of the great American resort hotels was over. The twentieth century, so far, has produced no group of new millionaires in this country to patronize rustic resorts. Instead, we have Miami Beach and Palm Springs.

In 1913, the Montezuma was donated to the Y.M.C.A. This organization seemed to have no use for the building, and in 1920 it was given to the Southern Baptist Convention. The latter group oper-



ated the Montezuma Baptist College at the former hotel from 1922 to 1930. The Catholic Church bought the Montezuma in 1937 for \$9,000, and opened a Jesuit seminary there to train priests from Mexico. In 1972, the Jesuits vacated the building, parts of which they modernized. In 1974, there was talk of using the Montezuma as an army veteran's center. Hopefully, the grand old building will be preserved and what is left of its original interior decor left intact.

L. H. I.

Photography credits:

Page 13 and figures 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15—Robert Nugent.

Figures 1, 2, 7, 8—from "Las Vegas Hot Springs," 1882.

Figure 3—Don Ivers.

Figures 4, 5—Dept. of Development Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.

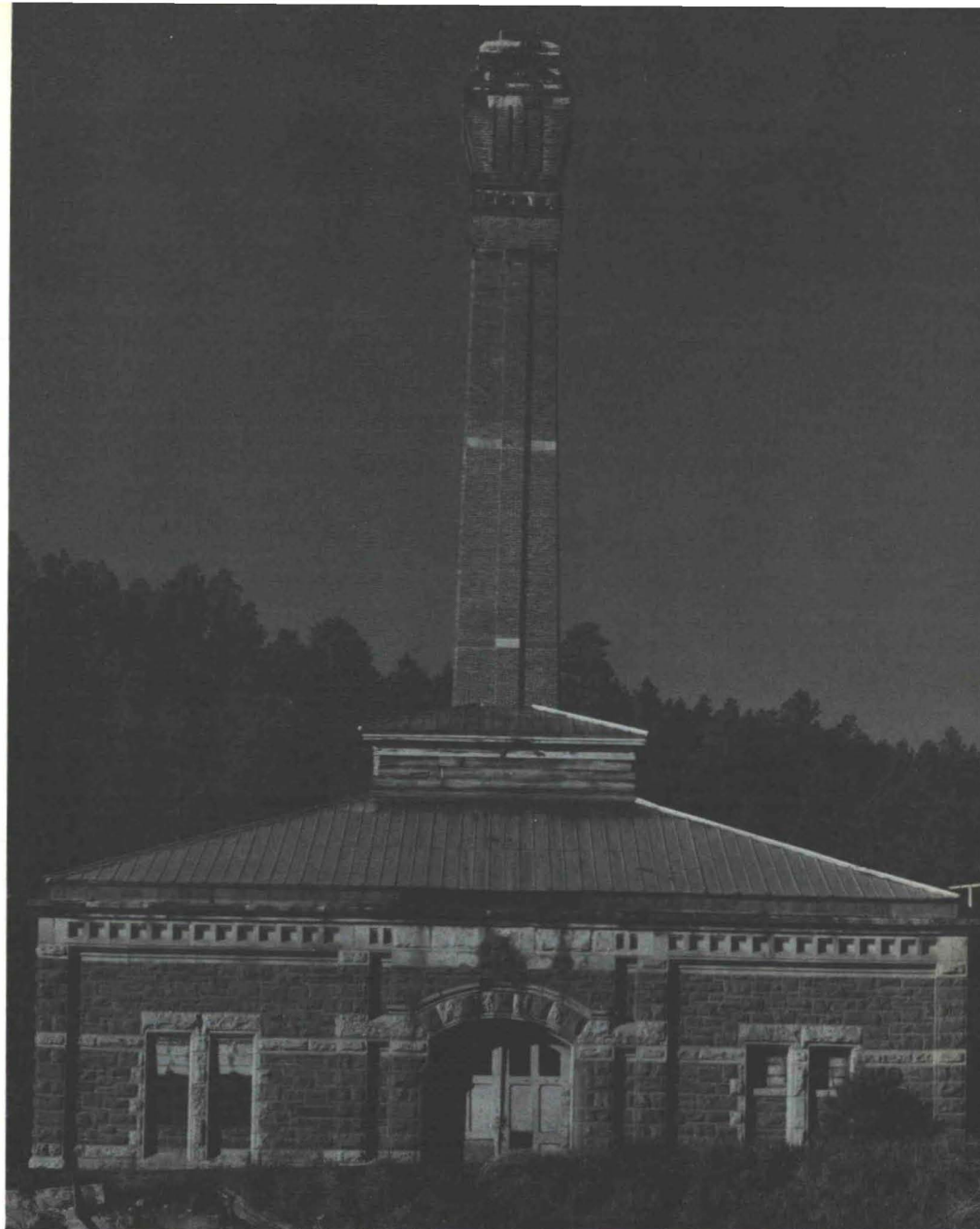


Figure 15. The power plant for the Montezuma Hotel complex is a bold, impressive structure.

Footnotes:

1. Clarence Pullen, "The Las Vegas Hot Springs," *Harp-er's Weekly*, XXXIV (28 June 1890), 499.
2. Milton W. Callon, *Las Vegas, New Mexico—The Town that Wouldn't Gamble* (Las Vegas, 1962), p. 129.
3. *The Daily Optic*, I (24 Dec. 1879).
4. *Ibid.*, I (4 Dec. 1879).
5. *Ibid.*, II (13 Feb. 1880). The bath house was built by a Mr. Adams about whom no information has been found.
6. *Ibid.*, II (12 Feb. 1880).
7. Callon, p. 130.
8. *The Daily Optic*, IV (17 April 1882).
9. *Ibid.*, IV (3 Mar. 1882).
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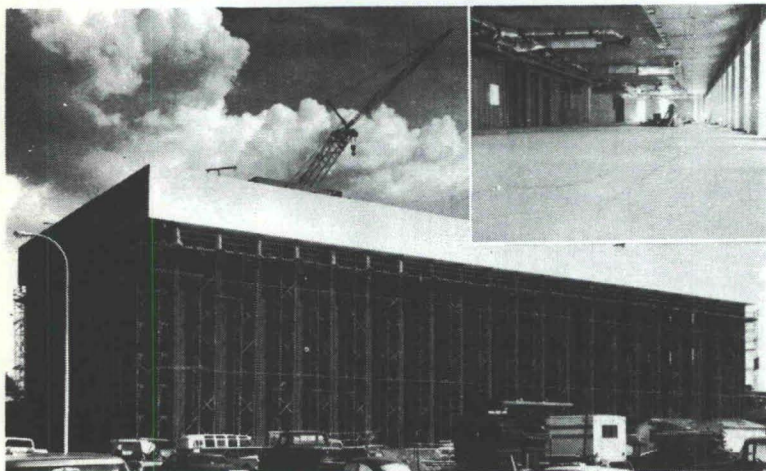
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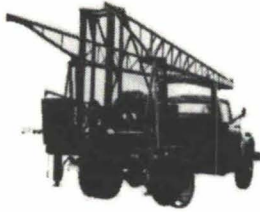
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San Vallé Tile Kilns .....	10
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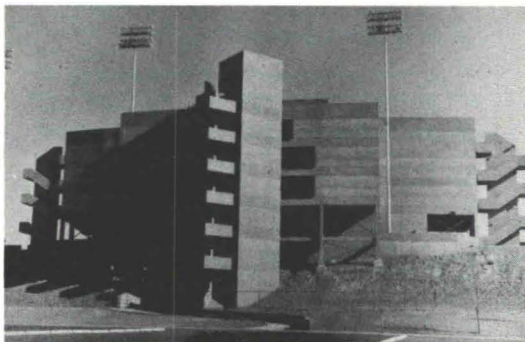
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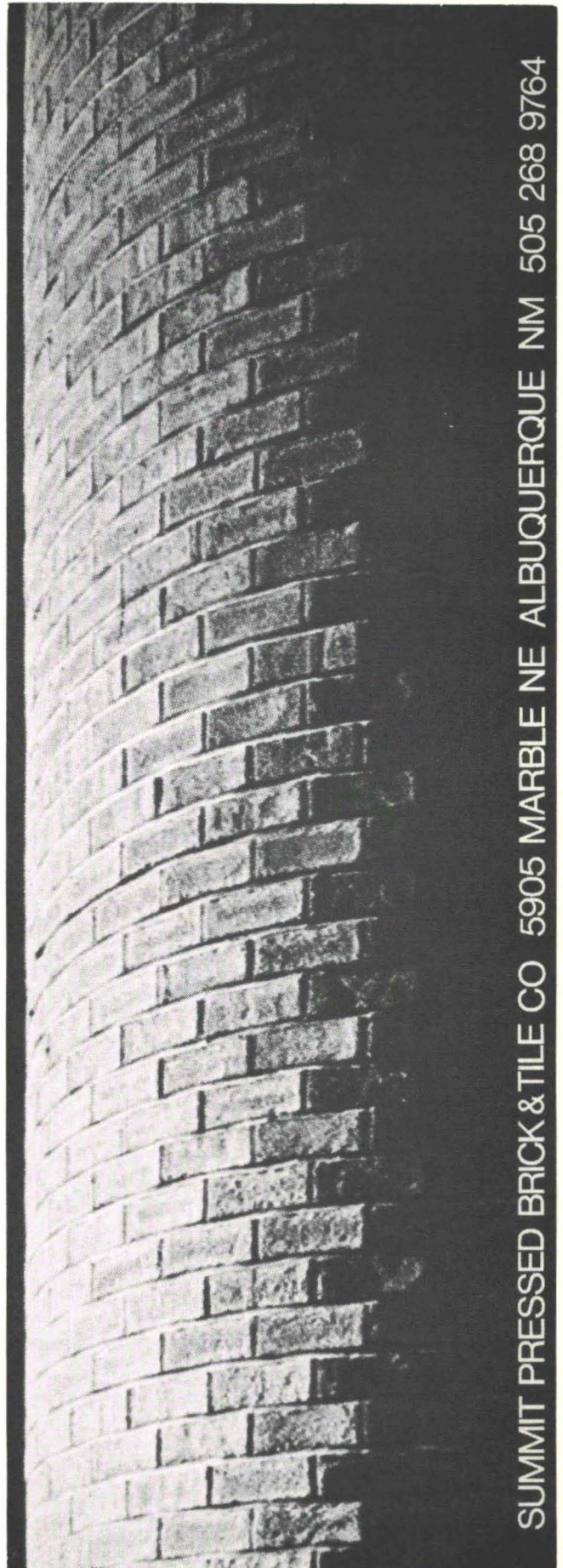
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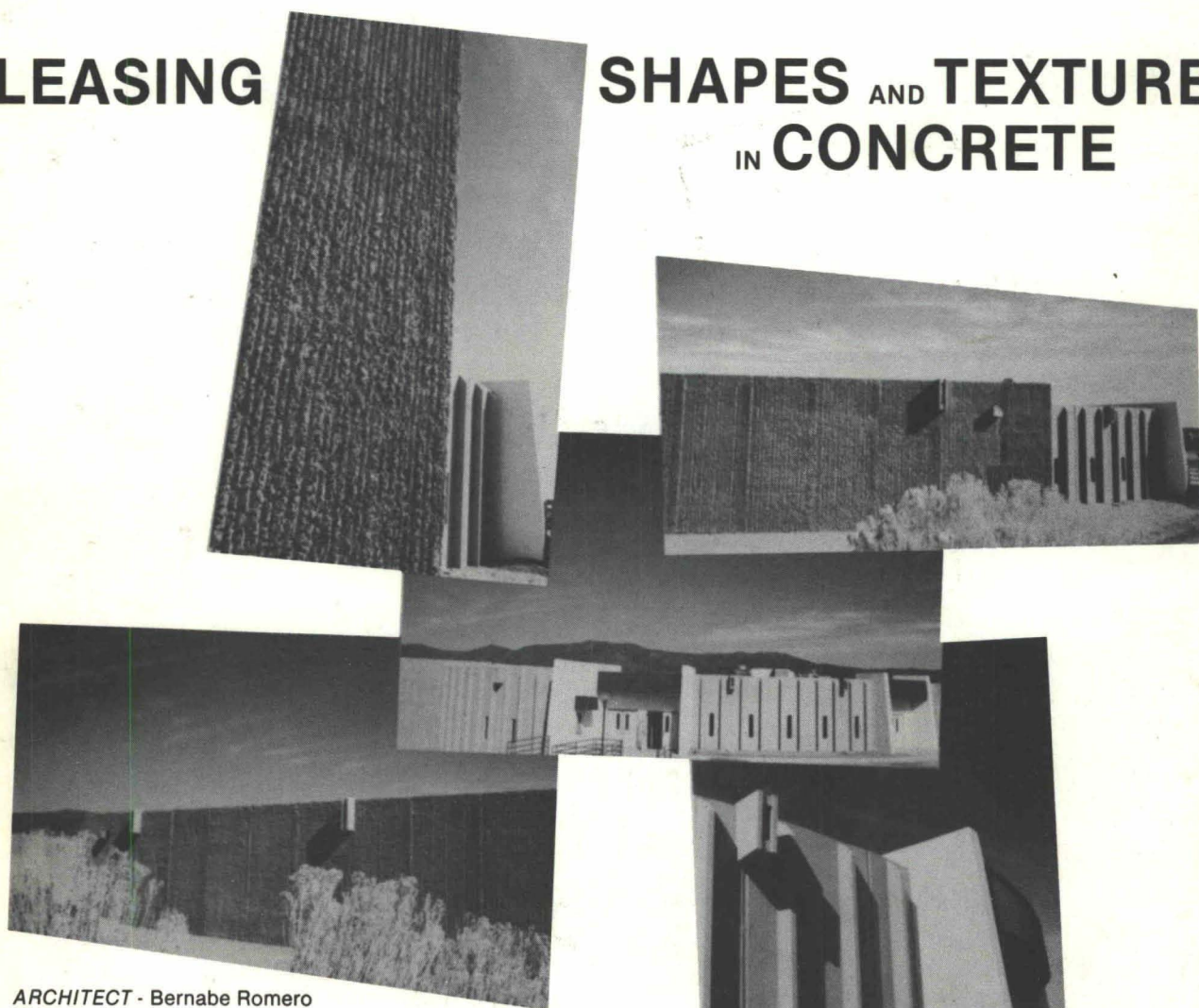
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