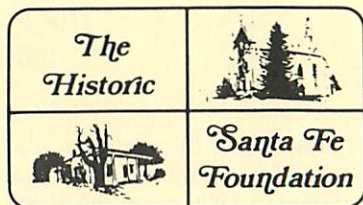


Bulletin ...



Vol. 5

June/July, 1979

No. 2



*First Ward School
400 Canyon Road
Photograph courtesy of Hope Curtis*



The First Ward School 400 Canyon Road

Standing at the corner of Canyon Road and Garcia Street, the First Ward School is an imposing one-story brick building with a modified hip roof. Opened in 1906 when the *Wide Awake Primer* was the approved first grade reader and the town's truant officer terrorized reluctant scholars, it is a classic example of a turn-of-the-century educational institution. Erected by contractor Carlo Digneo from plans drawn by architects Rapp and Rapp the school's original cost to the taxpayers of Santa Fe was \$5,311.00. Since its sale by the Board of Education in 1928 it has served at various times as a zoo, a theater, an apartment house and as a store for the display and sale of antiques. Now occupied by the Kelly Gallery which specializes in fine art and Indian artifacts, the old school continues to be an important landmark on lower Canyon Road.

The present building replaced an earlier structure purchased in 1876 by the Santa Fe County School Commission which had previously decided against putting up a new school. After careful deliberation, the board, headed by Antonio Ortiz y Salazar, decided to pay \$1,500.00 for a large adobe containing four rooms and a dance hall which had been a popular place for neighborhood *bailes*. One of the sellers happened to be Eugenio Griego, county treasurer and ex-officio custodian of Santa Fe's educational funds. The location was described in the deed as "the junction of the road leading from Santa Fe to Fort Union with the road to the house of James L. Johnson" known today as *El Zagan*. When equipped with two rows of double desks the building was officially designated as the public school for County Precinct -3 which included Santa Fe's east side. Although poorly lighted and heated in the winter only by wood-burning stoves which required constant refueling, this crude facility annually served 80 to 90 students for the next 30 years.

In 1891 the Territorial Assembly passed legislation which created a tax supported public school system for the entire territory and the following year title to the Canyon Road property passed from the county to the newly established city board of education. Soon thereafter the county precincts were replaced by city wards as administrative units and the old structure on Canyon Road became known as the First Ward School. Because of the structure's obvious discomforts and continuing deterioration a committee of three school board members was chosen in 1905 to consider possible remedies. With prominent attorney Napoleon B. Laughlin as chairman, this group declared the building "a disgrace" and recommended that it be condemned, stating that further repairs would be a waste of taxpayers money. In December of the same year the board proposed that an architect be employed to prepare plans and specifications for a new brick school to be erected as soon as possible. Two months later, the board accepted a proposal submitted by the Las Vegas architectural firm of I.H. and W.M. Rapp who had also designed the city's new high school then under construction. The contract was awarded to Italian-born Carlo Digneo, one of Santa Fe's best known builders.



The original First Ward School, predecessor of the present structure, as it appeared in 1904. Santa Fe Public Schools Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Contemporary photographs show that the school's exterior is little changed since it was opened in the fall of 1906. Resting on a sandstone foundation, the structure is set back from Canyon Road behind a brick retaining wall now topped by iron posts joined by lengths of chain. The retaining wall is broken by a flight of concrete steps leading to a landing in front of the entry which is reached by a second run of stairs. The main entrance has been scaled down somewhat; the first glass and wood double doors have been replaced by a single paneled door now painted black. Although the large block letters which boldly spelled out "Public School" have been removed, the original transom and sidelights still frame the doorway. The roof is embellished by a vestigial balcony and a short octagonal tower which was formerly surmounted by a flag pole. About 1921 an addition was made for the installation of lavatories in the building's south end which has recently been further extended.

Even though the school was the pride of the neighborhood when it opened its doors in September, 1906 its importance was short lived. Four years earlier St. Francis School had begun classes for an ever increasing enrollment across the street from the Cathedral on the present location of La Fonda's parking lot. Many of its students came from the First Ward which made the new building something of a "white elephant" because of the resurgence in the Santa Fe parochial schools. After three years it became evident that continued operation was not economically feasible and the school was closed. Subsequently it was opened intermittently when other institutions were overcrowded until its sale in 1928 to Dr. Frank Mera for



First Ward teacher Fanny McNulty McGraw ready for rush-hour traffic c. 1897. Santa Fe Public Schools Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



First Ward School Building.

August 1906

From Santa Fe Public Schools Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

\$5,000.00. A graduate of Henneman Hospital Medical School in Philadelphia, Mera had begun to practice medicine in the East when he was afflicted with tuberculosis. After a successful cure at Colorado Springs he came to Santa Fe about 1903 where he acquired Sunmount Sanitorium. From an unprepossessing beginning known as "Tent City" Mera and his brother Harry developed Sunmount into one of the finest establishments of its kind in the Southwest.

During Mera's ownership the school's most memorable tenant was naturalist Benjamin T.B. Hyde, later honored in the naming of Hyde Park. He used the building as the headquarters for a Boy Scout troop and as the location of a natural history exhibit. His collection which included live birds and animals indigenous to New Mexico, is still recalled with nostalgia by many present day Santa Feans. In 1936 Mera sold the property to Katherine Gay, another well known figure in Santa Fe who had come from the East. A native of Chicago she is perhaps best remembered as the builder of the handsome Spanish-Pueblo Revival house near the original location of Sunmount, now the home of Mrs. Sallie Wagner.

Miss Gay tried unsuccessfully to establish a theater on Canyon Road which she called the "Little Red Schoolhouse," said to be one of the first in Santa Fe to show foreign films. Just before World War II she remodeled the building into apartments which required changes in fenestration and the addition of several fireplaces. Following her death in 1962 the building was sold again to an English antique dealer, William J. Wilson, who had previously operated similar businesses in Dallas and Chicago. Tired of urban life and afflicted with an asthmatic condition, Wilson was delighted with the climate and life style he found in Santa Fe. After a brief stay at the corner of Lincoln and Marcy Streets he moved his store to Canyon Road where he remained for over a decade.

The schoolhouse is now owned by Scottsdale investor Myron G. Sammons and is occupied by a fine arts gallery directed by Joan Kelly. Repartitioned once again, the building contains three large rooms for the display of paintings and other works of art, a floor plan which is probably similar to the original arrangement for school rooms. Flanking the entrance the two cloakrooms have been enlarged and now serve as offices. Although the building's interior has been altered on several occasions to adapt it to various uses during its 70 years, changes to the exterior have been minimal. With its dignified demeanor the First Ward School continues to be unmistakably a school, probably the only building of its kind in Santa Fe.

John O. Baxter
May 1, 1979

Sources

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Board of Education Minute Books, City of Santa Fe, 1899-1930.

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Pinckney R. Tully House, 136 Grant Avenue. Photograph by Hope Curtis.

FOUNDATION RECEIVES TWO AWARDS FOR TULLY HOUSE RESTORATION

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation has been the recipient of two awards for its work on the historic restoration of the Pinckney R. Tully house at 136 Grant Avenue in Santa Fe.

On February 2, 1979, the Old Santa Fe Association held an awards dinner at the Old St. Vincent Hospital's Marian Hall. Two awards of merit were given for restoration, one going to Catherine McElvain for the residence at 222 Shelby Street and the second going to the Foundation for restoration of the Tully House to a specific time as documented in history; the exactitude of this documentation was again given special recognition during a slide presentation by Mike Weber. The award from the Old Santa Fe Association was accepted by the Foundation's Vice-Chairman, Eloisa Jones.

The New Mexico Historical Society held a conference in conjunction with its annual meeting in Taos on April 21, 1979. Part of the conference included an awards program by the Cultural Properties Review Committee for historic preservation projects throughout New Mexico, one award going to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation and architect Donna Quasthoff for the Tully House restoration.

Should any members be interested in seeing these two awards, they are on display at the Foundation's office in the Tully House, open from 9:00 to 1:00 weekdays.

Santa Fe's First Park

In 1832 Antonio Barreiro, a young attorney sent from Mexico the previous year to serve as *asesor* or legal advisor to the New Mexican authorities, noted:

Santa Fe has many places adequate for public parks. The abundance of cottonwood trees would make the work of any man who wished to promote such project very easy indeed.¹

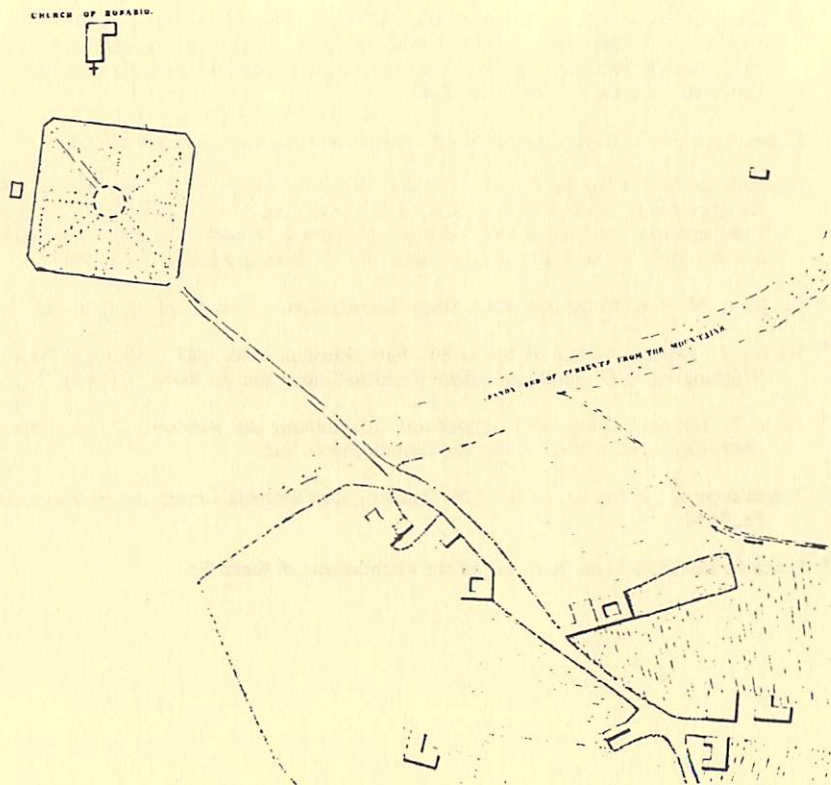
Santa Fe, however, did not have a park or public spirited citizen until the administration of Governor Mariano Martinez de Lejanza (1844-1845). Intent on beautifying Santa Fe the newly appointed governor ordered the establishment of a large park south of Rosario Chapel. The area which was known as "La Alameda" was described in 1913 by Demetrio Perez, the son of slain Governor Albino Perez:

Another work to embellish [sic] Santa Fe was done by him [Governor Martinez] & that was the establishment of a Park (Alameda) outside of the City in the Northern part near the Chapel of Nuestra Senora del Rosario. This park was attractive for its beauty. It was well planned by Gov. Martinez. — Trees & wild flowers were planted there systematically & grew nicely by constant irrigation from a long ditch dug out from the Terminus of the Common ditch used for the irrigation of lands North of the river which ended at the Arroyo running from the mountains of "Rio de Tesuque"; the new ditch for the Alameda or Park was dug out for a distance of about 3000 yards [feet?]; adobe fences were put in around the Park; walks were left inside running in straight lines from the center of the Park in all directions; a round spot was left in the center surrounded by a low adobe [adobe] fence & this spot was used as a ring for *Chicken fights*, where those fond of that game used to assemble to enjoy the performances. On the West side of the Park was built an adobe house with a portal in front for [the] residence of the family of the man employed to irrigate the Park & keep the trees & plants in good condition.²

Santa Fe's first park was possibly the alameda referred to as one of the locations used for a celebration on September 16, 1844 commemorating Mexican Independence. The program for the festivities called for the Governor to lead a procession of Santa Feans from the Plaza down la Calle Principal (San Francisco Street) to the alameda where a small shrine was erected. Following a public speech, military musicians, acrobats and rope walkers were scheduled to entertain the populace in the alameda. Weather permitting, fireworks were to be displayed that evening.³

In another account of Governor Martinez' beautification plans, Demetrio Perez commented on how Santa Feans greatly enjoyed sitting in the shade provided by the trees in the park.⁴ However, the park or alameda was short lived and its existence had been barely noted by troops in the U.S. Army of Occupation. Jeremy F. Gilmer included a sketch of the park and caretaker's residence in his 1846 Plan of Santa Fe New Mexico.⁵ John T. Hughes in his 1848 work *Doniphan's Expedition* reproduced a map of Santa Fe at the time of occupation in 1846

*Drawer 142.
Sheet 31.*



Portion of "Plan of Santa Fe, New Mexico" drawn by Jeremy F. Gilmer in 1846 showing Santa Fe's first park just south of Rosario Chapel. The caretaker's residence is located west of the park or alameda. Pathways can be seen radiating from the center where cockfights were held and the entire area is surrounded by a wall. An entrance is indicated at the southeast corner while a road from this same corner leads back to town along what is presently North Guadalupe Street.

Jeremy F. Gilmer, "Plan of Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1846-1847." National Archives, Washington, D.C., Photocopy - State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.

which only hinted at the outline of the park.⁶ On June 3, 1847 Dr. John W. Dunlap, a U.S. Army doctor, drew an elementary sketch in his journal of what he termed "a pleasure ground connected with a church north of Santa Fe in the suburbs."⁷ Dr. Dunlap's brief note is the last mention of the park which has come to light. By the late 1860's Rosario Cemetery had been established and today it encompasses the area once occupied by Santa Fe's first park.⁸

James H. Purdy

May 9, 1979

1. H. Bailey Carrol and J. Villasana Haggard (Trans.). *Three New Mexico Chronicles, the Exposition of Don Pedro Bautista Pino 1812; the Ojeada of Lic. Antonio Barreiro 1832; and the Addition by Don Jose Agustin de Escudero, 1849.* Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942.
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3. Proceedings of the Junta Patriotica, 1844, Mexican Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M., and Ward Alan Minge, "Mexican Independence Day and a Ute Tragedy in Santa Fe, 1844" *The Changing Ways of Southwestern Indians.* El Corral de Santa Fe - Westerners Brand Book, 1973.
4. Benjamin M. Reed Collection #241, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.
5. Jeremy F. Gilmer, "Plan of Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1846-1847". National Archives, Washington, D.C., photocopy State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.
6. John T. Hughes, *Doniphan's Expedition; Containing an Account of New Mexico, 1848.* Reprinted in 1962 by the Rio Grande Press, Inc.
7. Typed copy of the Journal of Dr. J.N. Dunlap, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.
8. Santa Fe Burial Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

WORTHY OF PRESERVATION

Since 1962 the following buildings have been recognized by the Historic Santa Fe Foundation as being worthy of preservation:

The Felipe B. Delgado House
The Donaciano Vigil House
The Gregorio Crespino House
St. Michael's Dormitory
The Juan Jose Prada House
El Zagan
The Juan Rodriguez House
The Francisca Hinojos House
The Arias de Quiros Site
The Padre Gallegos House
The Boyle House
The Roque Tudesqui House
Barrio de Analco
The Olive Rush Studio
The Randall Davey House
The Pinckney R. Tully House
The Adolph Bandelier House
The De La Pena House
The Antonio Jose Ortiz House
The Nicholas Ortiz III House
Loretto Chapel
The Hesch House
The Speigelberg-Spitz House
Old Stone Warehouse
Boquet Ranch
The Eugenie Shonnard House
The Jose Alarid House
The George Cuyler Preston House
Jailhouse Ranch
The Hayt-Wientge House
The Second Ward School
Cathedral Park
The Bergere House
The Borrego House
The Digneo-Valdez House
The Digneo-Moore House
Fort Marcy's Officer's Residence (Hewett House)
Carlos Vierra House
First Ward School