

THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

## 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.



Photo by Pete Warzel

Dearest HSFF Members,

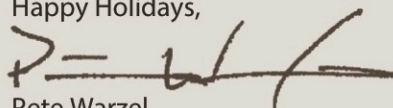
2015 is looking to end as a year of transition, change and success for your Foundation. New Board Directors joined our mission and new employees are committed to help us implement the vision that has guided this organization for what will be its 55th year in 2016. We undertook two major projects this past year – the elegant lime plaster on the façade of El Zaguán and the extensive adobe repairs at our Garcia House on Alto Street. Hana Crawford came on as our joint HSFF/New Mexico HPD oral history intern and introduced us to the long history and deep traditions of Agua Fria – the spot on the Camino Real del Adentro eight miles from the Santa Fe Plaza that traditionally supplied the bread and burros for the capitol city. We had numerous lectures in our Salon El Zaguán series and a truly successful Mother's Day Tour.

Momentum - at making our mission and activities known and respected in the community, at becoming more and more relevant in a city in transition, at educating the public about our heritage and culture, at, dare I say, having fun as an organization by doing good things.

I would like you also to consider keeping the momentum apace with your end of year donation or membership renewal to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. Please consider buying a membership as a gift for a friend or friends as a way of involving them in the rich history of our city. We are expanding our membership benefits by adding more members-only lectures. We have much good to do in 2016 and we truly need your financial support to accomplish it all. You have all been supportive and generous with your time and donations this year and we are thankful, all of us.

We have come a long way this year but we have a long way to go in the next.

Happy Holidays,



Pete Warzel  
Executive Director

# Saving El Zaguán: Margretta Dietrich and the Preservation of Santa Fe



El Zaguán Canyon Road entrance circa 1950s from the Loomis Collection, HSFF

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## ***Saving El Zaguán: Margretta Dietrich and the Preservation of Santa Fe***

by Nancy Owen Lewis, School for Advanced Research

It is fitting that we examine the history of our home, El Zaguán, 545 Canyon Road, in all its linear glory at the end of a year that saw the Foundation create a traditional lime plaster finish and a tenting structure that shaded it and allowed time for it to cure to the wonderful, tactile finish we have today. Visitors on the street come into the office and garden to tell us how beautiful our home now looks – again.

Nancy Owen Lewis, the author of the article following - *Saving El Zaguán: Margretta Dietrich and the Preservation of Santa Fe* - is a long time friend of this Foundation, having served as past Chair of the Board of Directors. Nancy is a Scholar-in-Residence at the School for Advanced Research (SAR) and served as its Director of Scholar Services for many years. There is a strong tie between SAR and HSFF not only through co-sponsored Sparks Talks during the year, but through the extraordinary women who came from the East to build the residence-turned-campus at SAR (The White Sisters) and restored and expanded our home at El Zaguán (Margretta Dietrich). Nancy explores the history of Margretta and her keen interest in not only the old "Johnson Place" that she named El Zaguán, but in preserving the architecture, culture and history of Santa Fe overall. It is right that we should be housed in this place.

Nancy Owen Lewis received her PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of Massachusetts and has recently been exploring the impact of tuberculosis on New Mexico history, with several articles published on the subject in *El Palacio* and the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Her book on the subject, *Chasing the Cure in New Mexico: Tuberculosis and the Quest for Health* is scheduled for publication by the Museum of New Mexico Press in March 2016. -- Pete Warzel

# Saving El Zaguán: Margretta Dietrich and the Preservation of Santa Fe

## *Saving El Zaguán: Margaretta Dietrich and the Preservation of Santa Fe*

by Nancy Owen Lewis

In 1928, the James L. Johnson house, today known as El Zaguán, was on the chopping block. Bronson Cutting, who had recently acquired the old hacienda through a mortgage foreclosure, planned to sell it to a development company. Instead, a woman named Margretta Dietrich rescued the historic adobe homestead from certain destruction. “I couldn’t bear to think of the place cut up and my view of the mountains to the east perhaps cut off,” explained Dietrich, who owned the adjoining property to the west.

So in 1928 Dietrich bought the “old Johnson place” at 545 Canyon Road, which she had previously admired. “It had a beautiful garden” she wrote, “and although I had never been in the house I had admired its lines and native architecture.” She then pondered what to do with the aging estate of James L. Johnson, a prominent trader on the Santa Fe Trail, who had purchased the original homestead in 1854. He expanded the property, which then consisted of a corral and small house, to include a territorial-style adobe home, where he and his wife, Maria Jesus Montoya, raised seven children. Generations of Johnsons enjoyed the home, orchard, and luxurious garden—until 1926, when James Baca, Johnson’s grandson, defaulted on the mortgage. Margretta Dietrich was a wealthy widow in her mid forties when she



Margretta Dietrich and her sister Dorothy Stewart (inside cart) designed this float for the 1926 Hysterical Parade in protest of a proposed women’s culture center. Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (MNHM/DCA), neg. no. 010932.

bought the property. Born into a prominent Philadelphia family, she attended nearby Bryn Mawr College, graduating in 1903. M. Carey Thomas, president of this exclusive women’s college, sought to instill in her students “the hope of doing something splendid.” Advocating social reform and women’s suffrage, she encouraged them “to pursue their ambitions rather than dismiss them as inappropriately unfeminine.” Margretta Dietrich seemed to take her advice to heart. In 1909, she married Charles H. Dietrich, the father of a classmate and former governor of Nebraska. Moving to Hastings, Nebraska, she became a leader in the women’s suffrage movement and in 1920 became first president of the Nebraska League of Women Voters. Then in 1924, her husband, twenty eight years her senior, died, and Dietrich pulled up stakes. But instead of returning home to Philadelphia,

she headed to Santa Fe. The city had intrigued her ever since her first visit in 1921—a trip she described in *New Mexico Recollections*.

“We arrived in Santa Fe about noon, and had our first meal at the Blue Parrot run by two delightful women in a lovely old house at the corner of Palace Avenue and Burro Alley,” wrote Dietrich. “The house had many patios, with sheep in one of them. My sister, Dorothy Stewart was so enchanted by it that she begged me to buy the whole block.” But as she explained, “at the time we were not ready to invest in Santa Fe real estate.”

She also had reservations about that real estate, for they had stayed on Canyon Road with one of the officers of the League of Women’s Voters. Dietrich, in fact, had come to Santa Fe at the invitation of the League.

## Saving El Zaguán (continued)

“Her house,” she wrote, “had been described to us as ‘beautiful,’ and by Santa Fe standards it was, but at first glance it was not at all what we had expected or accustomed to. It was built flush with the sidewalk. . . and was constructed of adobe, with wood from an old Mission church. To our eastern eyes it appeared a little crude,” she admitted.

But, explained Dietrich, “as so often happens, once captivated by the attractions of Santa Fe, we could not resist coming back.” She and her sister, Dorothy Stewart (a muralist trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art), would be part of a wave of artists, writers, and activists who came to Santa Fe during the 1920s. Some came to recover from tuberculosis, while others weary of life in the Midwest and industrialized East, came seeking inspiration and renewal in the traditional cultures of northern New Mexico. What they found was a way of life rapidly disappearing. Already decimated by disease, the Rio Grande Pueblos saw their culture endangered by the assimilationist policies of the federal government. Tourism and economic growth threatened Santa Fe’s Hispanic culture and small-town charm. Santa Fe’s art colony found itself in the vanguard of a cause—to preserve the very cultures they had sought for inspiration.

The art community soon became involved in an effort to prevent the Southwest Federation of Women’s Clubs from establishing a culture center in Santa Fe. On April 22, 1926 the federation’s plans were approved by the city council, which voted to provide the women with land at a nominal price. Concerned citizens sprang into action to defeat the

Chautauqua, as they called it, “lest the city vanish before this swarm of locusts.” The following day they formed the Old Santa Fe Association, dedicated to “guiding new growth in such a way as to sacrifice as little as possible the unique charm and distinction of the city.” Although not yet full-time residents, Margretta Dietrich and her sister Dorothy joined the protest. The Hysterical Parade that summer featured their horse-drawn cart, appropriately decorated with signs such as “Dr. Quack’s Quick Remedies for the Uncultured” and “Magic Chautauqua Balm.” Puzzled by the uproar, the genteel ladies of Oklahoma City and Dallas withdrew their proposal.

Santa Fe activists included not only Margretta Dietrich but four other Bryn Mawr alumnae as well. They joined forces to protect Pueblo lands, address Indian health, and promote native art. As one graduate explained, a Bryn Mawrter, by definition, is “a woman idealistically devoted to improving the welfare of others.” To deal with issues affecting Native Americans, they joined the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs, a precursor of SWAIA, which sponsors today’s Indian Market. Dietrich, in fact, served as president from 1934-54. All five belonged to the Indian Arts Fund, established in 1925 to collect historic and contemporary native art, with the goal of documenting and reviving this tradition. Dietrich was also a founder and major contributor to the Spanish Colonial Arts Society, incorporated in 1929. Disturbed by the decline in traditional architecture, the Bryn Mawrter also purchased and restored historic properties.

In 1920, journalist Elizabeth Shepley

Sergeant (class of 1903) and her companion, Gertrude Ely (class of 1899), bought and restored a crumbling adobe in Tesuque—a project Sergeant described in “a four-part article, ‘The Journal of a Mud Hut,’ published by *Harper’s Magazine* in 1922. In 1923, Amelia Elizabeth White (class of 1901) and her younger sister Martha (class of 1903), purchased land and a small adobe house on Garcia Street, which they transformed into an eight-acre estate called El Delirio, now home to the School for Advanced Research.

In 1927, Margretta Dietrich and her sister Dorothy Stewart finally moved to Santa Fe, purchasing the Juan José Prada House at 519 Canyon Road, which became their home. The following year Dietrich bought the neighboring “Johnson Place” at 545 Canyon Road and decided to convert it into an elite summer hotel. The project proved daunting, for “the wiring and plumbing needed attention and the floors were almost worn out,”



she explained. In addition, the squared beams in the reception room were “sagging from the weight of layers of dirt on roof.” She hired architect Kate Chapman, who had restored her other property, to make the necessary improvements. She added a heating plant, garages, cottages, and Spanish-style fire places.

By the following summer, the historic hacienda had been remodeled, refinished, and furnished. Dietrich renamed it “El Zaguán” for the long corridor or zaguán, which opened “at the west end into the old garden and into a patio at the east end.” The hotel was open for business, but it was hardly the elite inn Dietrich had envisioned. Lois Field, another Philadelphian, offered the following description of her visit in March 1929. “The little hotel El Zaguán is a dear. Just an old Spanish house modernized as little as possible to take in boarders.”

In July 1930, Dietrich installed a fountain in the courtyard of El Zaguán and hosted a fiesta to celebrate the event. With some “200 gaily dressed celebrants,” Fiesta El Zaguán was the talk of the town. “[S]eñora Dietrich, greeting the guests in a dozen places at once, was charming in her grandmother’s quaint gown and her pink high shoes,” reported the Santa Fe New Mexico on July 19, 1930. “Never was [there] a larger, more delightfully Santa Fean party.”

Dorothy Stewart, painter and muralist, accompanied her sister Margretta Dietrich to Santa Fe and soon became well-known for her parties.

Courtesy Palace of the Governors  
Photo Archives (MNHM/DCA), neg. no. 022843.

The party may have been a success, but the hotel was not, for as Dietrich soon discovered, the woman she employed to manage it lacked the necessary skills. Seeking other options, she leased El Zaguán for use as a girl’s boarding school during the 1932-33 academic year. Brownmoor School, the brain child of Mary Atwell Moore and Justine Ames Browne, attracted sixteen students, including Helen Chapman, daughter of Kenneth and Kate Chapman, Dietrich’s architect. The following year the school found a more permanent home at Bishop’s Lodge, where it remained for twelve years until moving to Phoenix in 1945. After the school departed, Dietrich decided to convert El Zaguán into fully furnished apartments, which she rented primarily to women of “modest employment.” By 1940 there were eleven such apartments. Dietrich would later buy and restore the Borrego House at 724 Canyon Road, today home to Geronimo’s Restaurant.

In addition to preserving some of Santa Fe’s most iconic properties, Margretta Dietrich became a leading patron of Indian and Spanish Colonial Art. Her sister Dorothy achieved recognition for her paintings and prints, as well as for the concerts and lectures that she hosted at her “Galeria Mexico” studio east of El Zaguán. In 1955, Dorothy Stewart succumbed to cancer during a visit to Mexico. Margretta Dietrich died six years later at the age of 79. In 1962, executors Sylvia Loomis, who had served as her secretary, and the First National Bank of Santa Fe, sold the bulk of the property for \$40,000 to El Zaguán, Inc., a newly-formed non-profit under the leadership of John Gaw Meem. In 1979 the

stockholders transferred their shares to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, founded in 1961 to preserve and protect Santa Fe’s historic properties. Today those properties include El Zaguán, the foundation’s headquarters, which a concerned woman from Philadelphia had the foresight to rescue some 87 years ago.

Sources Cited  
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Mullin, Molly H. *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.

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# Board of Directors and Staff Update

New Board Members and Staff joined the Historic Santa Fe Foundation & bring superb expertise to our endeavors.



**Ken Stilwell**, was born into a third generation Durango, Colorado banking family. He graduated from the University of Colorado with a triple major of English, Communications, and Spanish. Ken retired in 1996 following eighteen years working in military defense subcontracting, specializing in business systems trend analysis with information technology applications. After retirement Ken devoted his life to civil rights with Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) in New England, Lambda Legal Defense in New York, Human Rights Campaign in Washington, DC, and most recently with the 5,000 member ACLU of Georgia, serving as board treasurer and president from 1998-2011.

With his move to Santa Fe in 2011, he re-established his Southwestern roots and began volunteer work at SAR, School for Advanced Research, where he serves as Chair of the President's Council. Ken also volunteered his time at HSFF on the Development Committee and now brings his business acumen and development expertise to our Board.

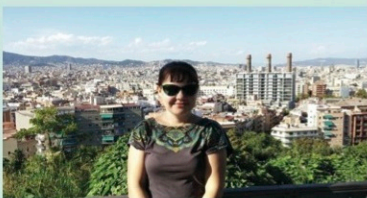


**Linda Tigges, PhD.** is a retired land planner. While working the City of Santa Fe in the 1980s and 1990s, she assisted in drafting the City's Archaeological Review Committee (ARC) ordinance, amendments to the Historic District Ordinance and staffing both groups. She also prepared City publications on architectural history, the plaza, acequias and neighborhoods. In addition, she worked with development review for master plans and annexation applications Relevant private sector land planner in the 1980s and 1990s work includes preparing archival reports for the ARC, neighborhood planning, and submittals or City and County commercial and residential projects. Published materials are articles on the Santa Fe presidio, the 1912 Santa Fe plan, 1880s

City land development, data on County business licenses and taxes, and the book, Spanish Colonial Lives, consisting of documents from the Spanish Colonial Archives of NM. Linda brings a variety of experience to our Board at HSFF.



**Melanie McWhorter** has lived in Santa Fe for 18 years. She has spent most of her working career in photography-related positions. With HSFF, she will rediscover the love for history that she garnered from her BA in History from Lander University in South Carolina and apply her love for fundraising that she developed from years of volunteer work. She is currently working on her thesis on photography and the landscape for a Masters of Science in Environmental Studies with Green Mountain College in Vermont. She will be working on development for HSFF.



**Mara Saxer** has recently returned to her hometown of Santa Fe after five years in the preservation community of New England, working principally on window restoration in Maine and Massachusetts. She earned her Masters of Architecture with a specialization in Historic Preservation from Tulane University. She joins the Foundation staff in the role of preservation specialist.

**Claudia Horn** leaves our Board of Directors after serving on the Executive Committee and heading the Landscape Committee, coordinating the great work done in our Garden at El Zaguán by the Santa Fe Master Gardeners Association and Linda Churchill, our consulting gardener. Sadly we also say goodbye, though not entirely, as Claudia will stay on our Property Committee on a volunteer basis and allow us her expertise for some time in the future.

**Hana Crawford** also comes to end of her joint term as Intern in oral history for both HSFF and New Mexico HPD. She has done exceptional work in assisting the Traditional Village of Agua Fria Association in their oral history work in documenting the long and deep history and culture of this important village. Hana will stay involved with us long distance as we build a sub site of our web site on the history of Agua Fria with content captured from the interviews done during her tenure here.

We thank Claudia and Hana deeply and sincerely for all they have done for this organization.

For complete Board of Directors and biographies visit: <http://www.historicsantafe.org/about.html>

# HSFF Annual Giving

The final months of 2015 are winding down. Next year, HSFF will continue to maintain the historic properties owned by HSFF and foster our mission educating the public about the importance of preservation. We need your help! We have a wealth of volunteers and we are truly grateful for their time and dedication, but for those who can offer financial support, we provide many ways to give. We took the time to create a list below of some of our projects and ways to donate.

Thank you all for your dedication to the mission of this Foundation and we hope that 2016 is a wonderful year for us all!

## Why You Should Give

- ★ Summer trades internship program and expansion of additional internships in fields including oral history
- ★ The beautiful, manicured El Zaguán garden maintained by Santa Fe Master Gardeners and Linda Churchill
- ★ Hand plaster on the back wall of El Zaguán that compliments the velvety and luscious front entrance completed in 2015
- ★ Preservation of the HSFF's historic properties, expansion of our educational program and many projects that our small staff and team of volunteers accomplish

## Ways You Can Give

- ★ Call our staff to set up recurring monthly payments of any amount from your credit card or checking account. Every dollar helps!
- ★ Give the gift of membership to friends & family with the enclosed envelope, on [HistoricSantaFe.org](http://HistoricSantaFe.org) or by calling our staff
- ★ Return the attached envelope with your donation or membership
- ★ Send a credit card payment via Paypal by visiting [HistoricSantaFe.org](http://HistoricSantaFe.org) and clicking on the iconic HSFF plaque shield



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If you use social media, please explore our accounts on Instagram and Facebook to keep up with the current information and happenings with HSFF and its community. Promote and share our accounts with your social network.



[Instagram.com/historicsantafefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/historicsantafefoundation)



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## Year End 2015 Report

- ★ Addition to the HSFF Register of Resources Worthy of Preservation:  
St. John's College – Santa Fe  
San José Hall – Galisteo  
La Fonda on the Plaza
- ★ Held 6 very successful Salon El Zaguán lectures including the upcoming members-only talk on December 7th with Tom Windes.
- ★ Instituted the Oral History joint Internship with New Mexico HPD and housed Hana Crawford at El Zaguán for the term.
- ★ Held numerous art exhibitions at the Gallery at El Zaguán with resident artists, staff, and an invitational watercolor/gouache show, raising funds for HSFF through revenue sharing with several artists and two exhibitions.
- ★ Purchased and implemented non-profit database software for better and continuing communication with Members.
- ★ Added Mara Saxer, Preservation Specialist, and Melanie McWhorter, Development Associate, to HSFF staff, bringing commitment and professionalism to your Foundation.

- ★ Added new Board Directors Tim Maxwell, Scott Tobey, Barbara Felix, Ken Stilwell, and Linda Tigges, bringing new talents and experience to further the vision of the Board and Foundation.
- ★ Completed the lime plaster on the street façade of El Zaguán and nearing conclusion of the major adobe repair work at our Garcia House. Both projects assisted by our good friends at Southwest Plastering Inc. and New Mexico Earthworks, and gained much recognition in the community and in the press.
- ★ Looking to complete a rigorous budget for the Foundation in 2015 and counting on your help at year end to meet that budget with your gracious and generous donations and memberships.

Thanks to all our  
giving and supportive  
volunteers and donors!

We are looking forward to a happy new year with you all!