

BULLETIN *HSF*

OF THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

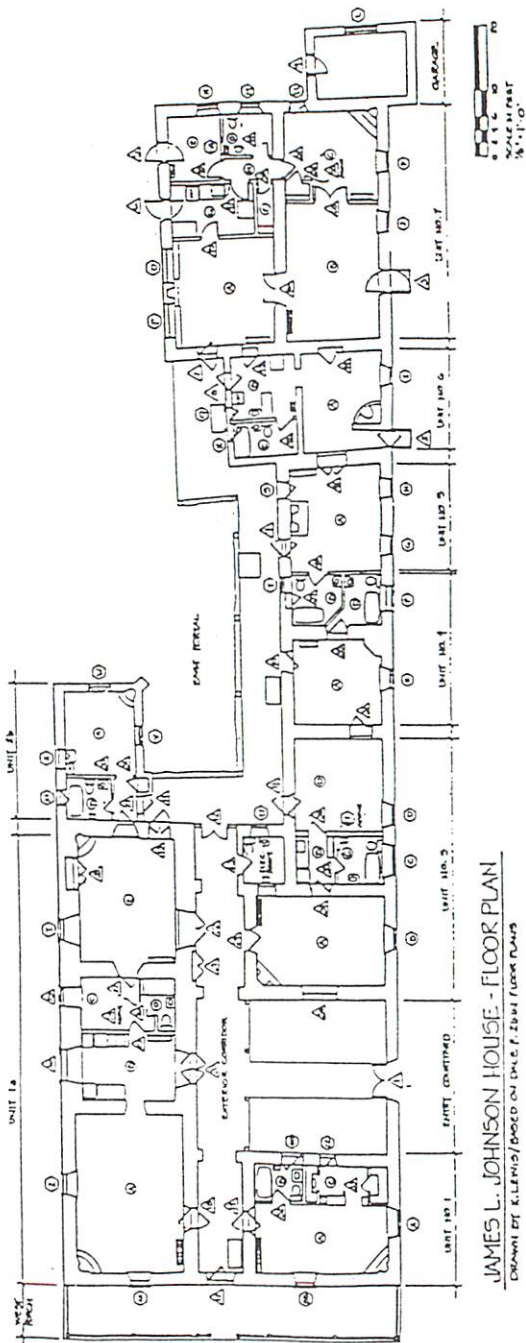
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Photo by Laura Gilpin

El Zagan - James L. Johnson House



JAMES L. JOHNSON HOUSE - FLOOR PLAN
DRAWN BY ELLIEN/BOGOT ON DICE F. 2504/1006 PLANS

THE JAMES L. JOHNSON HOUSE (EL ZAGUAN)

545 Canyon Road

Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

Although the Historic Santa Fe Foundation has owned El Zagan since 1962, existing documentation on the building and its inhabitants was long recognized to be very limited and, as it turned out, was not entirely accurate. In order to provide solid documentation of both the history of the building and its present condition, the Foundation's Board of Directors assembled a team that included among others an architect, a preservation specialist, and myself, as historian, to produce a Historic Structures Report (HSR). This document is intended to guide future decisions related to the building's preservation.

What follows is a summary of my research, which was based primarily on documentary and oral sources. The complete HSR contains an architectural description, documentation of architectural features, and treatment recommendations. The complete and annotated history of the building and its occupants has recently been published by the Foundation as a separate monograph.

The building we have today, known as El Zagan, was created in the mid-nineteenth century by James L. Johnson as a home for his large family. The son of a lawyer and a Baptist clergyman's daughter, Johnson was from a prominent family with roots going back to seventeenth century Colonial Maryland. A great uncle was a member of the Continental Congress and Maryland's first state governor. His father's cousin, Louisa Johnson, married John Quincy Adams. James Johnson became one of Santa Fe's most prosperous wholesale and retail merchants in the days of the Santa Fe Trail.

Johnson first came to New Mexico in 1845, the year before Colonel (soon General) Stephen Watts Kearny led the Army of the West to seize New Mexico near the onset of the Mexican War. (Congress created the Territory of New Mexico in 1850.) Johnson eventually joined Preston Beck, Jr. as a junior partner in one of the oldest established wholesale and retail businesses in Santa Fe. In addition to being the territorial capital, Santa Fe was a major trade center until bypassed by the main line of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway in 1880. After Beck's violent death, Johnson took over the firm and eventually became the owner of the substantial business block Beck had built on the northeast corner of the Plaza, where



*James L. Johnson,
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No.165641*

the Catron Block is today. By the 1870s James Johnson was one of the region's most successful merchants. He had extensive land holdings around Santa Fe and throughout the territory and was involved in most of the important business activities of the day—wholesale and retail trade, real estate, banking, and mining. However, in 1881 he suffered a major reversal of fortune, possibly the result of new credit realities which came with the railroad.

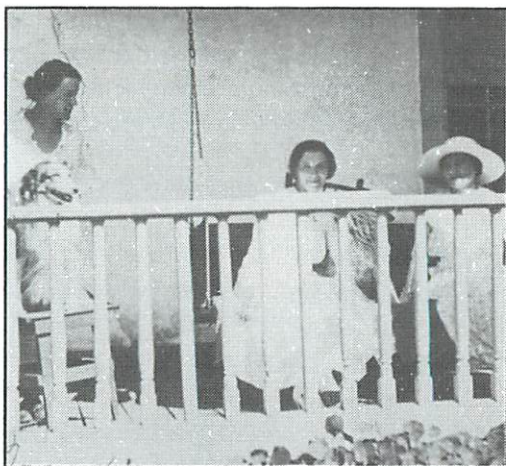
With his wife, Maria Jesus (Jesusita) Montoya of Chihuahua, Mexico, Johnson raised a family of seven children at their Canyon Road home. Beginning in 1854, the year before joining Beck's firm, Johnson purchased several parcels of land on the north side of Canyon Road, an

ancient trail up the Santa Fe River Canyon. He chose a location that was somewhat removed from the Plaza, the main center of activity. It was a sparsely populated area amid fields cultivated by Spanish families, as it had been one hundred years earlier when the Urrutia Map (c.1766) was drawn. Johnson's first tract, purchased from Juan Bautista Moya, contained a house of an unspecified number of rooms and a corral. He enlarged this property with additional purchases in 1857, 1864, and 1875 and built a sizable Territorial-style home for his growing family, probably incorporating existing rooms. He eventually owned a large tract opposite on the south side of Canyon Road, which contained orchards, stables and outbuildings. As a result of the 1881 financial crisis, Johnson lost his home and all the Canyon Road property, his business block on the Plaza, and other significant properties to Thomas B. Catron, the powerful Santa Fe lawyer and politician. The business was never recouped and members of the family lived on Canyon Road as Catron's tenants into the twentieth century. In Johnson's later years, the family formed a friendship with Adolph Bandelier,

the pioneering ethnographer of the Southwest, who was living in Santa Fe in straitened financial circumstances. Although Bandelier spent his final year in Santa Fe (1891-1892) as a guest at the Johnson home, there is no evidence, even in the journals Bandelier kept at the time, for the attractive belief he designed the garden at the Johnson home.

Johnson's career and those of his associates illuminate the precarious life of a frontier merchant with its inherent dangers, both physical and financial. Nevertheless, his life has been little studied, partly because it was anomalous with his competitors. Unlike other settled traders, his business did not survive the end of the Santa Fe Trail. Instead, Johnson faded from the business world just as a new era was beginning and was lost sight of even by historians. He also differed from most other Santa Fe merchants in a number of defining factors: his place of origin, his family background, his marriage to a woman from Mexico, his isolation from other members of his own family, his choice to build an adobe home in an outlying Spanish neighborhood, and finally the fact that he established deep roots in his adopted home and has many descendants still living in Santa Fe.

In contrast to Johnson, other successful merchants of the Santa Fe Trail period and beyond, for example the Spiegelberg brothers, their cousins the Staabs, and the Seligmans, were recent immigrants to America, primarily from Germany and of Jewish origin. They often came in pairs of brothers—there were six Spiegelbergs at various

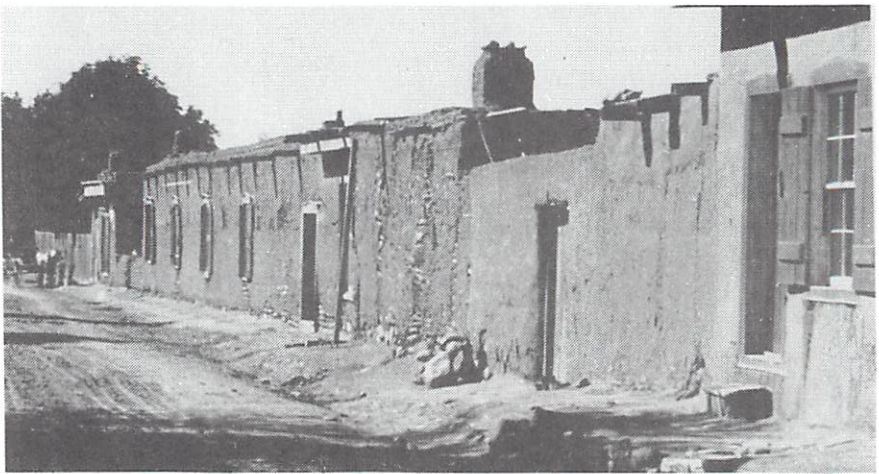


Antoinette Baca (left) and friends, 1920
Courtesy Frances Baca

times in the Santa Fe trade; and they tended to return to Europe or to the East to marry. Their homes were near the Plaza, on newly fashionable streets such as East Palace Avenue, and designed in imported styles derived from Europe, such as the Mansard-roofed Staab Mansion now incorporated into a hotel. Most eventually went back to the East Coast or to Europe to live out their lives. It is this prominent and distinctive group of merchants who have received the attention of historians.¹ Johnson has been almost completely ignored.²

The Johnson home returned to the family when James Johnson's grandson, James Baca, purchased it from the Catrons in 1918. Baca made extensive renovations, apparently turning the house into apartments. However, he borrowed heavily on the property and incurred several mechanic's liens. In the process he lost the property to Bronson Cutting, who took over the debt. Cutting, the wealthy owner of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* and later U.S. senator, was a close associate of Baca's brother, Jesus Maria Baca, who inherited the newspaper upon Cutting's premature death in 1935. In 1928 Cutting sold the Johnson house to Margretta Dietrich, who already owned the property next door on the west.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Santa Fe and its native cultures had been discovered by artists, writers, archaeologists, and anthropologists. A lively art colony formed in the Canyon Road and the Camino del Monte Sol neighborhoods. Far from eschewing adobe architecture, which had been consistently reviled by newcomers from the States throughout the long Territorial period, this new group bought or built themselves handmade adobe houses in Spanish neighborhoods. Civic leaders too, following the lead of the railroad promoters, came to recognize the economic value of tourism attracted by history as expressed in local architecture.



Johnson's residence on Canyon Road before 1909
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No. 31821

Once statehood was attained in 1912, after a decades-long struggle, an unlikely alliance of archaeologists, artists, and business leaders took up the task of defining an authentic, “indigenous” architecture for Santa Fe. They joined to convince the citizenry of the appropriateness and economic advantage of retaining, restoring, and, recreating a distinctly local style in both domestic and commercial architecture. The New-Old Santa Fe Exhibition held in 1912 brought the “Santa Fe Style,” as it was then called, convincingly to a public audience. It was the turning point in a movement which largely created the architecture of Santa Fe today. No one was more important in advancing this architectural



Margretta Stewart Dietrich
Courtesy State Records Center

transformation than John Gaw Meem, who came to Santa Fe for tuberculosis treatment in 1920 without architectural experience. He went on to become the premier architect in the Spanish-Pueblo Revival and Territorial Revival, as the historically appropriate styles came to be called. He was a leader in the effort to enact Santa Fe’s first Historic Styles Ordinance in 1957 which mandated the use of the historic styles.

Along with artists and scholars, Santa Fe attracted wealthy patrons who applied to varying degrees their time, energy, and financial resources to the preservation of Santa Fe’s pre-American cultures in all of their expressions. Among these can be numbered Margretta Stewart Dietrich. Some of the others were the White sisters, Amelia and Martha; Eva Scott Fenyes, her daughter Leonora Curtin, and granddaughter, also Leonora Curtin (later Paloheimo); and the William Fields with their daughter Lois.

Dietrich, the daughter of a Philadelphia physician, was a Bryn Mawr graduate and the wealthy widow of a former Nebraska governor and United

States senator. She came to Santa Fe with an impressive record of public service on behalf of the most vulnerable in society as she had known it—women, children, and the aged. She had been a state and national leader in the woman's suffrage movement, and once the right to vote was won, the first president of the Nebraska League of Women Voters and regional director of the National League. In New Mexico she turned her attention to the problems of Indian peoples. As president of the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs from 1934 to 1952, she firmly steered the organization in defense of Indian rights for the betterment of their lives and the preservation of traditional cultures. She herself amassed a definitive collection of contemporary Indian painting to become a noted expert on the subject.



*Brownmoor students performing a Spanish play in placita
Courtesy Elizabeth Wiley Samuels*

Dietrich moved to Santa Fe in 1927 with her sister, Dorothy Stewart, an artist, and bought the Juan José Prada house on Canyon Road, her home for the rest of her life. Soon she felt impelled by threatened development to purchase the Johnson property next door, to which she gave the name El Zagan. Later she purchased the Borrego house, further east on Canyon Road. All three Canyon Road properties were restored under the direction of her friend Kate Chapman, who championed traditional builders and their methods. Although Chapman built or restored many houses and was a major influence on Santa Fe architecture from the time of the New-Old Santa Fe Exhibition, her achievements, like Johnson's, are little recognized today.

After Dietrich's death in 1961, El Zagan was sold by her executors to El Zagan, Inc., a for-profit corporation set up under the leadership of John Gaw Meem expressly for the purpose of preserving El Zagan. By 1979 the last shares of this corporation had been transferred to the nonprofit Historic Santa Fe Foundation, which still owns and maintains El Zagan.

The Johnson House is an excellent example of a Territorial-style home on one of Santa Fe's oldest streets. Also on the property is a well-preserved section of a major *acequia*, known as the Canyon Road Community Ditch (Ditch #15), which diverted water from and returned it to the Santa Fe River. Its path in 1854 served as the north and west boundaries of Johnson's first tract of this property, and the north boundary of the parcel added in 1857. Also significant on the property is the recreated Victorian garden, which, even if not originally designed by Bandelier, was a noteworthy feature in the time of the Johnsons. Having survived the financial vicissitudes of James Johnson and his grandson, James Baca, the property was restored under the guidance of Kate Chapman in accordance with the best preservation standards of the time. It remains today under the stewardship of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, the leading private preservation organization in Santa Fe. The history of El Zagan reflects the major movements of Santa Fe social and architectural history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It touches a wide spectrum of the personalities and events that make up that history.

ENDNOTES

1. For example, William J. Parish, "The German Jew and the Commercial Revolution in Territorial New Mexico, 1850-1900," *New Mexico Historical Review* 35.1 (January 1960) 1-29; 35.2 (April 1960) 129-150. Floyd S. Fierman has written a number of monographs and articles on Jewish merchants in the Southwest.
2. The recently published correspondence of John M. Kingsbury with James J. Webb in 1853-1861 contains several brief mentions of Johnson and more generally sheds considerable light on business activity in this early period, which involved many transient merchants, who like Webb and Kingsbury did not remain in Santa Fe long into the 1860s to establish large, permanent retail and wholesale establishments. Jane Lenz Elder and David J. Weber, eds., *Trading in Santa Fe: John M. Kingsbury's Correspondence with James Josiah Webb, 1853-1861* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1996).

DIARY OF AN OLD HOUSE

Excerpts from the Journals of Charlotte White

Edited by Corinne P. Sze

The last issue of the Bulletin (March 1997) began a series of excerpts from the journals Charlotte White began on July 28, 1959, when she and Boris Gilbertson arrived from Illinois to spend a month's vacation working on their property at 518 Alto Street. In this episode, they complete the first month's stay. The following May they will return to stay. Charlotte's present-day comments are in brackets.

August 13, 1959

The sheep herder is with us again. When he is here, he really works but certainly not pleasant to have around. Got another lead on a man for adobe work. Now to start trying to find him, through brother, cousins, and so forth.

August 16, 1959 (Sunday)

Today we have a jack hammer. Mr. Roybal next door works for the city and he got a hold of a city one and is helping Boris crack the stuff up. Why they put such thick steps in, I can't imagine. It's a terrific job and hope Boris doesn't overdo. He's really remarkable to be able to throw that big thing around and know where and how to throw it. And also to do the beautifully delicate drawings he does, amazing. *[When we came, there were narrow cement steps that Bill Lumpkins had put in up to the front door. We couldn't have that, so Boris is taking them out.]*

Last night we took three children to the circus. I don't know who had the most fun—the children watching the circus or us watching the children watching the circus. We had cotton candy and bal-



Charlotte White

Photographer, Jesse Monfort Bopp

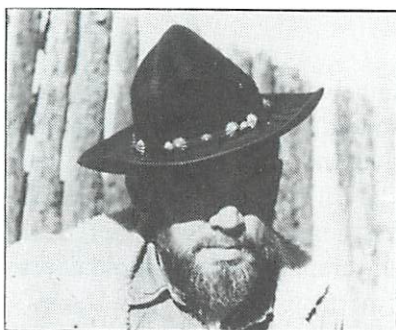
loons. There were lots of animals, for which I'm glad. The most wonderful to me were the trained chimps, which I howled over. Duchess liked the elephants best.

The adobes are almost where we want them. The windows are sealed with mortar and new lintels. Boris has really been working like an ox. It's remarkable how he takes it.

August 18, 1959

We have a good floor; *that* we know. The jack hammer wouldn't even break it up. Just made little holes in it. It's poured concrete over wire mesh. We had to tunnel under it and then break it to get our *zaguan*. The front is going to look quite different with the big drive [*up to the door*], which the sheep herder and Boris are digging out. What a job and what mess.

[That's the cement floor between the bathroom and the east wall of the front room. Lumpkins had created an inside hallway with a plasterboard partition that continued the south wall of the front room across to the bathroom, which he had added. This arrangement took away the zaguan feeling. We took the partition and floor out. Later we took dirt out. The whole thing was unbelievable.]



Boris Gilbertson
Courtesy Charlotte White

Boris made a little piñon "stove" in the patio to cook on, cheaper than charcoal, and I think I'll like it better. It is easier to regulate the heat. *[This was just a rock enclosed area for a fire.]* We only have about ten more days here. How quickly a month has gone and not nearly as much done as hoped. Hate leaving it. Hope it won't be long before we get back.

August 19, 1959

Signed my will today leaving everything to Boris. He is to distribute some of my personal belongings as I desire. It's simpler and cheaper that way.

Today I can't use the bathroom for our sheep herder is tunneling and breaking up the floor in the front [*hallway*]. It will be a feat to

even use it when it's available. Need a ladder. Love my piñon stove, and it's so nice to have the campfire going at night. Got some marshmallows; the children have never roasted them.

Never have we seen so many men looking for work and yet so hard to find anyone to work. They're all like Mike, I guess. They love the idea of earning some money but not willing to do anything for it. Ambrosio is really a good worker, poor guy. It's heavy work, too. Was offered \$35,000 yesterday for the place when it's finished—not interested.

August 22, 1959

Siempre mañana. Still seem to be always waiting for something to get done. Now it's to have a mountain of sand, stones, and cement hauled away by Rios wood yard where I buy two laundry tubs of wood for sixty cents. It would be wonderful fill, but of course now no one wants it.

The front is really beginning to look elegant. It looks so tall and grand. The idea of "friend" Delfino Montoya wanting \$5.00 per hour has spurred us on. That was with Montoya's brother-in-law as helper which we certainly don't need. We told him no, and Boris will do it himself. There! Since I have no pen and the candle is insufficient light, I'll wait until *mañana*.

August 24, 1959

How quickly the days go by, unbelievable. Such a busy place this is. Rios never did show up, so told him not to bother. Got the Senas. A thirteen-year-old boy drives the truck and helps his very handsome grandfather—I'm sure he isn't fifty, if that. Our helper is bringing adobes inside for safe keeping through the winter. Boris busy laying up adobes and I'm still scraping paint from old doors.

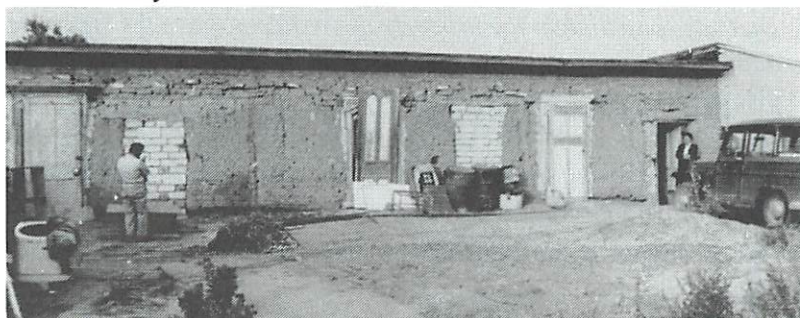
Took my little girls shopping this morning. Yesterday was Duchy's birthday so told her I'd get her a fancy hat to wear to church. All the little girls have them and they look like birthday cakes. Also one for Juanita—I won't be here for her birthday. When we get to town, we discover without a doubt that a petticoat would be much more exciting, so they chose red tulle with red ribbons and bells around the bottom—very pleased.

Ginger and Charles are coming for dinner—our first dinner guests. Grilled hamburgers, salad and fruit, roasted marshmallows. Saved enough for hungry mouths. Four of the children were here for their first marshmallow roast. What fun!

Got some DDT this morning. Think there must be bedbugs in the walls. [They loved me; they didn't even touch Boris.] When we first came I slept on the low cot and every night I'd get bites, so I changed to the high cot. No bites, nor did Boris on the low one. Last night they found me on the high one.. Anyway I poured DDT around the floor and on my cot legs. They can live for years evidently without nourishment. Wonder if that's it. There was no one here for years. Anyway, it was awful.

August 25, 1959

Another dark day and rain this morning. Boris has taken off to the hills for a few hours; we'll see. He couldn't stand it anymore here, and I can't blame him. He certainly deserves some pleasure and relaxation. Ambrosio bringing adobe in between showers, cleaning bricks when it rains. Had tons, five loads, of stuff hauled away, front and back. Looks much better. Now if the rain will stay away for a few days.



*Work in progress on back wall - Charlotte and faithful Jeep
Courtesy Charlotte White*

August 28, 1959

Getting ready to leave our house. Hate the thought. Got all the adobes inside, the windows boarded up, the front cleaned up, gravel in the drive. How different and grand it looks. We'll work and live for the day when we return with bag, baggage, and Mau-Mau [my parrot].

August 29, 1959

6 a.m.. leaving. Our children came to say good-bye last night, and as they left in unison said, "God be with you on your journey." I detected tears in their voices. My eyes had some. *Hasta la vista.*

(TO BE CONTINUED)

SATURDAY DOCENTS AT EL ZAGUAN

Jim McBride, Docent Coordinator

Last summer marked the third year the Foundation has been able to provide docents at El Zagan from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays during July and August. A handful of volunteers welcomed visitors to our historic home and garden. They talked about James L. Johnson's residence, the garden and territorial Santa Fe during the early years. Some of the questions our docents are asked give an excellent idea of the range of interests the visitors to El Zagan have. The most asked questions, and our answers, were compiled during the eight weeks by the docents. Most of them will speak for themselves.

What are those two big trees that give the garden so much shade? *Horse chestnut trees, which are said to be over 150 years old.*

What does El Zagan mean? *It is Spanish for covered passageway or hall connecting rooms or different parts of buildings. Mrs. Dietrich, who bought the property in the 1920s, gave the structure its name for the long hall that extends from the garden porch to the east placita.*

How old is this place? *We do not know exactly. When James Johnson purchased some of the land 1854 it had a house and corral on it. He added more rooms and land over the next twenty years.*

What are those trees just inside the entrance called? *They are called salt cedars.*

Do you have a public rest room? *No, but we allow our visitors to use the small toilet in the building during these guided tours.*

Where can we get something cold to drink? *Celebrations restaurant is just half a block up Canyon Road, on the same side as El Zagan.*

Is any of the furniture original? *At present the Foundation is attempting to determine if some of Mrs. Dietrich's furnishings are on the property. We know her sister, Dorothy Stewart, one of the artists who lived on Canyon Road in the 1920s and 1930s, decorated some furniture for her. Our current apartment tenants furnish their spaces to their individual taste.*

Did other Santa Fe merchants or businessmen live on Canyon Road? *As far as we know, the majority of the business leaders in the city lived closer to the downtown area, many of them of Palace Avenue..*

How did James Johnson furnish the house? *Again, we do not know exactly. The house probably was furnished with household items of his period, which could have been Victorian. We can guess that there was some local Spanish style furniture, since it was both the custom and because his wife was from Mexico. Unfortunately we do not have photos of his household furnishings. We know from the way Mr. Johnson frequently remodeled his store building on the Plaza that he liked to have the latest things, at least for his business. He was reported to have the first metal roof in New Mexico on his store.*

When was the garden planted? *Records indicate a garden on the west during Johnson's occupation. What kind of garden we are not sure. Stephanie Davis recreated our current garden in 1990 in the style of a turn-of-the-century Victorian garden.*

When was the use of the garden *acequia* discontinued? *In the 1960s it was deactivated.*

How can I rent an apartment? *Stop to see our Executive Director during the week to get all the information on the apartments and to be included on the waiting list.*

How long is the waiting list? *Very long!*

Does the cat belong to the building? *Yes, Mischka is as much a part of El Zagan as was her owner, Sylvia Loomis, a resident since 1947 who died in 1994. Foundation staff and tenants attend to the cat now.*

Are there any farm animals on the adjoining lands? *As far as we know only cats and dogs live around El Zagan...and a pet pig, which resides in the house to the west of our property.*

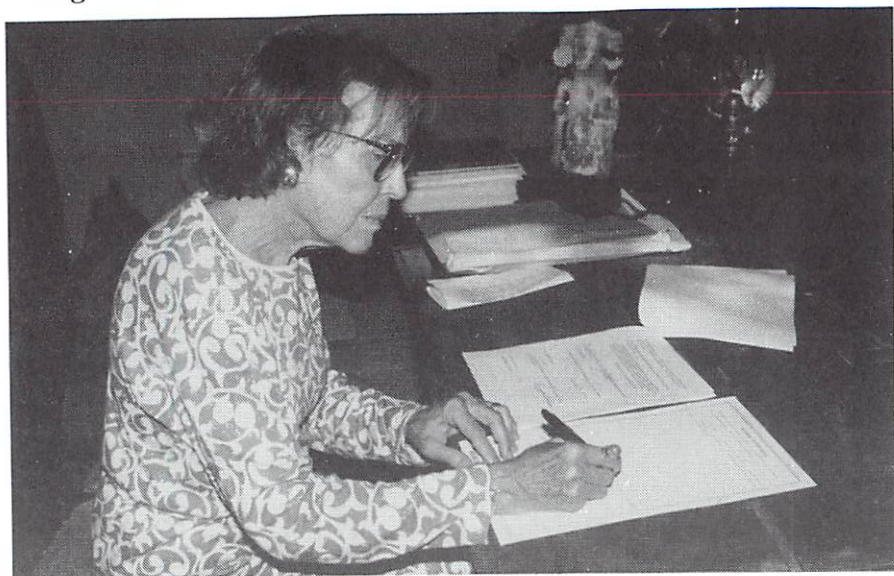
What is the name of that flower over there in the garden? *Here, have a garden layout sheet, which shows where the different flowers are located.*

Can we sit on the porch in the swing or chairs? *Yes, you may. Enjoy!*

This year's Saturday Docents were Charlotte White, Greg Walke, Don and Robin Brown, Lynne Andrews, Joyce Remke, Janet Kimberling and Lois Snyderman.

IN MEMORY

This last year the HSFF lost two members of dedication and great worth. It was considered only appropriate that such special friends be recognized in this issue.



JULIE PALTENGHE DOUGHERTY *Photographer, Hope Curtis
Randy Bell, Past HSFF Chair*

Julie Paltenghe Dougherty was born on December 27, 1925. On her mother's side, Julie was a tenth generation New Mexican and on her father's side, a third. She attended the Loretto Academy, ultimately graduating from the Radford School in El Paso, Texas. She went on to receive degrees from Vassar, Columbia University, and Manhattanville College. Julie returned to New Mexico in 1982, where she established residence with her husband, William Holmes Dougherty of Santa Fe. In addition to her many other interests and activities, Julie traveled extensively in the Himalayas of Nepal and Pakistan.

Julie was an active HSFF Board member from 1992 to 1996, and chair of the Foundation's Board from 1995, and served throughout her board membership as chair of the Education Committee. She will be remembered by members for her dedication, interest in historic issues, and service to the Foundation her grace, humor, and energy. Shortly before her untimely death, she told me her involvement with the HSFF was one of her most rewarding and cherished memories. She will be greatly missed by her friends and family.

JORDIE CHILSON

Charlotte White, HSFF Member

Jordie Chilson and I were not close friends. Now that she is gone (alas, too often this is true) I realize our relationship was very warm, trusting and meaningful. She gave of herself sincerely and faithfully in many ways. Her volunteer work in the Wheelwright Museum Shop, the book store of the Palace of the Governors, and her intense contribution to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation as a board member for twelve years were all indications of how dedicated she was to all she did. The new wing of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture contains a replica Navajo hogan, which was funded from Jordie's estate. As chair for the HSFF Membership Committee her efforts resulted in the largest membership the Foundation ever had. Her death on February 26, 1997 is a loss to us all. We will miss you, Jordie.



Charlotte White and Jordie Chilson
Photographer, Hope Curtis

SANTA FE ARCHITECTURE--1881

Marilyn Manges, Research Volunteer

This project began with a small article in the Foundation Newsletter requesting volunteers to search back issues of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* for architectural references. The Research Committee had long been frustrated by the lack of complete indexing for the Santa Fe newspapers. Since I had some experience in using newspapers for historical research, I volunteered with a few other individuals. Each of us took a year that was not indexed, read microfilm and recorded our findings.

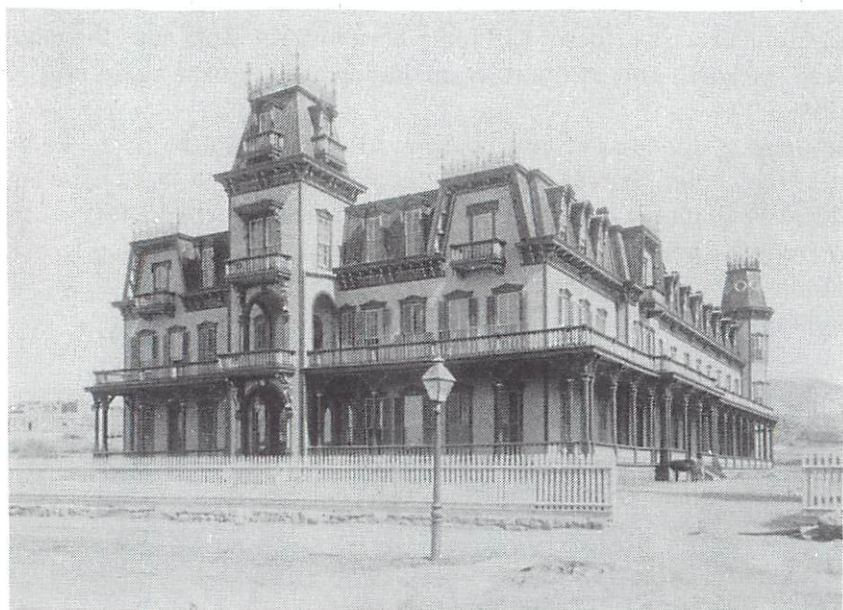
Although many interesting references were found, for a variety of reasons this phase of the project flagged. Later Corinne Sze called me when she needed the source of an undated clipping in the Foundation files regarding El Zagan. From force of habit, I kept notes on architectural items found during the search. The next request was to unearth the obituary of James Johnson, owner of what was to become El Zagan. Due to a misunderstanding, I began searching the year 1881. I could not find the obituary, but my architectural notes became so copious that I used a computer program to sort them. At some point a discussion with Corinne revealed the fact that I was working on the wrong year. Later the obituary (undated) was found in a scrapbook belonging to one of the Johnson descendants.

Too late to stop, the index was completed. The wrong year proved to be an interesting one, both historically and architecturally, and provided a revealing glimpse of a changing city. Building was the order of the day and the editor of the newspaper gloated as the city became more "American."

With some exceptions, Santa Fe was a town of "Wild West" fiction in 1881. Saloons and billiard halls outnumbered churches and schools. There were still shootings on the Plaza. Indian bands were a threat to travelers and desperados were not unknown. One could travel to Chicago by train but Espanola was served by stagecoach.

Architecturally, most of the city looked as it had before Territorial days. The typical building was a one-story adobe with a flat roof (which often leaked). Streets were not paved. There was a serious sewage problem on Water Street (formerly the Rio Chiquito). Although there were a few scattered gas lights, the only area with permanent gas lighting was Fort Marcy, the buildings and grounds, which occupied a good share of the central part of the city.

The Plaza was the center of activity with the governor in residence at the Palace and with several stores marketing merchandise acquired from "throughout the world." The Alhambra Saloon and the Exchange Hotel contributed to the Plaza's ambience. There were shops on San Fran-



Palace Hotel, Washington Avenue c.1885
Courtesy New Mexico No.10763

cisco Street near the Plaza, but lower San Francisco abounded with saloons. Upper Palace Avenue was the gentrified part of the city.

In spite of the *New Mexican* boosterism, these were not good days economically for Santa Fe. In size it was fourth in the territory, below Albuquerque, Las Vegas and Taos. The advent of the railroad resulted in a smattering of tourism, including a group of Austrian counts, who were traveling to visit the Wild West. There was also an influx of investors, most of whom appeared to be interested in mining.

Nevertheless, a minor building boom was taking place. Spiegelberg's new store on the south side of the Plaza and the Palace Hotel on Washington Street, as well as the Staab residence on Palace Avenue, were built in Anglo-American styles, much to the delight of the *New Mexican*. Although the Cathedral was not completed, churches reflecting the influence of the eastern part of the country flourished. A new Episcopal

church was nearly completed on Palace Avenue. The Presbyterian church on Grant was remodeled with a new addition. The new Methodist chapel on West San Francisco resembled a small church in New England and the Congregationalists started to build a similar structure. English-speaking Catholics remodeled the Guadalupe church. In addition to this ecclesiastic construction, there was some development both near the depot and on the south side of the river, including a brick yard and a cracker factory.

In general, the goal of city boosters to make Santa Fe look like the rest of the United States was not yet accomplished, but there were significant beginnings. For those interested in learning the history of the city from the perspective of newspaper coverage, volunteering to help continue this project with the Research Committee can be fun as well as enlightening.



*Spiegelberg Brothers Store - south side Plaza
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No.150156*

ORPHANS, GHOSTS, AND SEVEN BURROS: Life in an HSSF plagued property

Property Owners and Corinne P. Sze

In the second of an ongoing series, the owners of the Bronson Cutting House spoke on a summer evening about what it has meant to them to own a historic house in Santa Fe. As we sat before the brick fireplace in Cutting's spacious living room, it was hard to resist thinking of the history that was made in this home, which Cutting completed in 1911. The wealthy scion of a prominent New York family, Cutting had come to Santa Fe the previous year seeking relief from a ruinous case of tuberculosis. Like so many in the same predicament, he recovered and made Santa Fe his permanent home. In 1912 he bought the Santa Fe New Mexican, and at the time of his premature death in a 1935 plane crash, had just been reelected to represent New Mexico in the United States Senate. After his death the house was purchased from the heirs by Cutting's long-time associate, Jesus Maria Baca, to whom he had willed the New Mexican. Subsequently the house was used as an orphanage by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and as the home and office of a physician and then a lawyer. The present owners and their teenage son became the latest residents of the Bronson Cutting House about five years ago. At their request names are not used.

Q: How did you come to be in Santa Fe and in this house?

He: We moved here from Washington, D.C., to fulfill a dream of living in Santa Fe. I had first come to the area about 25 years ago as a consultant to the Navajo tribe. I knew then that I would live here. The land is very, very spiritual for me.

She: We were looking for a traditional adobe. The real estate agent suggested we look at this house, although it didn't fit what we said we wanted. The house has a special feeling; I can't really explain it in words, but that's what attracted us to it.

Q: What specifically did you like about the house?

She: The living room; the lighting at dusk is magical. Also the privacy and the fact that we can walk to the Plaza.

Q: Did its history influence your choice?

He: We were interested in it before we knew anything about the history. The realtor didn't make a big deal out of its being historic, just pre-

sented that as something we might like to know. She did give us the Foundation's *Bulletin* on the house and an album of historic photos. The Foundation's plaque had been removed.

She: What she told us only piqued our interest, but we really bought the house because we liked it. Only later did the history really mean anything to us. We had never heard of Bronson Cutting.

Q: Did you have any qualms about buying a historic house in Santa Fe?

He: We realized from living in Washington there could be considerable responsibilities. We had never owned a historic house before, but we weren't worried about it. We didn't think to ask and the agent didn't mention any restrictions or obligations that historic status might entail in Santa Fe. We didn't find out that this was a review area for the city until we hired Sharon Woods as a contractor.

Q: Was it a problem for you when you realized there would be limitations on what you could do with the property?

He: Fortunately we did not anticipate any exterior changes in mind, but I did need to convert a 1950s garage into an office for my practice. When Sharon started talking about all of the requirements we asked

her who she represent. We didn't realize till then she was the chairman of the city's Historic Design Review Board. Sharon was totally straight about everything. I had never dealt with anything like this before; some of it seemed arbitrary, but I came to appreciate the process—in part, because of my growing respect for this house.

Q: How did you become interested in the history of the house?



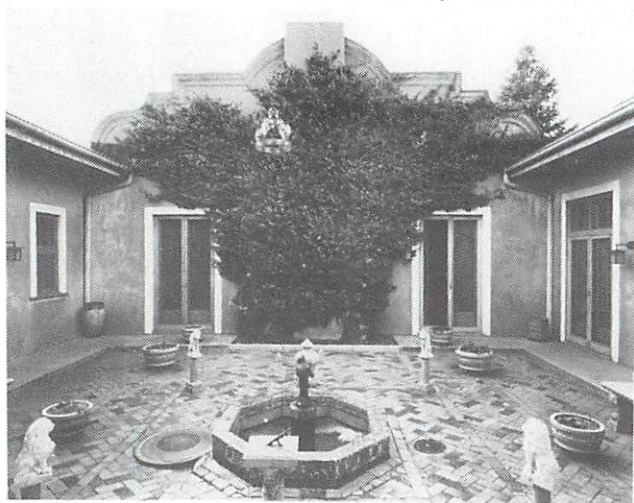
*Bronson M. Cutting in front of his house
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No. 51499*

He: A friend gave us a recent biography of Cutting by Richard Lowitt. At first I wasn't really that interested in reading the book, but I perused it for information about our house. Being from Washington, D.C., we had been surrounded by the world of politics all our lives. But as I looked through the book I realized that this man was something special, and I became fascinated by his life and by him as a person.

She: Also, we began to meet people who knew about Cutting or had been to the house when it was an orphanage, or to see the doctor or the lawyer who had their offices here at one time.

Q: What especially impressed you about Cutting?

He: Of course, he rose high enough in politics during his time in Washington to be offered the Vice Presidency under Herbert Hoover, and the Secretary of Interior by



*Cutting House inside patio and fountain
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No. 47779*

FDR. But what really impressed me were his principles and how he stuck with them. He sponsored the Philippine Independence bill, helped found the American Legion, championed the rights of the disabled, and chastised FDR's public works programs as too conservative. He did more than anyone

else at the time to enfranchise Hispanics in the state. It seems to me that he lived his values and even spent his own money in support of them. One example was his sponsorship of Hispanic kids to go to college. Through the book, I come to admire his character immensely; psychologically he is interesting to me as a character study of functional narcissism, a narcissist who learned to make it work.

Q: Did the house hold any other surprises for you?

She: For a house of its size and expense, the detail work doesn't seem as finely done as you might expect. For example, the brickwork on the

fireplace is not fully consistent and the windows aren't centered. The plank doors seem too rustic. I don't know if this reflects the state of the building craft out here then, economic restraints on Cutting's part, or perhaps just a conscious informality.

Also, there is a mystery about the drainage system for the patio and the fountain. It is still intact and works, but where does the water go? No one has a clue. There are no pipes in the basement.



*Interior living room of Bronson Cutting residence
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico No. 47771*

He: The realtor said that the manufacturer would be interested in the 1950s boiler in the basement as a museum piece and would give us a new one in exchange. It was true! They replaced it, and later a local plumber reported that he saw the old thing clunking away at a trade show.

She: After we were living here about a month, the ghost of the house came to me in a dream and said, "I'm friendly; the house is O.K." A few months later a psychic friend bumped into a ghost in the hallway. About once a week the hall lights, which are on a sensor switch that makes them go on automatically when someone enters the room, turn on at night for no apparent reason.

Q: Have there been any problems or inconveniences in owning the house?

He: There were no hidden problems, nothing beyond what you would expect with an old house like wiring, plumbing, and the like. It's a good house, not drafty, with a lot of passive solar.

She: The first week we were here, a very strange thing happened. My husband was out of town, and our son was out with friends. There was nothing on the windows yet, and there I was alone doing dishes on a summer night, when the door opened. I turned to see a strange woman standing in the doorway. She announced that she knew we were in the house, but Don Miller (a previous owner) had sold it to her. "I have the deed," she said, "and you have to leave." She kept saying the same

thing over and over. Finally I got her to come outside with me and I suggested that I would get in touch with her in the morning. With that she left. The policeman who answered my call was skeptical. Two hours later they picked up a woman in a downtown hotel with a similar story. Was I relieved!

Q: What changes have you made to the house and has its history influenced your decisions?

He: We haven't made many really—nothing structural and nothing on the exterior of the house, which we loved when we bought it. We did modernize the kitchen and added a ceramic tile mural by Pedro Romero. We put indoor shutters on the windows in the living room. There is a stack of original interior doors in the basement, so obviously there has been a lot of opening up to suit modern tastes. Also, we put in the fountain that is at the center of the patio. The one Cutting had was long gone.

She: Early on when we were fixing the kitchen, we considered taking out a wall. It took our son to remind us that this was a historic house and we shouldn't make such a drastic change. Our sensibilities have grown as we have lived in the house, and we wouldn't want to make any major changes now, even where they are allowed.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone who owns or might contemplate owning a historic house in Santa Fe?

She: Be prepared for it to impact you in ways you can't predict. Respect its history. A historic house imposes its soul as well as its history in special ways.

Q: Have you any future plans for the house?

He: We are intrigued with the name Cutting gave the house, *Los Siete Burros* (The Seven Burros)—with its political resonances. The realtor had told us about the name, but we only realized its implications when we read the biography. The “burros” were Cutting and his closest associates, his “kitchen cabinet.” I want to restore the name to the house, perhaps by having a sign made for the outside. It is important to us to keep this link with history alive. Can you imagine the political plotting and scheming that went on here?

Yet we have hardly met a anyone in Santa Fe, not connected with the house or a historian, who has heard of Bronson Cutting. It seems a shame to us that he seems to be forgotten. I want to do more research to

get people together who knew the house and collect their personal histories to keep with the house. To start we are planning to record an interview with a neighbor who has been here at least since the 1950s. He was in the house many times and knows lots of stories. Also, we received a letter from Cutting's great nephew, and we plan to follow up on that. It would be fun to have a party and bring all of these people together.

She: A woman came to the door and woke my son who was in the house alone. She said she thought she had grown up in the house when it was an orphanage. He didn't quite know what to do and didn't get a name. Unfortunately, she never called back. Now we know enough that we want to talk to these people.

Recently an electrician extending the line had to get through a basement crawl space so low he could barely make it. He discovered that the crawl space has been used as a dump during construction. It might be interesting to look into digging that out.

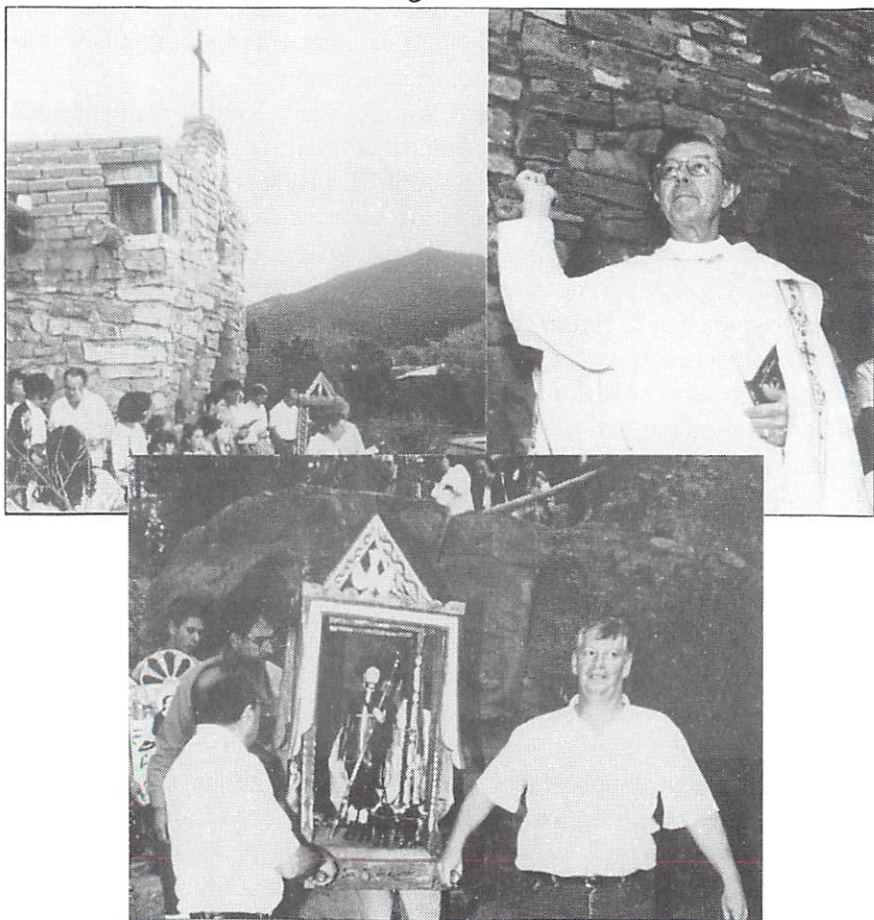
He: We want to honor the history and tradition of this unique man by keeping the history of the house alive. We have a sense of responsibility and respect for this house that has only grown as we have lived here and learned about its history. We feel like keepers of this little corner of history.

The Bronson M. Cutting House was plaqued by the Foundation in 1987, and its history published in the September 1988 Bulletin of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation.

SAN ISIDRO FEAST DAY

Eleanor Bové, Board member

On Thursday, May 15, 1997, the community of Cristo Rey Church came together to honor San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers, on his feast day. Father Lucero, Pastor of Cristo Rey Church, led the annual procession, pausing to pray at the headgate of the Acequia Madre. From the beautifully restored *capilla*, which sits on a high perch on Cerro Cordo Road, Father Lucero blessed the fields. The old was mixed with the new as Carlos and Ruth Martinez introduced an old hymn and *alabados* to San Isidro were sung.



Services at San Isidro capilla Cerro Gordo Road

Photographer, Richard Gonzales

HISTORIC PRESERVATION EASEMENTS COME TO HSFF

Tracey Connor, Board Member

In 1995 the Historic Santa Fe Foundation helped shepherd the Cultural Properties Preservation Easement Act (the "Act") through the state legislature. The Act enables private citizens to establish historic preservation easements to protect historic structures, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes and traditional cultural properties. The Foundation has established a program to hold, monitor and enforce historic preservation easements. Because this program is new to New Mexico, the Foundation is working with property owners, appraisers, accountants and city planners to educate and assist in understanding the benefits of these easements and the process of creating them.

A historic preservation easement is a *voluntary* legal agreement made by a property owner to protect the unique historic resources on property by restricting the type and amount of development that may take place. Each easement's restrictions are tailored to the particular property and to the interests of the individual owner. The easement creates permanent legal assurances that the property, even as it passes from owner to owner, will retain its unique characteristics.

The specific rights a property owner forgoes when granting a historic preservation easement are spelled out in each easement document. The owner and the Foundation identify the rights and restrictions on use that are necessary to protect the property. The Foundation has the right under the easement agreement to protect the property. The property periodically is inspected to ensure compliance with the easement restrictions and enforcement of the restrictions in the event they are violated.

When a historic preservation easement is granted, the property owner retains title, and can use, sell, or leave the property to the family. Future owners of the property must abide by the easement's restrictions. The easement is recorded at the county recorder's office so that all future owners and lenders will learn about the easement restrictions.

If the easement donor wishes to qualify for an income tax deduction, the federal tax laws require some form of public access or public viewing be available. If the property is an occupied residence, the public access requirement may be satisfied by allowing the Foundation to conduct two guided tours each year and permit people affiliated with educational, professional or historical societies to study the property.

The term of an easement may be perpetual, or for a specified number of years. Only gifts of perpetual easements can qualify a donor for income and estate tax benefits. Easements may be amended by agreement between the property owner and the Foundation, provided that amendment is consistent with the purposes of the easement and does not impair the unique qualities the easement is designed to protect. Easements may be terminated if there is a change in conditions surrounding the property which makes the preservation purpose of the easement impossible to achieve.

The property owner who donates a historic preservation easement may be eligible for income and estate tax benefits. The donation of an easement is a tax-deductible charitable gift, provided the easement is perpetual, designed to preserve an historically or culturally important land area or building, and donated to a qualified organization. To determine the value of the easement donation, the owner has the property appraised both at its fair market value without the easement restrictions and at fair market value with the easement restrictions. The difference between these two appraised values is the easement value.

An easement may reduce estate taxes. If the property owner has restricted the property by a perpetual historic preservation easement before his or her death (or by will), the property must be valued in the estate at its restricted value. To the extent that the restricted value is lower than the unrestricted value, the value of the estate will be less, and the estate will thus be subject to a lower estate tax. For some property owners, these tax benefits may be sufficient to allow the property to be retained in the family rather than sold to pay estate tax bills.

Historic preservation easements generally do not reduce the assessed value for property tax purposes, so do not have a negative impact on the property tax base. Studies have shown property adjacent to or near easement-protected property may increase in value.

Because the Foundation will incur monitoring and enforcement costs in holding and monitoring easements, its policy is to ask each easement donor to make a stewardship contribution to cover these potential costs. This easement endowment provides assurance to the easement donor that the property can be protected and preserved in perpetuity.

Please call the Foundation office at 983-2567 for more information, or to discuss the possibility of granting an easement on your property.

FOURTH-GRADERS TOUR SANTA FE

Susan Mayer Board Chairman, Volunteer Tour Guide

“I learned that the Cathedral was adobe.” “People used to live in the Plaza.” “I learned about La Conquistadora. She has 200 dresses!” “I studied architectural styles and saw a lot of old buildings.” These are some of the comments from Santa Fe fourth-graders who participated in Historic Santa Fe Foundation-sponsored tours this year. The tours were organized by Meriom Kastner and Lois Snyderman and led by a number of knowledgeable volunteers.

Since its publication in 1988, *We're So Lucky to Live in Santa Fe* has been distributed annually to local fourth grade classes. The book is written and illustrated by former Historic Santa Fe Foundation Board members Louann Jordan and Edward Gonzales with teacher Ava Fullerton. Tours designed to accompany the book and to enrich the students' experience augment the information presented in the publication. These tours provide a first-hand experience for students to see examples of the architectural styles and history discussed in the text of *We're So Lucky to Live in Santa Fe*. The leaders of the tours are volunteers and experienced docents at the Palace of the Governors, who are experts in the subject of the history of Santa Fe.

The tour exposes children to the stories and the buildings that compose the rich and varied tale of the City Different. Students convene on the Plaza, the traditional center of culture and commerce, and a site where many important examples of various architectural styles can be viewed. The group then proceeds to explore significant landmark buildings such as the Palace of the Governors, St. Francis Cathedral, and La Fonda Hotel. Through stories of the people and the buildings, students learn about the significance of these places in their city.

By exposing the youth of Santa Fe to their unique environment, the Historic Santa Fe Foundation hopes to instill a sense of pride in their ancient community. During the 1996-97 school year, 656 copies of *We're so Lucky to Live in Santa Fe* were distributed to city schools, 310 students participated in the tour, and 15 public and private schools were involved in the program. The Historic Santa Fe Foundation wishes to expand the tours in our continuing effort to promote interest in historic preservation among the young people of Santa Fe.

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Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month unless otherwise scheduled.

THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

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