

BULLETIN *HSF*

OF THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

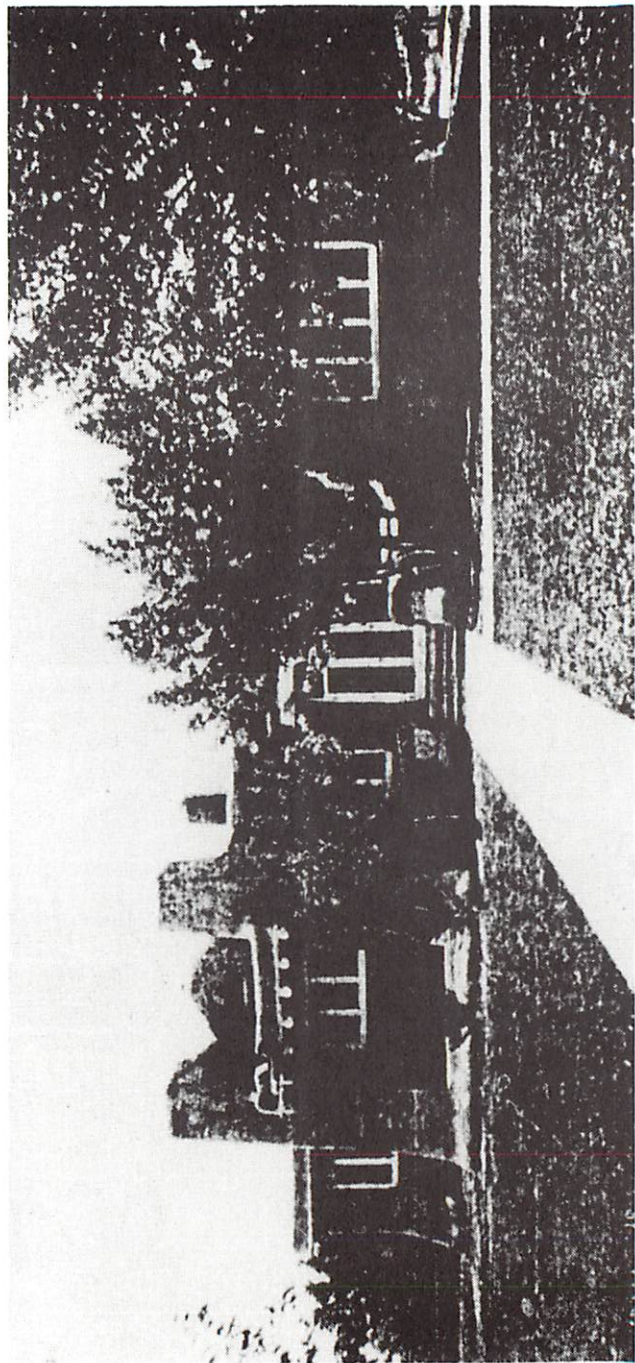
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Photo by Claudia Smith-Porter

Frank Leonard Smith House, 1992



RESIDENCE FOR MR. LEONARD SMITH, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO
I. H. RAPP, W. M. RAPP AND A. C. HENDRICKSON, ARCHITECTS ::

THE WESTERN ARCHITECT
JANUARY :: :: 1924

PLATE THIRTEEN

THE FRANK LEONARD SMITH HOUSE

334 Garcia Street

Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

The firm of I.H. Rapp, W.M. Rapp and A.C. Hendrickson, Architects, designed this Spanish-Pueblo Revival style residence for Leonard Smith in 1920-21 on lots 3, 4, and 5 of the Schumann Addition.¹ Constructed of hollow tile covered with pink stucco, it is a rare, relatively unaltered, early example of Spanish-Pueblo Revival used for a new home and the only residence of that style in Santa Fe presently attributed to the Rapps.² Primarily engaged in designing public buildings, the Rapp firm, under the leadership of Isaac Hamilton Rapp, had been responsible for Santa Fe's first commercial and civic buildings in what was then called the "Santa Fe Style." Their early designs, based on Pueblo mission structures, had demonstrated the applicability of traditional forms to modern functions and thereby were of critical importance to the acceptance of the "new-old" style.

In the 1870s, John G. Schumann had purchased property located south of De Vargis Street

and west of Garcia, including the Bandelier House,³ in four separate transactions.⁴ Schumann was a businessman who owned considerable property in Santa Fe, including the Schumann Building on San Francisco Street at the southwest corner of the Plaza. Here was located his boot and shoe store, which he sold to Charles Haspelmath in 1904 who in turn sold it six years later to his son-in-law, John Pflueger. Although Schumann subdivided the land facing Garcia Street, it remained undeveloped and was sold by his estate after his death in 1917.

Leonard Smith, a wealthy young man from Denver, bought five of Schumann's undeveloped lots, including 2 and 6, from two intermediary owners in September and October of 1920.⁵ The first purchase was made the day after his twenty-first birthday. The following January he married Rosina Bergere,⁶ the daughter of Alfred M. Bergere and Eloisa Luna Otero Bergere. Smith was the grandson of Eban Smith, a Colorado gold mining

millionaire and founder of the First National Bank of Denver. He had come to Santa Fe with his mother who bought a house on Palace Avenue next to the home of Rosina Bergere's sister, May Kenney. The heir to a sizable fortune, he hired the most prominent architect working in Santa Fe to design a reputedly \$20,000 or \$30,000 house to be built while the Smiths honeymooned in New York City. Four years later Rosina Smith was awarded the house in a divorce settlement.⁷ Within a few months Leonard Smith died in Denver, leaving two young chil-

dren in Santa Fe, Rosina and Frank Leonard.⁸

Rosina Bergere's mother was of the old and influential Luna family of Los Lunas. Her brother was the powerful Solomon Luna, a state Republican leader and for more than twenty-five years a member of the Republican National Committee. Another brother, Tranquilino, served as New Mexico's delegate in Congress. Manuel B. Otero, Eloisa's son by her first husband, was the 1924 Republican candidate for governor. Her daughter, Adelina Otero-Warren was the superintendent of schools of Santa Fe County and candidate for Congress in 1922.

After the death of her first husband in a dispute over land titles, Eloisa Luna Otero married Alfred M. Bergere, a young businessman born in 1859 of Italian parents in Liverpool. He had attended Queen's College, London, studied the piano for a possible classical career, and at the age of about sixteen immigrated to New York

Courtesy NM State Archives, SRCA 21236



Bergere Family and friends at the New Mexico building of the 1915 Panama-California Exhibition in San Diego, Cal.

City. Bergere came to New Mexico in 1880 to represent the Albuquerque interests of his cousin's wholesale and retail business. His long and successful career in New Mexico included vast sheep and land interests, realty, and the life and fire insurance business. A fer-



Rosina Bergere

vent Republican, Bergere entered New Mexico politics in 1887 and until his death in 1939 held political offices almost continuously including Clerk of the District Court, secretary to New Mexico's congressman in Washington, D.C., and Register of the U.S. Land Office.⁹ The Bergeres were married in 1886 and eleven years later settled permanently in Santa Fe with their growing family. Maria Rosina was the third youngest of their nine children.¹⁰

In December of 1925 Rosina Bergere Smith married Dr. Robert Osgood Brown, a prominent Santa Fe physician and leader in the state medical community. A native of Chicago and graduate

of Rush Medical College, Brown first came to Santa Fe as a patient at Sunmount Sanatorium, having contracted tuberculosis while serving in the National Guard Medical Corps in Pershing's 1916 pursuit of Pancho Villa across the Mexican border. After recovering he stayed on as a physician at Sunmount and then started a general practice. In the late 1920s he gave up surgery to devote himself exclusively to internal medicine and diseases of the chest. Dr. Brown brought the first electrocardiogram to Santa Fe from Boston, where he had learned to operate it and interpret the data.¹¹ A much valued member of the small Santa Fe medical commu-

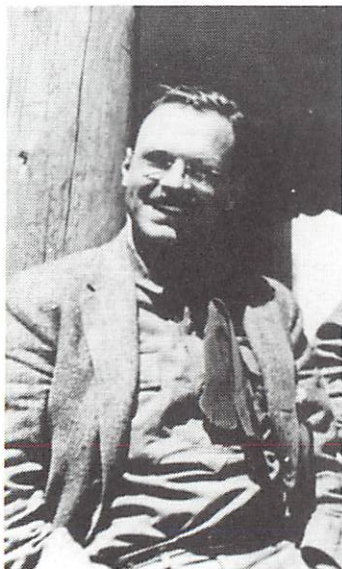
nity, he is remembered still with fondness and gratitude.

In the 1920s and 1930s Dr. Brown was the medical director of St. Vincent's Hospital. He was also a member of the medical staff of the New Mexico State Penitentiary and then attending physician; was active in the field of public health for many years serving on the District Health Board and the Board of Public Welfare; and was elected president of the New Mexico Tuberculosis Association and the New Mexico Medical Society. In 1949 Dr. Brown died suddenly of a heart attack at home at the age of fifty-eight. His practice

was taken over by his nephew, Dr. Bergere Kenney, who had begun practicing with him in 1948 upon returning to Santa Fe after completing his medical training.¹²

The Browns were active in the civic and social life of Santa Fe. Both were participants in the Santa Fe Players and Dr. Brown was a member of the volunteer fire department from 1925. When he tried to resign a year before his death, he was voted honorary membership. Rosina Brown was an early member of the Women's Board of the Museum of New Mexico and served as its president. Much of her life was devoted to the charitable organizations of her church: the St. Francis Altar Society, the Charity Committee, Confradia de la Conquistadora, and the St. Vincent Auxiliary. According to her daughter, she performed innumerable acts of unsung individual generosity toward those in need.¹³

Rosina Brown lived at 334 Garcia Street from 1921 until her death in 1972. She left the house to her two children by Leonard Smith. They sold the property to Dr. S.W. Swedenborg, a psychiatrist; it is presently owned by Gerald Peters.



Courtesy Zelinda Makepeace Douhan

Dr. Robert Osgood Brown at Sunmount Sanatorium, 1917

Photo by Pauline Russell Makepeace

Mrs. Peters is the daughter of Bergere Kenney, Rosina Brown's nephew.

To build a house for himself and his bride, Smith hired the premier architectural firm working in Santa Fe. Though based in Trinidad, Colorado, the Rapps had been working in Santa Fe and throughout New Mexico since the 1890s, designing banks, courthouses, schools, state government buildings, and the like in the popular Classical styles of the period. Commissions in Santa Fe in the first years of the twentieth century included the state capitol, the governor's mansion, the county courthouse, and the First National Bank building on the east side of the Plaza.¹⁴

When in 1912 the Museum of New Mexico staff sought to define a traditional architecture appropriate to Santa Fe and to promote its use through an exhibition of the nascent new-old style, a Rapp building (the Colorado Supply Company in Morley, Colorado) was one of two commercial buildings available as examples.¹⁵ One of the organizers of the exhibition wrote to W.M. Rapp.

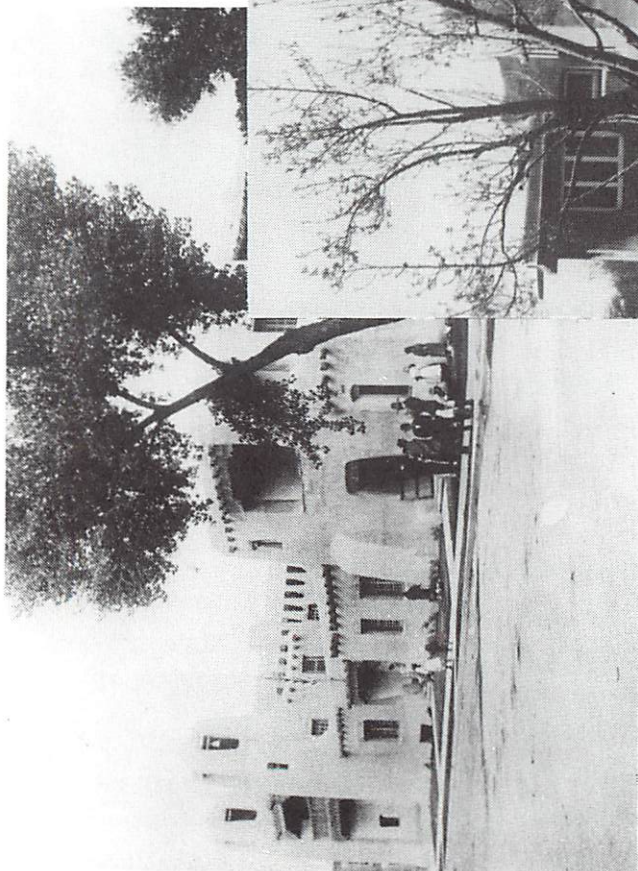
Mr. I.H. Rapp in talking with me . . . [about]

the distinctive architecture we are trying to exploit described a building I had been interested in on seeing it from a Santa Fe train and was kind enough to . . . search his papers for two small cuts showing the Colorado Supply Company's administration building and the pueblo church from which it was designed. Mr. Morley and I consider this the great find of the exhibition, not only because it shows the adaptability of the new-old style for large buildings so well but because it proves to have been the work of your firm.

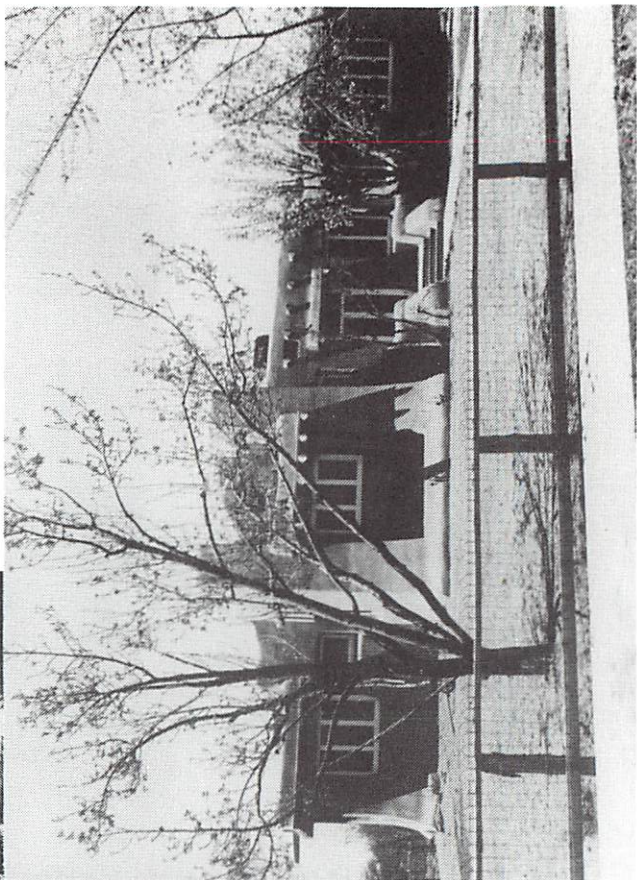
We have named this architecture the Santa Fe style because it originated here and many of its best examples were to be seen here in former times. . . .¹⁶

According to Sylvanus Morley, a building based on the mission church at Acoma had been requested by a Rapp client.

Mr. I.H. Rapp . . . informs me that it was designed at the instance of Mr. C.M. Schenck, presi-



*Below:
Leonard Smith house, ca. 1925
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, #39989*



*Above:
Museum of Fine Arts, 1921
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, #16757*

dent of the Colorado Supply Company, who greatly admired the old church at Acoma and desired to have it reproduced as nearly as possible in the new warehouse. . . .¹⁷

Perhaps as a result of the exhibition, the next year the Rapp firm was asked to design a warehouse in the Santa Fe rail yard for Gross, Kelly and Company using the same "mission" style.¹⁸ In 1914 the firm was responsible for the first of two buildings for Sunmount Sanatorium. The Rapps were then chosen to design the New Mexico Building at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, plans that were used again with some refinement for the Museum of Fine Arts dedicated in 1917. As in the Colorado Supply Company building, the form was derived from Acoma, although in the former the order of the facade had been reversed.

Rapp, Rapp & Hendrickson continued to be the foremost professional architectural firm working in Santa Fe in the new traditional style. Buildings for the School for the Deaf and the Water and Light Company; La Fonda; and a second building at

Sunmount added to the catalogue of successful Revival-style buildings. Then, in the early 1920s Isaac Rapp effectively retired from the field following the deaths of William Morris Rapp and Arthur Hendrickson.¹⁹

Rapp buildings were generally constructed of modern masonry covered with cement stucco generously shaped to represent the contours of adobe. They were characterized by immoderately heavy buttresses and battered walls, rounded corners, curved and thickly rounded parapets, balconies and bell towers, set-back second stories, roof lines of varying heights, and projecting *vigas* and *canales*. The earliest designs developed the possibilities of forms suggested by the Pueblo missions.

The home designed for Leonard Smith was among the last Santa Fe buildings designed by the firm and one of only a few residences in Santa Fe. This late and uncharacteristic venture into domestic architecture appears to echo the organization of the facade of the early Rapp buildings based on Acoma. By this time the Spanish-Pueblo Revival was moving in two directions: the low and linear plan with inset portal derived from Spanish Co-

lonial architecture and championed by the archaeologist Sylvanus Morley, and the Pueblo form with set-back second stories employed by the artist Carlos Vierra.²⁰ Rapp chose neither but seems to have returned to his earlier work by suggesting the Acoma facade adapted to the smaller scale of a home.

Like the Museum of Fine Arts, the main facade of 334 Garcia is divided into three sections (see photos on page 6). A church facade is suggested on the south with heavy tower-like corner buttresses, a curved bell parapet, and an overhang below the parapet supported by *vigas* in the place of a balcony. The inset middle section contains a door flanked by pairs of windows. The north section with four windows completes the rough symmetry without the balancing effect of the upper-story loggia of the museum. The thick buttresses, curved and rounded parapets and soft corners imitating the contours of adobe, the varying roof lines, flat roof, projecting *vigas* and *canales*, inset windows, and exposed lintels define the early Pueblo Revival as formulated by the Rapps.

The single-story house was set back from the street line near

the middle of the original five-lot tract. It is basically rectangular with projecting rooms on the south facade. The windows are groupings of long wooden casements with divided lights. The front door enters directly into the living room, which has exceptionally fine carved corbels. There are three fireplaces in the house, one in the living room and two in bedroom corners. An original two-car garage with exposed hollow tile on the interior is connected to the main house by a wall with an arched gateway leading west. A high, pink stuccoed wall lies along the street line creating a protected front yard.

The house had a number of unusual features including the two-car garage, a full basement, a built-in vacuum cleaner, and copper conduits. An extensive underground sprinkler system was supplied from a well by a pump just inside the front wall. Like the vacuum cleaner, it never really worked. The garage originally had its own grease pit and gas pump befitting Leonard Smith's passion for automobiles. The house has always been pink although perhaps not always in such a forthright shade. The last time it was stuccoed Mrs. Brown

was assured that the color would fade somewhat as it always had before—it never did.²¹

The property included a vacant lot on either side of the house. The north lot contained a watered lawn until the cost became prohibitive. Lilacs along the east side of this lot were grown from slips brought from the Bergere House on Grant Avenue. On the south lot were trees and a formal garden. This property was previously sold to a separate owner and a new house has been built on it.

Alterations have been few and mostly within the period when the Browns lived in the house. About 1930 a fire gutted the bedroom south of the kitchen. A new floor was installed raising the level above that of the hall. At the same time a door on the west wall of the living room was removed and the opening filled. In about 1937 a small study off the dining room was converted to maid's quarters by the addition of a bathroom and closets. The wall along the front property line was built around 1930 by a grateful patient, Dr. Brown's sister whose diabetic child he had treated. In the 1940s large gates into the driveway were removed. After the house was

sold, steps were added at the back northwest corner as an outside entrance for Dr. Swendenborg's patients.²²

The Frank Leonard Smith House is worthy of preservation for associations with families who have influenced Santa Fe's history and for its nearly unaltered architecture, the work of a major figure in the evolution of Spanish-Pueblo Revival. As such it provides matchless and

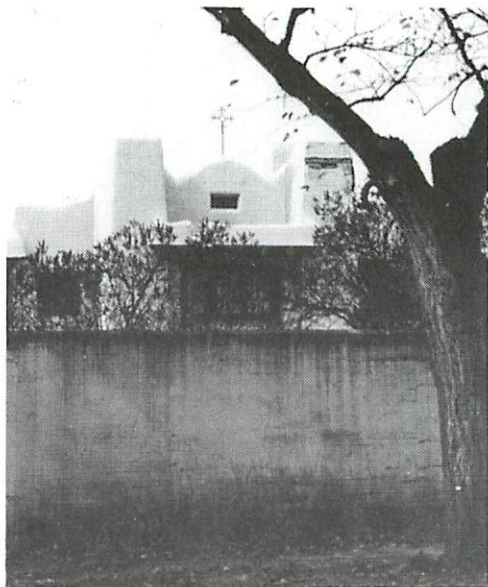


South section of the Smith House front facade, 1992

irreplaceable evidence bearing on the history of the predominant style of twentieth-century Santa Fe.

Notes

1. Rexford Newcomb, A.I.A. "Santa Fe, The Historic and Modern," *The Western Architect*, 35 (January 1924): Plate 13. This article was brought to my attention by Carl D. Sheppard, the author of a monograph on Isaac Hamilton Rapp. Dr. Sheppard learned of it from Dr. Gunther Kohl through a mutual friend.



Photos by Claudia Smith-Porter



Three views of the Smith House, 1992

2. Sheppard interview.
3. Plaqued by the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. *Old Santa Fe Today* 22.
4. Santa Fe County Deeds, G:364-5; H:644-5; H:581-2; J:25.
5. Santa Fe County Deeds, M-3:500; 501
6. *Santa Fe New Mexican* , January 30, 1921.
7. Santa Fe District Court, Civil Cause #10667; Final Decree, February 9, 1924. Santa Fe County Deeds, M-5:356.
8. *SFNM* , April 26, 1924. Eloisa Brown interview.
9. "Autobiography of A.M. Bergere." Unpublished manuscript. Bergere Collection. State Records Center and Archives. *SFNM* , September 7, 1927.
10. The Bergere family home on Grant Ave. has been plaqued by the Foundation. *OSFT* , 26-7.
11. *SFNM*, February 1, 1949. Eloisa Brown interview. Transcript of Kenney interview.
12. Transcript of Kenney interview. *SFNM*, February 1, 1949. *Rocky Mountain Medical Journal*, 230.
13. Eloisa Brown interview. *SFNM*, February 14, 1972
14. A list of documented buildings can be found in Carl Sheppard's study of Isaac Hamilton Rapp, 111-115.
10. The other was El Ortiz, the hotel in Lamy designed by Louis Curtiss of St. Louis.
16. Unsigned letter to William Rapp. October 16, 1912. Loomis/Weiss Collection, Museum of New Mexico Manuscript Collection. Quoted by Sheppard, 108-109.
17. Morley, 299 (note 31).
18. The 1913 Gross, Kelly and Company Warehouse has been plaqued by the Foundation. *OSFT*, 62-63.
19. Sheppard, 15.
20. Wilson, "The Spanish Pueblo Revival Defined," 28. The home Vierra designed at 1002 Old Pecos Trail has been plaqued by the Foundation; *OSFT*, 117. The home Morley renovated on Washington Avenue is no longer plaqued because of inappropriate alterations.
21. Eloisa Brown interview.
22. Ibid.

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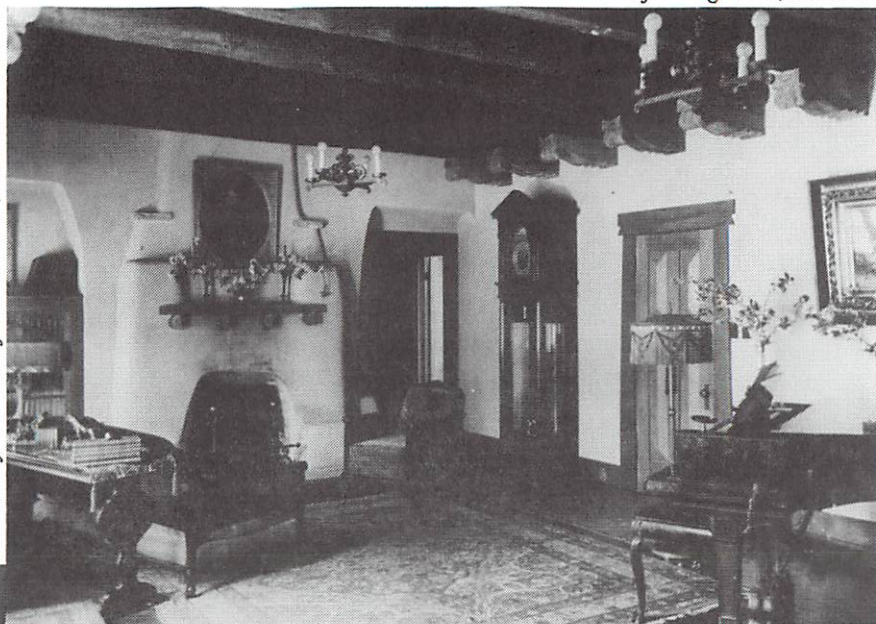
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INTERVIEWS

- Brown, Eloisa. August 23, 1992.
- Sheppard, Dr. Carl. July 12, 1992.
- Smith, Frank Leonard. August 21, 1992.
- Willson, Rosina Smith. August 21, 1992.

Interior Views of the Smith House

Front entrance view of Living room, ca. 1925



Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, #39984



Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, #39982

View of living room from dining room, ca. 1925



Museum of Fine Arts, ca. 1936 Photo by T. Harmon Parkhurst

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS PLAQUED FOR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The Foundation Board voted at its September meeting to plaque the Museum of Fine Arts in conjunction with the Museum's 75th anniversary. The plaquing will be announced at a gala event taking place on Friday, Nov. 12; the presentation will be made on Sunday, Nov. 15, during the early afternoon symposium of Santa Fe artists' descendants. by Rick Davis, who is a former Foundation board member and Frank Springer's grandson.

The building is a significant structure designed and built in 1916-1917 by Rapp, Rapp and Hendrickson, the same firm that designed and built the Frank Leonard Smith House.

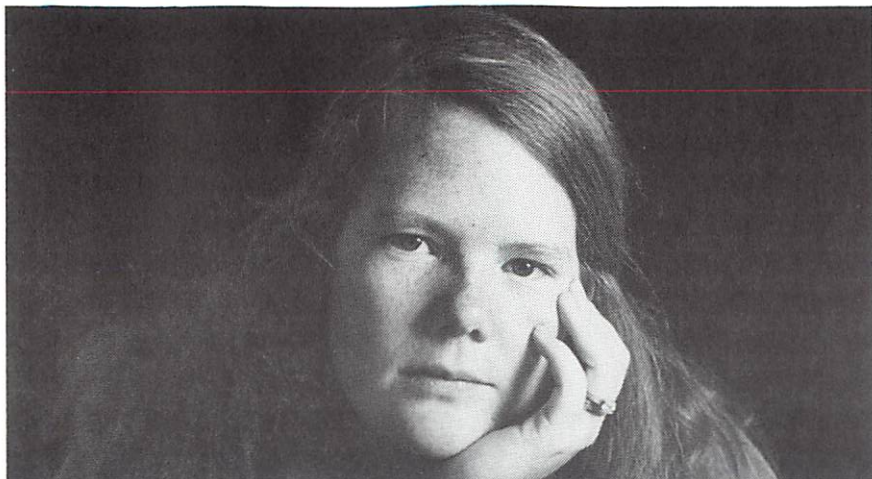
An upcoming Bulletin will feature an article on the Museum of Fine Arts; meanwhile, those who

are interested can see an exhibit Carl Sheppard, art and architectural historian, has prepared on the building's history and origins. It will be displayed in the Museum lobby during the anniversary festivities and for a time thereafter.

According to Board member Laurel Seth, David Turner, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, has said that he cares a great deal about the building and hoped that it could be plaqued for the anniversary.

David Turner said that "Many people ask about the origins of the building and ask if it was once a church or some other type of building. I wanted it plaqued to give the building integrity and credibility as one that was originally designed to be a fine arts museum."

OUR VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS



LAUREL SETH

Laurel Seth is a native Santa Fean whose family ties to Santa Fe go back several generations; her grandparents moved here before statehood. Her love of Santa Fe and its unique architecture drew her to the Foundation early in her life—in the late '70s, she thinks. Growing up in a large, old adobe house on East De Vargas gave Seth an intimate understanding of such structures, so she wrote a book with her sister, Sandy Seth, on their origins and restoration called “Adobe! Homes and Interiors of Taos, Santa Fe and the Southwest.”

She began her Foundation activities by judging Christmas Lighting Contests with Penn LaFarge. After that she helped Jordie Chilson with membership activities. During her initial board term she was member-at-large; her second term

she had the thankless job of treasurer and is now the chair of the Nominations Committee.

Seth also owns an art gallery as did her mother, Jean. She serves on the Museum of New Mexico board, where she is in charge of planning and executing the public events for the 75th anniversary celebration for the Museum of Fine Arts.

Seth and David Turner, Museum director, thought one of the best ways to celebrate the 75th anniversary was to plaque the Museum of Fine Arts building. Since it is not a general policy of the Foundation to plaque public buildings, the board found it an intriguing idea and thought it a celebratory gesture to do so—the Foundation’s way of saying “Happy 75th Anniversary.”

It will be formally plaqued on Sunday, Nov. 15 at 1:00 pm.

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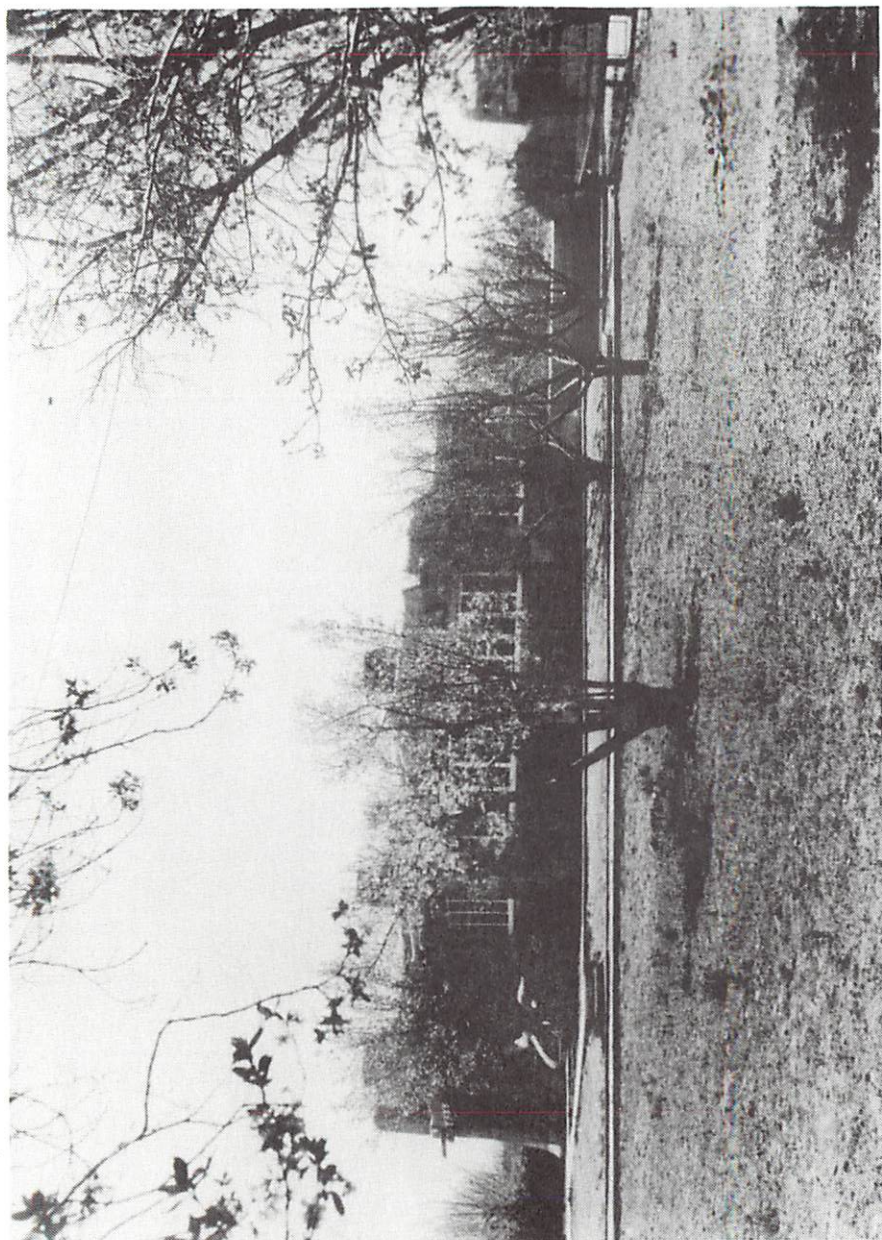
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*Leonard Smith House from north lot, ca. 1925
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, #39987*