

IF ALLEYS COULD TALK ~ HUNTING FOR OLD CARRIAGE HOUSES



[[San Juan Silver Stage](#) | July 2020 | By [Kathryn R. Burke](#)]
<https://silverstage.news/07-20-if-alleys-could-talk-hunting-for-carriage-houses>

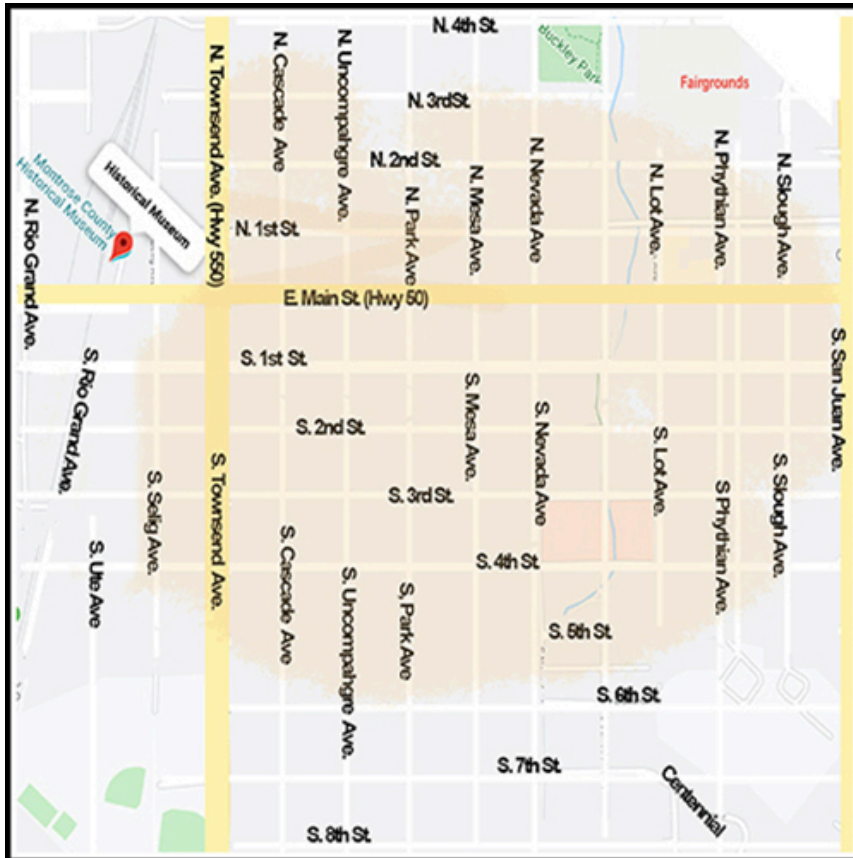
On a hot summer day, tour the alleys in your air-conditioned vehicle or get out and take a walk. Pass the commercial district, where the backs of buildings have been decorated with nostalgic murals and discover the old carriage houses along residential alleys.

Many of the houses, like the Lathrop House or today’s Crippin Funeral Home—were sizeable to accommodate large families, many of whom also had servants. And they had carriages.

Most of the larger homes standing today still have them. They look a little like a garage...but not. Carriage houses are tall with a pointed roof and (originally) a single door. Back in the day, a

1 “If Alleys Could Talk, hunting for the old carriage houses.” San Juan Silver Stage, July 2020

carriage was the standard mode of transportation. To keep the conveyance clean, dry, and safe, families stored their carriages in these outbuildings behind the house. Horses? They were usually left outside to forage. Carriages cost a lot of money. Horses didn't. Hence the house for the carriage and grass for the horse.



It takes a while to find the old buildings (a few of which did also double as a barn). And you have to really look. But once you do discover them, it soon becomes apparent what you are looking at. You'll find them in the residential areas along alleyways on both sides of Townsend—especially near the intersection with Main Street. The old part of town stretches several blocks in either direction. We found some great ones around S. 2nd and S. Lot streets. And more around S.

5th and S. Selig. The more you look, the more you find.

See if you can find these carriage houses. Some have been painted to match. Others have been refurbished and repurposed. We found one (in the alley behind Jimmy Johns and the Coffee Trader) that had been torn in half. (Pictured in slideshow above.)