

BULLETIN *HSF*

OF THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

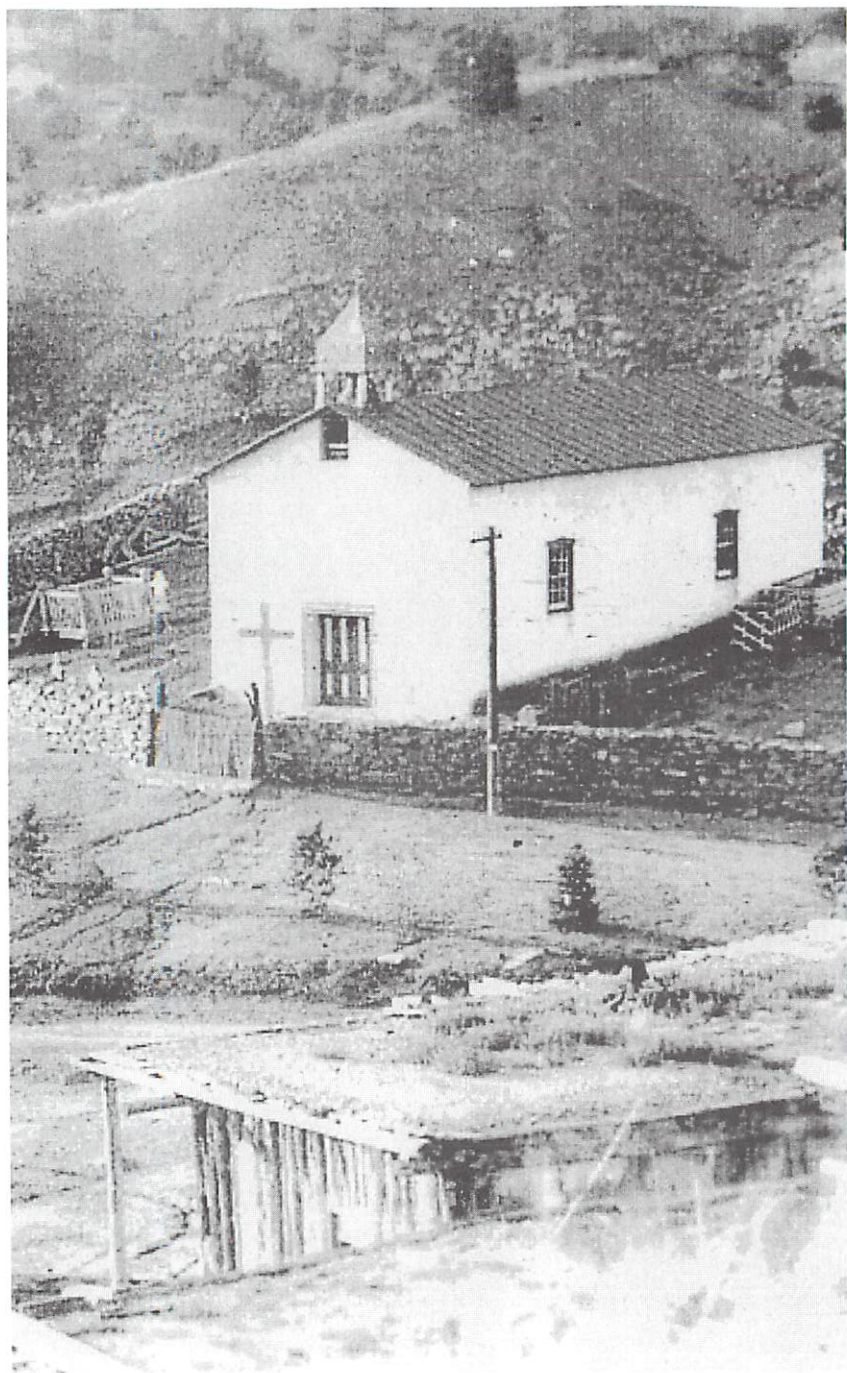
VOL. 24, No. 1

March 1997

Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Photographer, Corinne P. Sze.



Nuestra Señora de la Luz Catholic Church, Cañoncito, NM, Aug. 18, 1995.



Nuestra Señora de la Luz, Cañoncito, NM, 1914. Museum of New Mexico #8830, Waldo Twitchell, photographer.

NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA LUZ CHURCH AND CEMETERY*

Cañoncito, New Mexico

Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

The bright orange metal, gable roof of Nuestra Señora de la Luz is a familiar landmark for travelers on Interstate 25 south of Santa Fe. Few probably realize that it shelters a 19th-century Roman Catholic adobe chapel built by parishioners of the small outlying Hispanic settlement of Cañoncito, or that the highway at this point traces the approximate route of the historic Santa Fe Trail as it descended from the summit of the Glorieta Pass and proceeded into Santa Fe. Fewer still break their journeys to have a closer look at this modest Territorial-style structure or walk through the quiet little cemetery on the surrounding hillside.

The one-story chapel was built between 1880 and 1891 on rising ground in Cañoncito, 13 miles southeast of Santa Fe, at the entrance to Apache Canyon. It now faces south directly onto the I-25 frontage road which ends shortly thereafter. Built as a mission church at a time when it was difficult for parishioners to travel to the parish church for services, Nuestra Señora de la Luz remains an active mission served by the priest of St. Anthony's Parish at Pecos, who celebrates Mass every third Saturday of the month at Cañoncito. In the absence of a resident priest, the church has traditionally been cared for by a local person, known as a *mayordomo* and appointed by the parish priest, a custom that continues to this day. The chapel remains, as it has been for some 100 years, the focus of cultural and religious life in this tiny community.

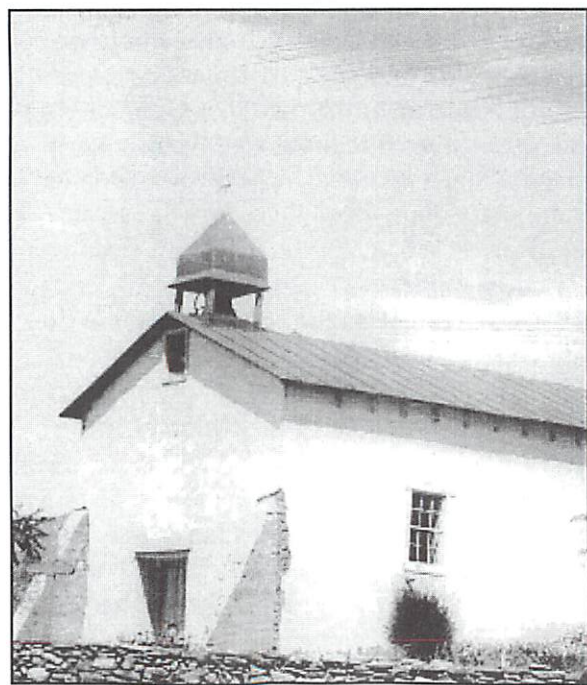
Nuestra Señora de la Luz represents the continuance into the late Territorial Period of a tradition of church building in adobe that began with the 17th-century Spanish Colonial missions to the Pueblo Indians. As Spanish settlement spread during the Colonial and Mexican periods, modest rectangular churches of this sort were built in the countryside using the same system of wall and roof construc-

* The research reported here was performed by Corinne Sze under contract with the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division of the Office of Cultural Affairs in order to prepare a National Register nomination of the Nuestra Señora de la Luz Church and Cemetery. This work was financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, through the HPD.

tion originally derived by the Franciscans from indigenous Indian tradition.

After the American army took control of New Mexico from Mexico in 1846, Greek Revival detailing in wood was added to traditional adobe architecture to create a style now called Territorial. The Territorial details of Nuestra Señora de la Luz Church—pedimented lintels inside and out, paneled doors, and wood-lined door and window openings—illustrate the continuing use of the Territorial style in outlying communities at a time when this mode was already being eclipsed by the influence of the French clergy and the eastern styles brought by the railroad after 1879. In the 1870s in Santa Fe pitched metal roofs were introduced and regarded as a great improvement over the leaky flat dirt roof. After the railroad greatly increased their availability, metal roofs became ubiquitous on adobe buildings in northern New Mexico.

The church was built on land donated by Mária de la Luz Borrego for the purpose of its construction. Evidence in the archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe suggests that the church was built no earlier than the middle of 1880. As late as the first half of that year



christenings, weddings, and burials of people from Cañoncito were still being performed by the parish priest at the church in Pecos. Beginning in mid 1880 a new priest ceased to record the location of his various activities so that it is not possible to know from this source when the Cañoncito church came into use. It is, however, mentioned as already built in the deed dated November

Nuestra Señora de la Luz, c. 1937. Museum of New Mexico #120135. Fritz Broeske, photographer.

7, 1891, by which Maria de la Luz Borrego et al. transferred the property to Archbishop Salpointe.¹

Little is known of the circumstances surrounding the construction of the church. Located at a strategic spot on the Santa Fe Trail a few miles southeast of Santa Fe, Cañoncito had earlier been a trading point and the last stop for travelers before reaching their destination in Santa Fe. Noted historical events had taken place in the vicinity before the church was built. At Apache Canyon in 1846 General (and Governor) Manuel Armijo gathered his Mexican troops to defend New Mexico against the occupying American army. Sixteen years later (1862) at the nearby Johnson Ranch, Union forces destroyed an enemy supply train thereby effectively halting the Confederate threat to the Southwest. By 1880 the railroad superseded the Santa Fe Trail ending Cañoncito's importance in relation to transportation. Nevertheless, for a short period in 1879-1880 Cañoncito had a post office and in the 1880s this church was constructed. It is not known what other developments, if any, prompted the granting of a post office or the building of the church.

The church grounds are entered via a wooden gate in the rock wall that lies along the frontage road. A large wooden cross on a concrete base stands in the center of the walkway in line with the entrance. Because the back end of the building is built into the hillside, from the exterior an illusion is created that the church itself slopes up the hill. On the interior changes in grade are somewhat



Nuestra Señora de la Luz, taken 1995. Courtesy New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

compensated for by a step up into the church and another into the sanctuary; nevertheless, the north end of the church including the sanctuary is considerably below ground level and the approximately 16-foot ceiling is much higher than it appears from the outside dimensions.

The main facade of the church is unbroken but for the centered double doors of the main entrance, a small, fixed-pane window in the top of the gable, and a rock buttress, 22 inches wide and 10 feet high at the southwest corner. At the crest of the gable is a bell canopy topped by a weathered wooden cross. There are two windows on each of the side walls of the nave. On the rear (north) elevation there is only one small opening in the gable end that provides access to the attic for roof maintenance.

The plan of the church is a simple rectangle measuring on the exterior approximately 22 by 50 feet and containing a single-aisle nave and sanctuary. A sacristy lying west of the sanctuary gives an L shape to the overall plan. Around the turn of the century a pitched metal roof was placed over the traditional flat, dirt roof. The adobe walls of the nave are about 22 inches thick and rest on a 3- to 4-foot wide foundation of native stone and mud mortar. They are covered with concrete stucco on the exterior and plaster on the interior.

The front entrance leads directly into the nave. The sanctuary opposite the entrance is a continuation of the rectangle of the nave and separated from it by a wooden, spindled altar rail and a step up. The continuous ceiling of the nave and sanctuary is constructed of



Interior nave and sanctuary, taken 1995. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

exposed, square, pine beams and planks of regular width without distinction between the two areas. The nave windows are deeply inset in the thick side walls and are wood lined as are the doorways. In the nave there are rows of pews on either side of a wide aisle.

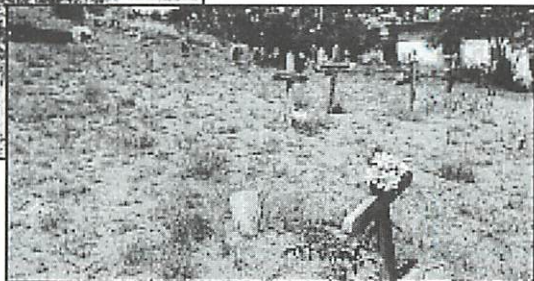
A door from the west side of the sanctuary leads into the sacristy, a small, nearly square room which is covered with a shed roof and measures approximately 16 by 17 feet on the exterior. The adobe walls are 18 inches thick and rest on stone footings approximately 2 feet wide, both slightly narrower than the nave dimensions. The ceiling of this small room is composed of exposed *vigas* and planks. *Viga* ends protrude beyond the front and rear walls. Photographic evidence suggests that the sacristy was added before 1925.²

Both the main and the sacristy doors are solid wood and paneled. The four nave windows and one in the sacristy are wooden and double hung with 6/6 lights. All doors and windows have wooden



Grave markers in cemetery, August 18, 1995. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division.



surrounds and shallow pedimented lintels on both the interior and exterior. The wooden trim around the openings on the main facades, the bell canopy, and the large wooden cross in front of the church are painted bright reddish orange. Elsewhere the wooden trim is heavily weathered.

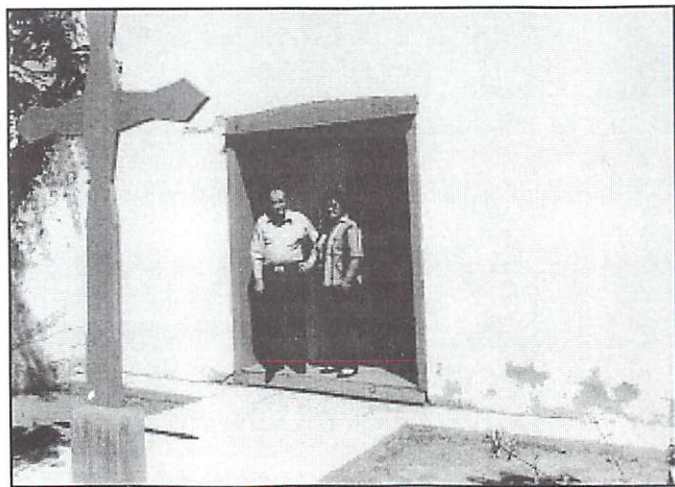
On the slopes on either side and across the back of the church is a cemetery containing a variety of modest markers, the earliest of which that are now visible and legible appear to date from the 1890s. Types of markers include many simple wooden crosses, the most common means of marking graves in Hispanic New Mexico; small metal crosses with nameplates; and concrete markers, some evidently homemade with irregular, hand-produced inscriptions and designs

lined in brick or enclosed by low wire fencing. In some cases earth is mounded high over the grave sites.

The cemetery and church are enclosed by a rock wall along the south (front) and east perimeters and by a wire fence across the north and west. According to historic photographs dating from about 1915, what appears to have been a smaller churchyard was originally surrounded on all four sides by a low stone wall like that in place on the south and east sides today.³ At an unknown date more than fifty years ago, the cemetery was apparently expanded to the north and west, the wall removed on the two sides, and a wire fence replacement installed.⁴ Historic photos also show some grave sites surrounded by rectangular wooden fences called *cerquitos* (little fences)—a Hispanic custom generally believed to have been brought to New Mexico, along with the use of grave markers, by 19th-century Anglo-American influence.⁵

The major alterations to the original church—the addition of the pitched roof and the construction of the sacristy—took place relatively early in its history. About 1900 a metal roof on 2 x 6 wooden rafters was placed over the original flat roof that would have been drained by wooden *canales*.⁶ The four feet of dirt which comprised this original roof are still visible in the attic.

Several less significant alterations took place at unknown dates more than fifty years ago. The present pews replaced backless benches around 1914; the front two rows were built by Sabino Gonzales.⁷ Before 1937, presumably to stabilize the structure—perhaps to keep the front wall from pushing out and separating from



Nick and Nora Varela, former mayordomos, in front doorway, August 19, 1995. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

the side walls—stone buttresses were added at each front corner of the church.⁸ The east buttress has since been removed. Wooden plank flooring was added over the original dirt floors and both the interior walls (originally mud plastered and whitewashed) and the exterior walls (originally mud plastered) were hard plastered.

More recently plywood was put on top of the plank floor in the nave. In 1985 the church's orange metal roof was replaced with duplicate materials. The interior walls of the church were replastered and painted. An added acoustical-tile dropped ceiling was removed and the re-exposed historic wood beams and planking were refinished.⁹

Today the interior of the church appears to be well maintained and in good condition except for some water damage at the floor level of the nave walls and considerably more water damage in the interior of the sacristy. The exterior stucco of the church and sacristy is in poor condition with large cracks especially above and below windows and deterioration at the ground level. The paint of the exterior trim, except on the main facade, is severely weathered.

As they have been since its construction, the rituals of the church continue to be performed by the parish priest traveling periodically from Pecos. In addition to the monthly celebration of the Mass, First Holy Communions, baptisms, and weddings are celebrated at Nuestra Señora de la Luz as these occasions arise. Burials are still taking place from time to time in the churchyard, although there is little room left. The Saint's Day of the church is celebrated with services and food in June although the official date is in May. At Christmas time the traditional *Las Posadas* is re-enacted by the



*Nuestra Señora de la Luz, c. 1915-1920.
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Neg.
No. 56641.*

Grave marker in Nuestra Señora de la Luz church cemetery taken 1995. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.



community under the leadership of the *mayordomo*. Maintenance of the church continues to be the responsibility of the *mayordomo* and is a community effort which brings together people from the vicinity.

This property, which has not been significantly altered, well represents its long history as an active mission church, despite the need of some exterior and interior rehabilitation. The church and cemetery were recently successfully nominated for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and placed on the Historic Santa Fe Foundation's "Registry of Buildings Worthy of Preservation."

ENDNOTES

1. Santa Fe County Deeds, B-1: 382-384.
2. The sacristy appears in an undated photograph in the Twitchell Collection, Museum of New Mexico photo 56641, presumably taken before Ralph Emerson Twitchell's death in 1925. Nick Varela, "Cañoncito Parish Church," Application for Registration New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, 1984, states, without citing a source, that the sacristy was added in the 1920s.
3. Museum of New Mexico photos 8830 and 13747.
4. Nick Varela, interview, 25 August 1995.
5. Dorothy Benrimo, *Camposantos* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1966). Nancy Hunter Warren, "New Mexico Village *Camposantos*," *Markers 4* (1987): 116. This assumption is questioned, not entirely convincingly, by Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 70.

6. The approximate date is given by Mr. and Mrs. Sabino Gonzales, "History of the Cañoncito Church," interview notes, 25 October 1984 (Historic Preservation Division files).
7. Mr. and Mrs. Sabino Gonzales, "History of the Cañoncito Church," interview notes, 25 October 1984 (Historic Preservation Division files).
8. Both buttresses are shown in a historic photo dated 1937. Museum of New Mexico photo 120135.
9. Nick and Nora Varela, interview, 18 August 1995.

SOURCES

- Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives. File. Nuestra Señora de la Luz, Cañoncito, New Mexico.
- Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Pecos Parish. Records of Baptisms (1862-1899), Marriages (1862, 1899), and Burials (1870-1899). Microfilm reel 43A, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.
- Benrimo, Dorothy. *Camposantos*. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1966.
- Borrego, Maria de la Luz, et al. to Juan Bautista Salpointe. 7 November 1891. Santa Fe County Deeds, Book B-1: 382-384.
- Gonzales, Mr. and Mrs. Sabino. "History of the Cañoncito Church." Interview notes, 25 October 1984. (Historic Preservation Division files).
- Jordan, Terry G. *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.
- Museum of New Mexico Photo Archives.
- "Nuestra Señora de la Luz Church, Cañoncito, New Mexico." Survey plat, measured drawings and elevations [1984?]. (Historic Preservation Division files).
- Santa Fe County Deeds.
- Sze, Corinne P. "Nuestra Señora de la Luz Church and Cemetery." National Register of Historical Places Registration Form, 1995.
- . "Religious Properties of New Mexico." National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1995.
- Varela, Nick. "Cañoncito Parish Church," Application for Registration New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, 1984.
- Warren, Nancy Hunter. "New Mexico Village *Camposantos*." *Markers* 4 (1987): 115-129.

Interviews

- Varela, Nick and Nora. 18 August 1995.
- Varela, Nick. 25 August 1995.

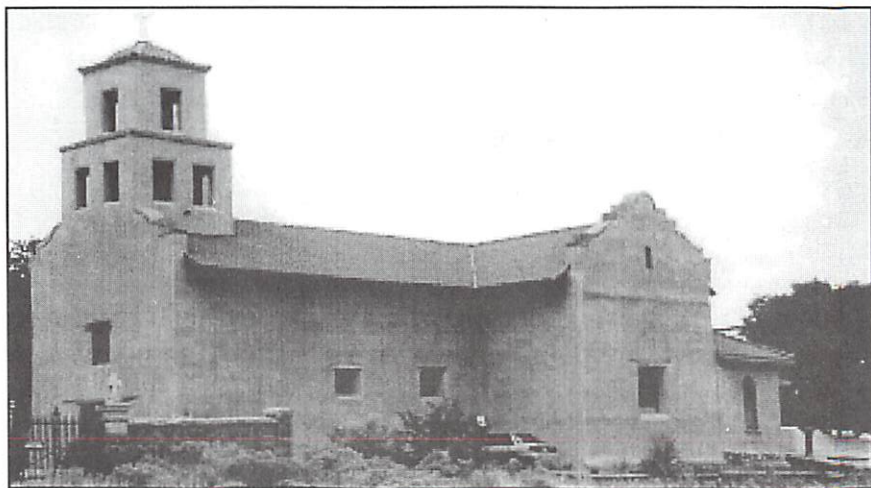
HISTORIC GUADALUPE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

*Sally Ventres
Association President*

The Historic Guadalupe Neighborhood Association was incorporated in June of 1995, following commercial threats to its historic residential character. The boundaries of the association are the Santa Fe River on the north, Guadalupe Street on the east, Paseo de Peralta on the south, and St. Francis Drive on the west. Excluding the railroad property and a small triangular residential area between Manhattan Street and Paseo de Peralta, the remainder of the association's span is a part of the Westside/Guadalupe Historic District.

This was originally an Hispanic farming community on the outskirts of the central village of Santa Fe. Its water supply came from an *acequia* constructed along El Camino Real (now Agua Fria), which was diverted from the river near its intersection with the Old Santa Fe Trail. A smaller *acequia*, diverted near what is now Closson Street, ran along Alto Street. Families grew alfalfa, corn, chili, and a variety of fruit trees on their land.

The northeast cornerstone of the neighborhood is the Santuario de Guadalupe, said to be the earliest church in the United States dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. The date of its construction is not known, but the Bishop of Durango issued the license for the chapel in 1795. By the 1950s, the parish had outgrown the chapel



Santuario de Guadalupe, August 22, 1996. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

and a new sanctuary was built on adjacent property. This parish church continues to serve a cohesive function in the neighborhood as it did in times past, when feast days such as *el día de Guadalupe* on December 12th were celebrated by parishioners proceeding from the chapel to worship at altars set up in neighborhood homes.

The arrival of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in



Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Depot. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

February of 1880 wrought an immediate change in the farming neighborhood, which lay adjacent to the new railroad tracks and depot. Six years later the Texas, Santa Fe and Northern Railroad extended its tracks from Española to Santa Fe, running across the river and continuing down the middle of what is now Guadalupe Street to the depot. Old-timers today recall the trestle bridge—reminiscing about how as teenagers they played by jumping up and down on it to make the bridge bounce.

The railroads infused the adjacent agricultural neighborhood with commerce, construction, and the need for housing for the many laborers who came to work in the new industry. Properties originally laid out in long, narrow strips running between the upper *acequia* and the river were subdivided. Narrow lanes between Alto and Agua Fria streets provided some access to the new dwellings, but division of family property over time has created an ownership pattern characterized by many small, oddly shaped lots with limited vehicular access.

Early dwellings along El Camino Real and Alto Street were

almost exclusively Pueblo Hispanic in character. Constructed of adobe, they usually fronted directly onto the road. With the railroad came architectural influences from other parts of the country. Although adobe remained the primary building material, after the turn of the century brick and stone began to be used. Basements were sometimes dug, with foundations raised above grade. Dwellings were recessed from the roads and acquired front yards. Porches replaced *portales*. Some of the houses featured pitched roofs and dormers. This created a mix of architectural styles now known as Santa Fe Vernacular.

Forty years ago the neighborhood was almost self-sufficient. "Mom and Pop" stores fronted Agua Fria. The Home Bakery was there, where children were dispatched before meals to pick up necessities. It was a family neighborhood. Long-time residents remember a walk to the Plaza as a major expedition. With increased automobile ownership and the advent of larger grocery stores, these small shops could not survive. None remain, but it was their existence that caused the area on the south side of Agua Fria to be zoned when Business Capital District zoning was introduced in the early 1980s. Some of these locations reverted to residential, some to multi-family dwellings, and others to low-impact small businesses and agencies—none of which imposed an adverse impact upon the neighborhood. At the time, no one envisioned the possibility of high-impact, high-traffic, tourist-oriented businesses as being the threat that they have now become. Neither was it anticipated that narrow, curved Agua Fria



Charles Dudrow House on Agua Fria St. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.



Alto Street facing East. Courtesy NM Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. Corinne P. Sze, photographer.

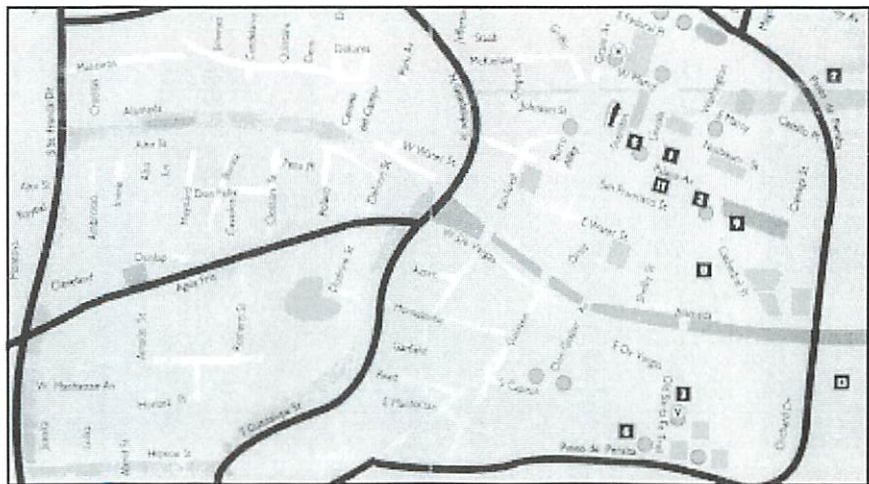
Street would become a major traffic corridor to the downtown area. The construction of St. Francis Drive in 1964 and the commercial development of the warehouse district along Guadalupe and Montezuma streets have had a seriously detrimental effect upon the neighborhood.

The neighborhood association includes the major part of the area designated in 1983 as the Westside/Guadalupe Historic District. This designation has provided some protection, but residents fear that the pressures coming to develop the railyard property, which lies contiguous to the neighborhood, may prove insurmountable.

The association formally organized following efforts to preclude Sunwest Bank from developing an eight-lane drive-in facility encompassing the corner of Agua Fria and St. Francis Drive in 1993. Responding to neighborhood appeals, Sunwest graciously withdrew its plans. The following year the association opposed an attempt to establish a large-scale micro-brewery restaurant and bar in the old Home Bakery/Co-op building. The future of this effort now resides in the hands of the State Supreme Court.

The Historic Guadalupe Neighborhood Association foresees a constant challenge to preserve this historic residential district. Much depends upon the city's plans to develop the railyard property. So close to the downtown area, Historic Guadalupe will be a prime market for expansion of commercial, tourist-oriented businesses. Residents hope that the citizens of greater Santa Fe agree that this historic neighborhood deserves preservation from such incursion.

Historic Guadalupe Neighborhood district map



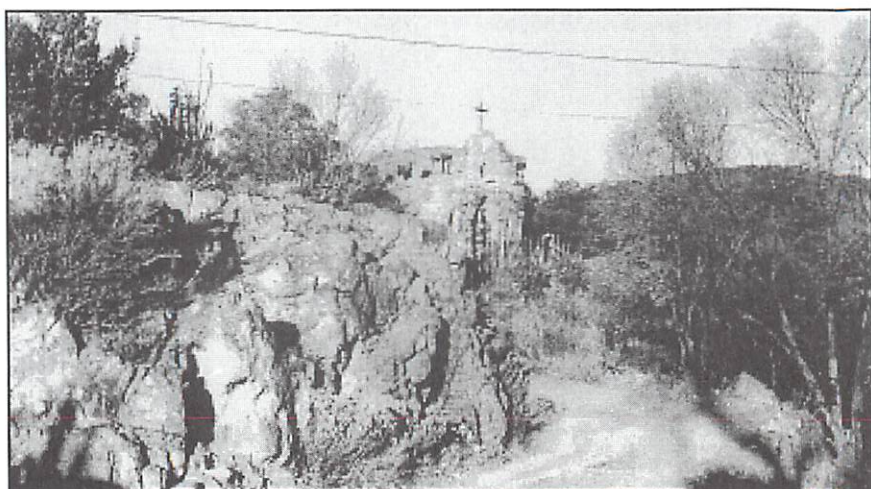
San Isidro and His Grotto

Eleanor Bové
Board member and local historian

We all know the story of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers who devoted his life to the service of God. He would rise early and go to church, and all day long while working the fields, he would commune with God, his guardian angel and all the saints. Numerous stories illustrate his love for the people and animals around him. His life was a model of living on this earth in Christian perfection.

There was a man with the same qualities in his character here in Santa Fe. He lived on Cerro Gordo Road. His name was Lorenzo López, Sr. And his devotion to God and his family was evident in how he spent his days working and praying. On many occasions I saw him enter Cristo Rey Church and travel the whole length of the church to the altar, always on his knees. Although untrained, he was also a master carver of wooden *bultos*. In 1926 he built a chapel out of native limestone gathered on his property and dedicated it to San Isidro.

Even though the humble chapel was for almost 70 years an inspirational sight sitting atop a high hill on Cerro Gordo, it became unstable and in need of repair. Last year *La Cofradía de San Isidro*, a group from Cristo Rey parish headed by Carlos Martínez and Ramon José López, obtained a lease from the current property owner,

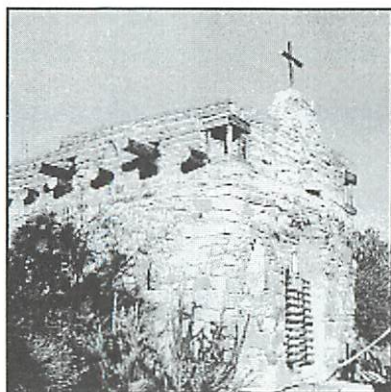


San Isidro Chapel, Cerro Gordo Road, 1996. Thaddeus Sze, photographer.

Leopoldo Brito, for access, restoration and maintenance of the *capilla*. Using photos and an article that appeared in the *New York Times* in 1939, the volunteer group quickly assembled plans, permits and a crew. Funds were raised, more limestone was gathered and work began during the Fall of 1995. Along with Mr. Brito's consent to take care of the chapel, he had added a personal request. It had long been his desire to complete another of Mr. López's wishes, a grotto dedicated to all mothers. This task was given to Phillip Bové and Carlos Perez. The grotto is also built with indigenous material collected on Cerro Gordo. Limestone was placed in the same style used on the chapel and a natural vein of colorful clay forms the back wall.

The chapel restoration and grotto were completed just in time for the May 15th celebration of San Isidro's Feast Day. As has been a long-standing custom, a procession comes up Arroyo Ancha from Cristo Rey Church, blessing the Acequia Madre, praying the rosary and singing *alabanzas* to San Isidro. Praying for rain and successful crops, the worshippers this year were delighted by the sight of the beloved *capilla* back to its original condition. Every day prayerful visitors come to the grotto, many leaving flowers, candles and others signs of their devotion.

The City of Santa Fe awarded the *Cofradía de San Isidro* a Heritage Preservation Award in May this year. But the best reward comes during a slow ride or walk along Cerro Gordo and a quiet stop at the shrine for a moment of solitude.



Two views of San Isidro Chapel, 1996. Thaddeus Sze, photographer.



Donaciano Vigil House Transferred to HSFF Ownership

*Dale F. Zinn, Architect
HSFF Board Member*

Picture a sunny courtyard, where adobe walls reflect the late summer sunshine onto old vines and the light pushes past the tall windows that seem to stand still in time. Fresh geraniums dotting the patio lend their bright colors to an important occasion.

That picture remains as the background for the special event that took place on Alto Street on August 16, 1996. With a simple but well-considered signature, Charlotte White gave her beloved home, the Donaciano Vigil House on Alto Street, to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. I am sure that her long-time partner, Boris Gilbertson, was looking down from his sculpture garden in heaven, pleased to see that the many years of their cooperative endeavor to restore and maintain the property will now be protected forever.

The foundation was established several years ago as the beneficiary of the house in Mrs. White's will. The board has assisted Charlotte by providing technical assistance, and advancement of funds for stabilization and repairs to the property from time to time. In July of 1995 Charlotte approached the executive committee regarding the possibility that the foundation would take full responsibility as owners of the house. The board considered with care the magnitude of the gift and the potential costs of stewardship. A decision was made that the HSFF could utilize the existing endangered properties acquisition fund to provide cash reserves for immediate repairs, and plan for continued upgrades and stabilization needs for the house in the future.

Charlotte remains in her home as a welcome and treasured life tenant. The house represented the main asset of Charlotte's possessions, as a house does in most people's estates. The value of the house was her insurance against the



*Julie Dougherty, Board president, and
Charlotte White toast the signing.
Hope Aldrich, photographer.*

event that long-term medical expenses or nursing care might be required. The burden of looking after all the details and worrying about repairs and daily maintenance were the motivators in bringing Charlotte to the foundation with the prospect of transfer of ownership sooner, rather than later.

Through some creative thinking and the availability of appropriate insurance policies, the property committee was able to negotiate a transfer that provides Charlotte with a life-time tenancy at the property or a guaranteed sum for replacement housing if she chooses to move.

Board members Dale Zinn and Robert Vigil have met with Charlotte several times in the past year to identify and review the lists of maintenance items. A long-term plan will be developed from this valuable information that will allow the property to be maintained in a manner to which it has been accustomed under the warm and loving care of Charlotte and Boris. We would like to publicly thank Ken Bateman and Randy Bell, who provided the expert legal council to Charlotte and the HSFF in this process.

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation is proud and grateful to have earned the trust of Charlotte White. A Donaciano Vigil House fund has been established to receive tax-deductible donations for the purpose of offsetting costs of stewardship of the property. We hope that the membership will recognize the generosity and importance of this action by Charlotte and take the time to thank her as we cannot, of course, thank her enough.



HSFF Board members and friends celebrate the transfer in Charlotte's patio. Hope Aldrich, photographer.

Diary of an Old House

Excerpts from the Charlotte White Journals

Edited by Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

The Foundation is unusually fortunate that Charlotte White began keeping a journal the day after she and Boris Gilbertson arrived to begin working on their Alto Street property, and that she faithfully continued to record its transformation from a crumbling adobe to the elegant home it is today—a project that would absorb much of the next two decades of their lives.

I have been working with Charlotte off and on for a couple of years in an ongoing project to transcribe those portions of the journals that relate to the house, including enough detail to follow the thread of her life during those years. Because the journals contain much material that is highly personal, they could not simply be handed over to an editor to pick and choose at will from the contents. So Charlotte first selected passages she wished to share and then we recorded her reading those entries as well as her comments upon them, which included explanations, expansions, and her present view of past events. Rarely do we have such complete documentation of a building project, and even more rarely the opportunity to relive the past through the immediacy of a journal with one of its participants.

Charlotte records not only the daily details of adobe and *vigas*, but gives us as well the emotions that surrounded this highly personal project—her ever-deepening love of her new surroundings, so different from her native Illinois; her pleasure in creating a garden where there had been nothing but weeds and debris; her wonder at the extremes of Santa Fe weather, always important to a gardener; and her reactions to the inevitable frustrations of the enormous project she and Boris had taken on. We follow too her growing realization of the property's historical importance, which only deepens her attachment to it.

Her main subject, however, is Boris Gilbertson—his talent, his strength, his persistence, his moods. Professionally already a highly regarded sculptor, he seems to have limitless ability to make real with his hands his vision of the house and to place inordinate demands upon himself in the quest for excellence. We also follow his career as an artist in the Southwest, from early attempts to find a local gallery to recognition in a wide regional area.

In addition to the principles, the diaries also contain an unusual cast of characters, artist friends, neighborhood children, and animal companions including a beloved African gray parrot, Mau-Mau, who seems almost human.

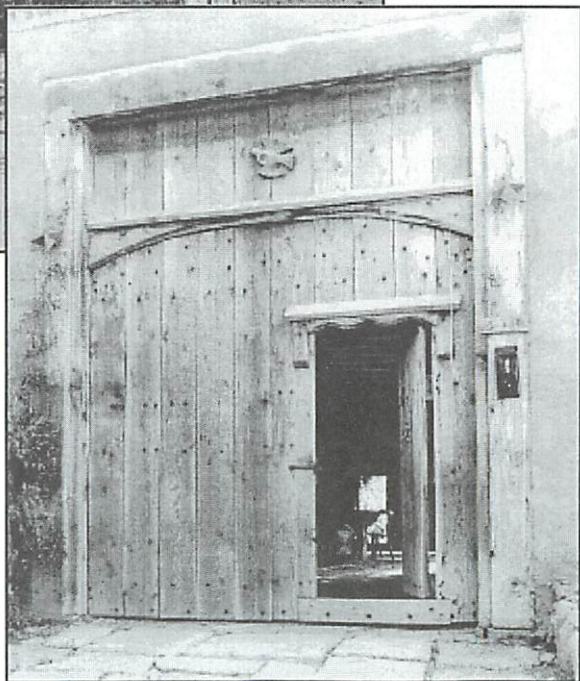
With this edition of the *Bulletin* we begin an ongoing series of excerpts from the journals embellished with Charlotte's present-day comments given in brackets. What follows are her early impressions of the new life she has chosen, her delight at the house despite its condition, the first efforts to begin its rehabilitation, and an early realization of the difficulties of such an undertaking, one which would eventually take 20 years to complete.

I am most grateful to Charlotte for her generosity with her time and her memories; for allowing us all to be, as it were, present at the creation.



*Front Entrance
facing Alto Street,
1958. Photographer,
Charlotte White*

*Entry gate designed
and constructed by
Boris Gilbertson.
Photographer,
Alan Stoker*



July 28, 1959

Arrived yesterday from Illinois at 518 Alto with the little jeep's arse dragging 1,000-pound load among which was Boris's grandfather's workbench that he had made many years ago and is prized above all Boris's possessions. It's eight feet long, so naturally hung out, making it necessary to leave the tailgate open. We also had an eight-foot piece of plate glass we hope to use for a skylight in the bedroom eventually. And tools and clothes, charcoal stove, cooking basket [full of cooking stuff], cots, sleeping bags, an air mattress, and so forth. We were very lucky, for which I am most thankful. The jeep has won the name of *El Burro*, which is an honor and a compliment.

[We didn't use the plate glass as a skylight; we used it in the old doors back here in this building—they were the front doors when we came. The glass had been all broken and the doors boarded up when we came. We made room for them in the back building facing the patio.]

But now for the house. With the sun coming up over the Sangre de Cristos, my beloved mountains, I sit in our patio surrounded by the very old adobe walls. It is weed-filled, with paper, cans, old stove pipes, tar paper, and assorted rocks; but there are a few tough trees that have survived neglect, one of which stays—the others to be transplanted. It will be truly beautiful some day. The house is even more wonderful and full of promise than I had remembered. Of course, we didn't dare look at it before too hopefully, for fear it wouldn't be ours. The footing needs attention and above the windows where years of rain have washed away the adobe. How I hate to see that precious adobe return to the ground.

The house was full of children wandering in and out from the minute we unboarded the front door—from sixteen to two years old. All from across the road. Mrs. Arroyos' son Mike helped us unload and hose out the front room. Nice Mr. Maez, who has kept an eye on the place, fixed the toilet; but outside of that, the plumbing was intact and they had men up

here to turn the water on inside of two hours. *[Lumpkins had put in the bathroom across from the front room.]*

Spent our first night here. Such luxurious camping out. Running water. The candlelight and shadows on the thick adobe walls. Smell of piñon. Cozy beds. Slow dripping of a slightly leaky roof, which will soon be fixed. The front room is fine. We will be working on that first so we'll live in the back. So much to do. What first?

Missed yesterday. So many things to do. Never have I been so happy. I wouldn't even mind living just this way. I have a table with a fruit bowl, candles, and lovely pinon branches with beautiful green cones as a centerpiece. Bought two most comfortable and nice looking canvas-backed, basket-type chairs. Cook right at the table on the hibachi. Boris hung a piece of wood to hang our clothes on backed by the tarp which gives it privacy where our cots are. And the elegance of a bathroom and "kitchen" with running water—all cold. It is the fanciest camping out you can imagine.

[When we came the bathroom area Lumpkins had added was really two rooms. A tiny room with a hot water heater and a sink was attached to the bathroom itself that had a shower stall, a toilet, and a sink. I guess they had used the smaller room as a kitchen somehow or other. We took out the door between the two rooms to put in a gas heater. There were also two doors into the hallway, one from each of the small rooms. We closed off the original door into the bathroom; the door we use now was the one into that little "kitchen."]

We have decided to plaster with real adobe, no fake. The idea of covering up those old, old, lovely adobe bricks with nasty plaster has bothered us every time we talked about it. It never has the feeling or the warmth of the real thing. We are on the lookout for a man who can do a nice job and not ask three dollars an hour. The footing has to be dug and two windows put in on the south wall because we are using some handsome old doors which will not let any light in on the patio side. *[I don't understand this; it doesn't sound right.]* And anyway some day the patio will be so elegant we'll want a good look at it from the front room. Boris took the broken

glass out of the front doors and put plywood in [which we left for a while, of course]. Also drew a picture of flowers and Mau-Mau [my beloved African gray parrot] with *La Casa Blanca* drawn on it. It is such ideas and little touches that he will be inspired to do that will make this place really great.

He found a huge, hungry, black widow spider under a rock in the patio yesterday—hope there aren't too many of them or any more I should say. He has it in a jar. I'd feel better if it were smashed. Saw a baby horned toad in back this morning. If they aren't moving, you can't even see them for they are exactly the color of the earth.

Ginger and Charles [*Ginger Gray and Charles Hagerman*] called on us last night. They are such nice people—such good friends. Right at the start they love the place and its spaciousness.

July 31, 1959



*Alto Street facade. 1997.
Photographer, Gene Aker.*

*Current view of
interior Placitia door.
Photographer,
Karl*



Neighbor boys and Boris got the footing dug in front yesterday.

[This footing is baffling to me because the front room didn't need a footing. It has those great river rocks as a footing. I've forgotten so many things in 34 years. But I think for some reason we thought we should put a footing on that west wall of the patio. We had never worked with adobes and we didn't know what we were doing really. I don't think this footing was ever necessary.]

Still trying to track down an old-timer to do the adobe work. Got stuff for the back roof which will be on in a day or so. It seems to take so long to get going and money disappearing like mad; but it's for things we'll need for years to come, and guess it's all part of owning a place and getting started. *[You see, I'd never owned a house before.]*

Want to pick up my Santa Fe car license today. It will make us feel even more that we belong. Glorious sky last night from the roof where we later want to have a deck. *[Of course, we never did.]* You can see all around the city—the Jemez and the Sangre de Cristos. Each day is so beautiful—hot sun, cool shadows, magnificent country.

It is most discouraging and depressing, the price of everything. So much to be done. Thought we could do more ourselves. We'll just have to—it's the only way we can swing it.

August 1, 1959

Truck of adobe bricks arrived. First load: eight men and two boys; two men very "tight." Second load: six men and three boys; "tight" ones still with us. Third load: three men and one boy, one "tight." Lovely bricks. Seventy dollars per 100, plus twenty dollars delivery, which is well worth it. With a stack of them in front and the footing dug, it is beginning to look as though something is going on.

I worked on the back roof yesterday and this morning, scraping it and getting ready for the tar and tar paper. It is too hot now. We can't even touch the stuff. Hope to get it done later today or tomorrow morning. Had a beautiful downpour

last night. The way the rain beats down on the flat roof is wonderful. To watch the sky all around gathering for the storm is magnificent.

An old Spanish guy was here yesterday about plastering. All he could think about was what gold might be in the walls—willing to split it with us, of course.

August 2, 1959

Boris is on the roof putting a new one on *[back roof]*. It is hot now, and I hope he comes down soon. Besides it is Sunday and we are taking the afternoon off, eating out, and going to a Mariachi concert in the Plaza tonight. Still trying to track down a man to put the front adobe on. It is a job to find them in. We'll have to find someone soon. I knocked down the silly little fireplace in the front room this morning. Saved about two dozen adobe bricks from it.

[There was a silly little stuck-on fireplace on the north wall of the front room, right in the middle. Just a few adobes piled up with a chimney. After I got it down, I discovered there were electric wires going right through the wall with chimney and fireplace on top of them. But being adobe, of course it didn't ever ignite.]

Spent last evening sitting on the front stoop with three of the children from across the street. Duchess and Juanita are handsome, dark, little girls, Mike's sisters. Such energy and devilment. Those children sleep when they are tired day or night. Makes no difference. Otherwise they are just having fun.

August 3, 1959

It is unnecessary to say it is a glorious morning. They all are. The intense light, hot sun, beautiful air, the soft breeze that ruffles the leaves on the little cottonwood in the *placita*. The sound that the leaves make and the way it looks against the intense blue sky. The shade also will be welcome. *[The cottonwood didn't stay because it wasn't in the right place. There was also a small elm which I took out later.]*

Think we have found a man to do the work the way

we want it—an old-timer, sober and intelligent who does beautiful work, Señor Montoya. He can't start for another couple of weeks.

We went to Truchas to look at the beautiful adobe plastering. Lots of straw in it which makes it look like some of the fancy Japanese papers [*that Boris used in his work*]. Few cracks, sturdy. Hope we can have ours done that way.

The sky at sunset was wild, sun spotlighting parts with rain shafts and lightning behind it all. The sky in the evening is never the same. Each day a new dramatic effect. Amazing. The clouds are always more beautiful than any we've seen. Went to the Plaza last night. Looked like Mexico. The children drove home with us, stopping for a jumbo sundae—more than anyone could eat, except me, of course.

August 6, 1959

Finished tarring and papering the roof yesterday [*of the back room*]. I did it, just because it's my house—for no one else would I do it. We've both been working like bulls. Slowly things are getting done. Boris does such a perfect job, being a perfectionist, that it takes longer; but it's done right. Like the windows having to be evened [*leveled*] out.

[I don't remember how I tarred the roof. I think I must have used tar paper. I don't remember these things. There was no ceiling or insulation back here. It was leaking every place, so we wanted to do that first for protection. When we finished the back room in 1979, we put the ceiling in and a lot of insulation. There were only 2 x 6's holding up the roof back here. We did the ceiling and vigas from underneath the roof, which isn't easy. The front room supposedly has eight inches of dirt on the roof—I don't know.]

Each evening my little friends Juanita and Duchess come over and we talk Spanish. They are darling and call me their God-given mother. So begins another busy day. They go so fast. Too fast. [*We were just out here on my vacation*

for a month to work on the house.]

August 7, 1959

Most discouraged. It goes too slowly. I guess we'll have to find someone to work or we'll never get even the front done before we have to go. Wish I could do that work. I've been cleaning bricks, old ones from the prison. It's a hell of a job and I'll never make two thousand.

It rained from late yesterday afternoon until seven this morning. It's clearing now and maybe we'll get some things done.

August 8, 1959

Stopped raining long enough to get cement poured. *[That's that dumb footing that we thought we had to put in the patio over on the west wall between the two houses.]* Found a laborer at a dollar an hour to help with the bull work and clean bricks. He's a good Spanish guy with about twelve children. No job. How do they survive? He speaks no English but with fingers and gestures, he and Boris get along.

Last night we had a little shooting on Alto Street. Were awakened at eleven by Mike knocking on the door saying someone was trying to break in. He was home alone with six little ones and frightened. Boris cut quite a figure running around in his pajamas, flashlight in one hand and 38 in the other. Cops came, shot into the shrubbery. No sign of anyone. Watched from empty-paned front window, hugging the wall, gun in hand, just like a horse opera. It is really a shame how they leave little children alone. If they survive, guess they're tough. Maybe that's better. This journal was going to be about the progress of the house, but since there is no progress, we'll fill in with life on Alto Street, of which there is plenty.

August 9, 1959

The sheep herder we have working for us showed up drunk today wanting an advance of three dollars. I would have told him to go to hell, but not Boris.

August 10, 1959

We've decided to have the roof finished by an expert. Hot tar and gravel, ten-year guarantee. Hope to have it done today. It will cost \$100, but will be worth it to have one thing finished. *[That's this roof in the back. Can you imagine? A hundred dollars!]*

The sheep herder is here again toting, leveling. He is a steady worker, which is something. Boris spent yesterday filling in a big hole in the wall caused by erosion before the roof was fixed.

Certainly hope Señor Montoya can come next week to get started on the front. *[He never did show up.]* Nothing seems to be getting done. I keep telling myself that if Boris wasn't that way he wouldn't be what he is to be an artist. One goes with the other.

This is truly a wonderful spot and Boris thinks from the shards and flints and the old adobe that it must have been a very old campsite for Indians long before the Spanish invasion —being right on the river would be a likely place.

[I saved those things that we found as we were digging around in the patio and took a big box of shards over to Marjorie Lambert who was the top archaeologist for the state. She dated some of them back to the 1300s, showing that the Indians did camp and live along the river. The shards are still in the shed out back.]

Ginger and Charles dropped by yesterday with a delicious watermelon. Met "our children" on the Plaza last night. They run to greet us and cling as though we were magnetized, especially to Boris.

August 11, 1959

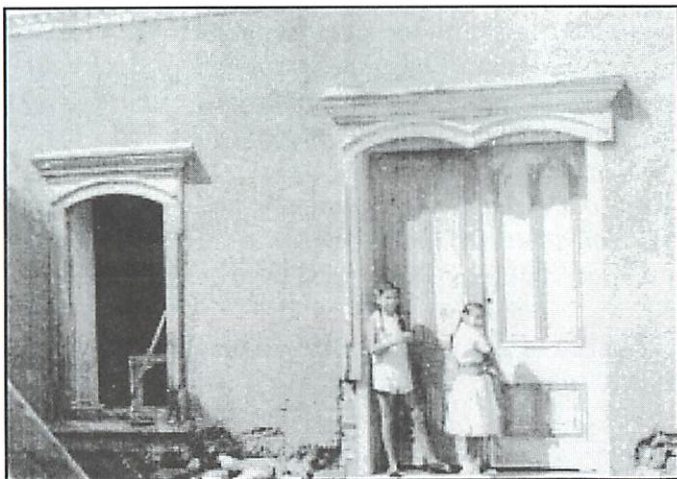
This glorious country! Every morning is a joy to get up. The light is blinding; it takes several minutes to really see when you come in, even if you haven't been in the sun.

The roof is beautiful. The gravel color is wonderful with adobe. I'm going to have the front done next spring. Slowly this room is taking shape. Boris is doing a perfect job, of course, and that takes longer but also lasts longer.

August 12, 1959

The front is more of a problem than we had suspected. Evidently before the roof was fixed the water had run down into the wall at one end and eroded the adobe. Big holes are under the surface, of course. They have to be cleaned out and filled in like a cavity in a tooth so that we won't have trouble later on. *Mucho tiempo*. Oh well, things are always more involved than we expect, and I must learn to be patient. Boris got a hold of some sand with lots of mica in it. We think it will look great in the final coating of adobe, and will sparkle in the morning sun, which should delight the neighbors. [*We didn't do that.*]

TO BE CONTINUED



*Duchess and Juanita, C. 1961 at the interior placita door:
Courtesy of Charlotte White.*

Longevity, Harmony, and Interesting Disasters: Life in an HSFF Plaqued Property

*Plaqued Property Owner and
Sally Hyer, HSFF Board member*

How does living in an historic building with 250-year-old vigas affect a family? Does a sense of the past make up for collapsing ceilings and falling rocks that knock out guests?

One snowy fall afternoon I sat by the corner fireplace in an ancient Santa Fe adobe and spoke with a father and daughter, the fourth and fifth generations in the family to enjoy the warmth of that room. They told me that the home has powerfully influenced them both, almost as if it were a well-loved relative. Profound respect for the original builders has become a family tradition.

This is the first in a series of interviews with people associated with sites and buildings that bear HSFF bronze plaques designating them worthy of preservation. The interview begins with the home's owner and ends with comments by his daughter. At their request, names remain private.

Q: How did you come to live in this house?

A: Because my parents lived here. My great-grandmother and grandmother lived here. There have been several generations.

Q: Can you tell me any stories about living here from your perspective as a small child or as an adult?

A: I would suggest that you will find some common denominators for everyone who lives in a non-stabilized adobe with a flat roof, no matter where you go in New Mexico. It is one of upkeep, continual vigilance, as things are always needing repairs. It is surprising how the upkeep can occur unexpectedly and without warning. It frequently has to do with the design and materials of these historic buildings in Santa Fe. They are not stone, they're mud.

If you look at everything that was built before 1840, there is a shared architectural style. It is interesting to be brought up in a place which is not going to be changed, at least by the present owners, in terms of architectural style. My guess is that the longer you live in one place the more you have to recognize that decisions in terms of function may have had good reason. Before you run around and start changing

things you should respect what you found at the beginning before you instantly say, "I know better, I know exactly how to change this." That sometimes leads to very interesting disasters.

Q: What condition was this house in when your family first moved in?

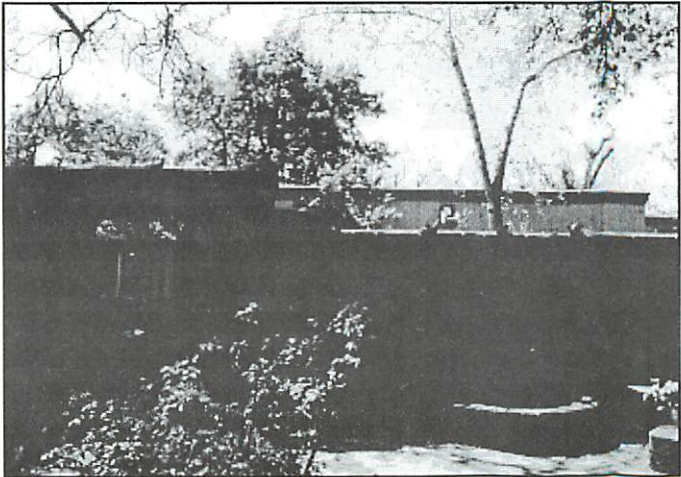
A: The roof had little *latillas* and the dirt came down. I think it was a visiting judge who was knocked out by a rock coming down. All the floors were dirt. Then in Grandma's day they put down big pine boards and this oak floor over the top. If you look at the slanted floor you can see all that has been done is just to add planking. A marble would roll down this floor at a rapid rate. Nothing is level. Look at this wall! Nothing is straight, nobody had a square. Plaster came, wood floors came.

It used to be people didn't want to live in mud huts, so this whole house was painted with bricks at one point so that it looked like a brick house. Grandma took that down. The coal furnace is now a gas furnace. I can remember when it was all coal. The coal furnace is now gone and that's a change! I'm inclined to think gas probably is a better way to go than coal. Having now dealt with both, I like gas. I'm not saying you don't change things. But you want to think about it before you change.

Q: Can you tell me about some of the unique features of the house you've grown to appreciate--or seen as problems--over the years?

A: Non-stabilized adobe is a problem once you have plaster on it. It is rather terrifying when you discover that you have washed out two

*Front entrance and garden. Laurel
Seth, photographer.*



feet of adobe wall and what you now have is a plaster shell with a fairly large *viga* sitting up overhead, which means you are going to have to take down some plaster and put in some new adobe to keep it up. That happens periodically. When you see a *viga* drop three feet it's very exciting.

You don't find that you have the problem until significant problems occur.

You can have sections of a roof come down inside. Only a year or two ago we had a nice section of the living room roof come crashing down. Happens all the time. It's something that you have to expect. It's the nature of the beast. It's a continual, ongoing repair process. You have to expect it if you are going to live in an unstabilized, flat-roofed place, whether it was built in 1960 or 1720. You have many of the same, ongoing problems.

That doesn't mean that there aren't many, many positives to living in a house that has successfully stood the test of time. You also have to respect the judgements and decisions people have made in the past, not instantly think you know the right answer and the greatest improvement. You're not always as successful as you think. I grew up being taught that by my grandmother, who was a great advocate of mud plaster.

- Q: What does it mean to live in an historic house, a plaqued house?
- A: I think that there is a responsibility to multiple goals and threads, and preservation is certainly one of them. And a respect for decisions that have been made in the past. And trying to avoid financially based decisions. I suspect that the most useful thing to do financially for all historical buildings in this part of the world would be to tear them down. That is by far and away the best land use from a financial point of view. Historical buildings are inefficient, they are expensive to maintain, and therefore, financially the best thing to do is tear them down.



Front portal of house. Laurel Seth, photographer.

Q: If it is so financially detrimental, then why not go that route?

A: It is home, and it has been home for a couple of generations. If you have some respect for the people who went before you, you think twice before you call the bulldozer. Even, at times, you try to fight the bulldozer from coming. In this part of town there has been for forty years a struggle to prevent this from becoming a parking lot. If you come down on the side of preservation you have to recognize that you will be very unpopular.

Q: Is it worth it?

A: It has been for me personally. I think your organization is one of the few, if not the only, organization in this milieu that has, in the last few decades, been relatively moral. I think morality frequently, or at times, brings a great deal of public criticism. You have been on the side of preventing people from bringing in the bulldozer.

Q: What are the positive aspects that compensate for the walls collapsing and the roof leaking?

A: There is a sense of long-term peace in a place that has actually survived this long. Here is this little fire. Maybe two hundred years ago people were sitting here, not with tape recorders, but discussing the problems of a flat roof. There is a joy to being in a place that has worked for several hundred years, for several generations. Whatever that intrinsic grace of being and living is, continues. What was appealing to someone two hundred and fifty years ago may still have some appeal in 1996. It is longevity. There is a harmony to the place which I expect only comes from the small mutations in existence over several hundred years of functioning in one place, which we don't always see in the newest and the most marvelous of Santa Fe style built on top of a hill.

Q: Did you learn these values from growing up in this house? You have gained an appreciation for traditional societies and traditional values, such as respect for past generations. Do you think that is linked to this house?

A: Probably. Part of it is certainly the house. One's own relatives. It may be that the two are inseparable. It is quite possible.

Q: What do you see for the future of this house?

A: I hope that as long as I'm around it will stay fairly unchanged. You'll have to talk to the children about what they think. That'll be decisions that they will have to make. Maybe they'll decide it's time to get the bulldozer in. I hope they don't, but maybe they will.

[The interview continues with his 14-year-old daughter]

Q: Your father said I should ask you about the pros and cons of living in an historic house.

A: Pro, it is really unique. I am the only person I know who has a house like this. I like that. It becomes more a part of you because it is different. I always want to live here now because I have grown up here and am used to it. I think it is more a part of New Mexico to live in a classic adobe house. I really love New Mexico.

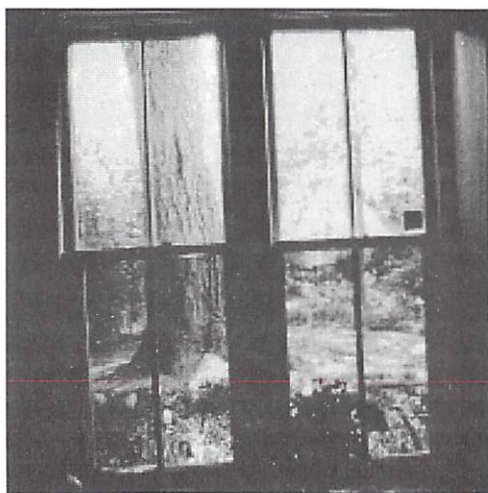
I had to learn as a little kid, though, to be careful around it, to be more respectful of things like that. This drum, for instance. As a little kid you want to bang on things and play around, and I had to be more careful because it is delicate. Most things in the house are antique and delicate. A little kid wants to just go around and mess it up. That was hard for me, but now I appreciate it.

I am disturbed when I see houses being torn down. There were a couple of houses on Don Gaspar that were like this one, little old houses, that they tore down and turned into a parking lot. Most people probably didn't really care, but it disturbs me because there are very few old houses. They are unique and different, those little houses. There probably aren't any other houses just like them and now they are gone. I am aware of that because I am living in a house like this.

Q: Is there anything you don't like?

A: Cold bathrooms!

*Garden view through front door.
Laurel Seth, photographer.*



Anita's Garden

Jim McBride

Board member and historian

Visitors would never suspect that Santa Fe was suffering a drought if they wandered through the garden at El Zagan last summer. Visiting tourists and local lovers of our garden all acclaim the beauty of the healthy trees, shrubs and flowers. Much of the credit for this miracle amidst our water shortage was owed to our gardener, Anita Stalter.

Anita worked with Stephanie Davis, starting in 1990, when the garden renovation project got underway. When Stephanie moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, a few years ago, Anita took over the horticultural responsibilities for El Zagan. One of the innovative ideas these master gardeners initiated together was a drip system for watering the trees, shrubs and flowers throughout the property.

Anita is a firm believer in the need for any Southwest gardener to be sensitive to the conditions of the area, which not only includes the soil and weather aspects, but most important, the water sources available. Her belief that the drip system is the best method has proven true at El Zagan. Her main concern during the past dry year were the trees, in particular the old established horse chestnuts and the always thirsty salt cedar. Raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by parents who loved to garden, Anita has been working in and around Santa Fe for over sixteen years. In 1986 she received her certifica-



tion as Master Gardener after completing the comprehensive course work offered by the Santa Fe County Extension Program. Every summer Anita employs two or three volunteer gardeners to help her at El Zagan and the Roque Tudesqui House, both properties owned by the HSFF.

*Anita Stalter in her garden.
Jim McBride, photographer.*

The present garden was laid out by Stephanie Davis along the lines of a Victorian garden, which might have existed in New Mexico at the turn of the century. A variety of the plants and flowers from the original garden still remain. For example, the lush peonies traditionally are supposed to have come from China via Mexico more than 100 years ago. The two giant horse chestnut trees, which so spectacularly dominate the property, are said to have been planted by James L. Johnson, one of the first Yankee merchants to settle permanently in Santa Fe over 150 years ago. Through Anita's efforts, the HSFF started shipping seeds for germination from the horse chestnut trees to the American Forest Famous and Historic Tree Company in Jacksonville, Florida. Potted saplings prepared by Anita are also sold at the El Zagan office. Kits were sold during the Historic Preservation Week last May at El Zagan for \$35. The kits include seedlings propagated from the horse chestnut seeds with full instructions on how to grow them. There is already such a demand for the kits that the HSFF has a waiting list and is also selling gift certificates in anticipation of delivery.

Besides the garden, which draws most of the visitors, Anita also cares for the orchard located behind the property, and two small vegetable gardens, for use by the El Zagan tenants. The east terrace garden contains lettuce, radishes, beans, beets, and carrots. Just below the garden, there are nine tomato plants.

When I asked Anita what flower in the garden she likes the best, she broke out in one of her bright smiles. After a pause, she did confess that the delphiniums this year really were something to admire. "Most people seem attracted to the roses," Anita said, "perhaps because they are most familiar to people from all over the world." To help our visitors, Anita has provided a map of the garden, which points out the location of various trees, shrubs and flowers. In addition to this small publication, Anita launched the effort this spring to produce a full-color poster of the garden. The poster was introduced at the opening of the annual August Art Show at El Zagan and was an immediate success. Copies are still for sale at the foundation office. Visitors, after a tour of the garden, seem delighted with the opportunity to buy the poster to take home to family and friends. Anita says that she had no doubts that the poster would be a success simply because the garden is that unique and memorable.

Thanks, Anita, from all of us, for the beauty you have helped bring into our lives.

Jim McBride--Volunteer Extraordinaire

*Lois Snyderman
Executive Director, HSFF*

In recognition of the many hours he has spent on foundation projects, the HSFF Board recently voted Jim McBride "volunteer of the year." Jim, a former commander in the navy and a naval aviator, moved to Santa Fe with his wife Barbara nine years ago to take a teaching position at Santa Fe High School. After two years at the school, Jim decided to pursue his passion for history on a full-time basis. He enrolled in the UNM graduate history program and received his Master's degree in the Spring of 1996.

Jim has served as the HSFF's volunteer archivist for several years, most recently cataloguing the papers left to HSFF by Sylvia Loomis, a long-time resident of El Zagan and a dedicated preservationist. This past January Jim became a member of the board and immediately volunteered to chair the Membership/Events committee, which is responsible for a number of important projects.

Last year Jim put in numerous hours planning and coordinating the HSFF art show, the Caminando Canyon Road tour, and producing the first-ever Bandelier Garden poster as a fund-raising enterprise. He also worked with another HSFF volunteer, John Davis, on the popular docent-led summer tours of El Zagan, given on Saturdays during July and August.

Jim is also a volunteer docent at Las Golondrinas, and in his rare spare time, continues his history research and writing. He is pursuing his research on the World War II German prisoners of war interned at Fort Stanton and transcribing the journals of the sea voyages that he made during his navy years.

The foundation is very grateful to Jim McBride for his many hours of volunteer work on its behalf.

Jim McBride portrays James L. Johnson at the Caminando Canyon Road tour.



The Santa Fe Trail Lives Again!

*Elaine Pinkerton Coleman
Local author and trail buff*

The Santa Fe Trail turned 175 years old in 1996, and trail buffs from Santa Fe and elsewhere turned out to commemorate the anniversary.

On Saturday, November 16, a troupe of re-enactors, representing the "Father of the Trail" William Becknell and his companions, all on horseback, rode into the Santa Fe Plaza at noon. A cheering crowd, many dressed in period costumes, greeted the "time travelers."

Thus began an afternoon of commemorative activities. State historian Thomas Chavez, Master of Ceremonies, welcomed Becknell and entourage and spoke briefly about the Trail's significance in the history of Santa Fe and the Southwest. In attendance were dignitaries from the Santa Fe Trail Association, National Park Service, Daughters of the American Revolution, Tesuque Indian Pueblo, and from the City and State of New Mexico. Also on hand were writers, journalists, and Santa Fe Trail historians.

Harry Myers, superintendent of Fort Union, presided over a formal ceremony at St. Francis Auditorium. The Santa Fe Concert Band provided music. Later in the afternoon an open house was held at the Palace of the Governors. Santa Fe Trail exhibits and dances by the San Juan Pueblo Indian dancers, Hispanic and Anglo period music, and storytelling were also offered.

One of the highlights of the day was a characterization of Doña Maria Gertrudes Barcelo ("La Tules") by singer-actress VanAnn Moore. Spectators were transported back in time as Moore portrayed the colorful, independent woman who operated one of early Santa Fe's most elaborate gambling establishments.

Often called the Southwest's first superhighway,



Santa Fe Trail ruts near Ft. Union, NM, 1996. Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Neg. No. 128726.

extending from Franklin, Missouri, to Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Trail was a cultural and commercial link between the existent United States and Mexico. The saga of the Santa Fe Trail offers a reflection of our country's history from 1821 through 1880, but the origins are far earlier. Authorities speculate that the trail may well have been the route of buffalo, antelope, deer, and other animals during seasonal migrations.

As early as 1801, Lt. Zebulon M. Pike was writing about the commercial possibilities of trade between America and the Spanish Southwest. His intuition was apt. For a span of nearly six decades, the Santa Fe Trail was traveled by countless men and women, hundreds of thousands of oxen, and Conestoga wagons.

When William Becknell left Franklin, Missouri, in September 1821, ostensibly to trade with the Indians, he had little luck. But in New Mexico, he encountered a company of Spanish dragoons. Mexico had declared its independence from Spain. American traders were now welcome in Santa Fe. Instead of taking him prisoner for having entered Spanish colonial territory illegally, the soldiers urged him to bring his goods to Santa Fe. Becknell arrived in Santa Fe on November 16th, quickly sold his goods, and hurried back to Missouri, his mules laden with silver coins.. Profits for Becknell and those who followed were astounding. It is estimated that Becknell profited 2,000 percent. With the birth of the Trail, a new era of prosperity began. For New Mexico, the trail meant ever-increasing supplies of less-expensive goods from the eastern United States. Many New Mexicans also sent caravans east.

The Santa Fe Trail originally stretched more than 900 miles from western Missouri, through Kansas, to southwest Colorado and the tip of the Oklahoma panhandle into northeast New Mexico and Santa Fe. Often travel was just 12 to 15 miles a day. Hazards included wagon accidents, disease, starvation, drought, storms and floods. Offsetting the dangers were handsome profits.

The trail offered not only commercial gain but romance and adventure. People of those years undertook the rough, challenging route in search of new lives, new fates, new fortunes. The trail's greatest commercial traffic occurred in 1855, with some \$5 million in profits. By the turn of the century, however, trade by wagon and oxen had been almost totally replaced by the advent of the railroad.

To learn more about the Santa Fe Trail, contact the National Santa Fe Trail Association or our local End of the Trail Chapter, Jack Barnes, president.

HSFF Honors Indian School Teacher

Sally Hyer

At an evening ceremony in the garden at El Zaguan last May the Foundation's Education Committee was proud to honor Santa Fe Indian School teacher Doreen Bailey with the John and Faith Meem Educational Award for her innovative, multimedia project, *Pieces of Our Past*. The Meems devoted much of their lives to working on behalf of Pueblo architecture and history, and the 1996 award recipient shares their passionate spirit of commitment.

Many thoughtful and well-prepared projects were nominated for the Meem award this year. The Education Committee presented Certificates of Merit to Lisa Nordstrum of Atalaya Elementary School for her video, *What is a Neighborhood?*, and to Edward L. Chacon of Edward Ortiz Middle School for his proposed project, *In Search of Peralta*.

Pieces of Our Past is an electronic textbook that tells the story of the history of SFIS since 1890. It combines readings and computerized animation with oral history interviews and photographic images from the school's archives. This interactive multimedia database advances the knowledge of history and historical research skills of Native American 7th and 8th grade students.

The Education Committee particularly admired the impact and interactivity of *Pieces of Our Past*. In a spin-off project SFIS students in several classes developed their own research questions, did library research, studied oral history techniques, and interviewed relatives. They then created story boards that were presented to parents and classmates at a special open house. The most successful story boards were entered into the database. Students, their relatives, and Pueblo community members were inspired to share and interpret their own history, creating a permanent resource for future students.

Perhaps not since the 1930s, when El Zaguan owner Margretta Dietrich supported reforms in Indian education, have so many Santa Fe Indian School teachers and students gathered at the Canyon Road house.

BULLETIN REDUX

Ruth Holmes, Chair
Publications Committee

“All the news that’s fit to print.” Well, not exactly. The *New York Times* need not worry about competition from the HSFF, but since 1974 we have been printing the *Bulletin* with a similar objective. “All the research fit to print” still might be a bit presumptuous a statement, but the Foundation’s publications committee works diligently to compile and disseminate information considered pertinent to the goals of HSFF and to the interest of its membership. For readers of long standing, the format of the *Bulletin* is probably rather obvious; however, this summary is written as an explanation to those who are not so familiar with the publication—an audience which now includes individual researchers, public information sources, and property owners as well as new members. This is also a good place to remind people that receiving the *Bulletin* at no charge is another benefit that comes with payment of membership dues.

The cover photograph and related main article always provide material on a property recently placed on the foundation's "Registry of Buildings Worthy of Preservation" and, thus, becomes eligible to display the foundation's handsome bronze plaque. The research file for the property is put into publication format, including information on previous owners as well as on the property itself. Architectural elevations and plans are reproduced, along with photographs both old and new, and observations that might add to the general knowledge. Articles in recent issues discuss various neighborhood associations, recognize special volunteers or projects, furnish information on HSFF grants, and acknowledge unique associations with other preservation-guided groups. Of equal importance is often a special article on a historic property: perhaps owned by the foundation or previously plaqued but now supported with new information or, upon occasion, one considered endangered.

The *Bulletin*, like buildings, people, and laws, is open and subject to change. We welcome suggestions and comments from our readers and hope this publication, indeed, does provide the research and human interest that will make reading it a worthwhile and pleasurable endeavor.

1997 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

President Susan Mayer
1st Vice Chair Jim McBride
2nd Vice Chair Ruth Holmes
Treasurer Dale F. Zinn
Secretary Sally Hyer
Ex Officio Vacant

Members at Large

Charles Bennett Jack Pressler
B. Jesse Monfort Bopp Robert Vigil
Eleanor Bové Greg Walke
Georjean Brock Barbara Zook
Tracy E. Conner Corinne Sze (honorary)
Elizabeth Gutierrez

Executive Director: Lois Snyderman

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

THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

PO Box 2535

Santa Fe, NM 87504-2535

983-2567

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Annual Membership Dues for 19__.

Individual	\$10.00 _____	Patron	\$50 _____
Family	\$15.00 _____	Sustaining	\$100 _____
Commercial	\$25.00 _____	Life	\$1,000 _____



I would like to volunteer.