

HISTORIC SANTA FE





Davey's home and studio on the grounds of Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary

INSIDE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

During the month of August, The Historic Santa Fe Foundation usually takes a break on publishing the eZine, but we decided to help Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary celebrate the 100th anniversary of Davey's arrival in Santa Fe. **They will be celebrating the arrival anniversary with a garden party on the lawn of the Audubon Center, Sunday, September 22, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** One of the center's docents, Robert Basler, offers a piece on Davey for this eZine and we hope you can attend the celebration in September. Enjoy!

Find out about our events and sign up for our email newsletter at historicsantafe.org/events. Find out about donating and membership at historicsantafe.org/join-give.

Cover photograph: Randall Davey House sala, Melanie McWhorter



Happy Anniversary, Randall!

The 100th Anniversary of Randall Davey's Arrival in Santa Fe

by Robert Basler

Exactly 100 years ago this month, the artists Randall Davey and John French Sloan arrived in Santa Fe, and they fell instantly in love with the city. Sloan would buy a place in town and spend his summers painting here, and Davey would go even further. He bought an old U.S. Army sawmill at the very end of Upper Canyon Road, converted it to his home, and worked there for more than four decades.

Davey's home and studio are preserved almost exactly as they were when he died, and you can take a guided tour every Friday at 2 pm for just \$5. It's the best-kept secret in Santa Fe. More information on the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary.

I may be just a little biased about how interesting the Davey legacy is, because I'm one of the docents, but where else are you going to hear a tale involving Kit Carson, the Titanic, Bill Gates, Cyrus McCormick III, Burro Alley, Los Cinco Pintores and a speakeasy bar?

Let's back up for just a second. Davey was born in 1887 and had a comfortable childhood in East Orange, New Jersey, the son of a school superintendant. In 1905, he enrolled at Cornell to study architecture, but a couple of years later he dropped out, deciding to become an art-

Davey painting, *The Race*, courtesy Robert Basler

ist. He must have shown some talent, because soon he was studying under a major 19th- and 20th-century artist named Robert Henri, who pronounced his name HENRYE because, well, we don't know why he did that. It was a made-up name, anyway.

In 1917, Henri came to Santa Fe to paint for a while, and when he went back East he told his promising students that there was no place like it. He said they had to come for themselves to experience the scenery, the architecture, the light, the color, the whole package.

So, in the summer of 1919, four people – Randall and Florence Davey and John and Dolly Sloan – climbed into a delicate-looking Simplex brand chain-driven roadster to begin a 2,000 mile journey west. Santa Fe, or bust.

The trip would take them six whole weeks. Later, writing about the drive, Sloan variously blamed bad roads, weather, and the difficulty of getting their wives to leave nice hotel rooms for another day of driving, as reasons the trip took so long. He also blamed "the imminence of Prohibition." These were four people who seriously enjoyed drinking, and one presumes they were making the



best use of the few weeks of legal drinking they had remaining.

About 80 miles from Santa Fe their tires gave out, so they loaded the roadster onto a train and made the last leg of the journey by rail. Santa Fe did not disappoint, but then, it seldom does. We know that within nine months of his arrival Davey had bought the sawmill, brought his young son out here, and this was their home.

We will be celebrating the arrival anniversary with a garden party on the lawn of the Audubon Center, Sunday, September 22, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. There will be croquet on the lawn, a silent auction and live music. Appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. There is a suggested donation of \$5 per person to support the historic Davey home and studio. Parking and a free shuttle will be provided from Atalaya Elementary School, 721 Camino Cabra, to the festivities.

When Davey died, in 1964, great care was taken to preserve the house and studio, and in 1983 his heirs turned the 135-acre site over to the National Audubon Society, with the stipulation that they must maintain the home and studio, allow regular tours and sustain the Davey legacy. Randall and his second wife, Isabel, are buried beneath an orchard near the house, where Davey used to let the burros who brought his firewood munch on the apples.

It's worth remembering that Davey and Sloan were pio-



Top left: Davey portrait, pre-1919
Top right: Davey and Sloan, 1950

neers of a sort, setting up easels here even before five upstart painters began turning Canyon Road into an epicenter for the nation.

In an interesting historical juxtaposition, John Sloan bought a place here to paint just in the summers. In a September, 1920 letter to Henri, Sloan wrote that he would be renting his Santa Fe studio for the winter to a young, promising Philadelphia artist named Will Shuster, who of course became one of Los Cinco Pintores. Cue the eerie foreshadowing background music...

This is just the tip of the iceberg, if you don't mind a Titanic reference. What I love about the Davey story is that it abounds with juicy coincidences, connections and ironies. You're probably wondering why I haven't elaborated on my earlier references to Kit Carson, etc. Sorry, but I need to keep some good stuff for the tour. I'll see you on Friday.

Robert Basler is a career journalist who retired from Reuters seven years ago and now lives in Santa Fe. He is on the Board of Directors of the Santa Fe Animal Shelter, and volunteers as a docent for the Randall Davey home and studio tours.



HSFF STAFF

Executive Director -
Pete Warzel
Office Manager -
Jacqueline Hill
Restoration Specialist -
Mara Saxer
Development Coordinator -
Melanie McWhorter

HSFF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair - Ken Stilwell
Vice Chair - Graciela Tomé
Secretary - Tim Maxwell
Treasurer - Harlan Flint
At-Large- Anne Culp
Board Directors - Michael Dale,
Nancy Owen Lewis, Ra Patterson,
Alan Jones, Elizabeth Bradley

HSFF MISSION

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation
545 Canyon Road Suite 2
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-983-2567
historicsantafe.org