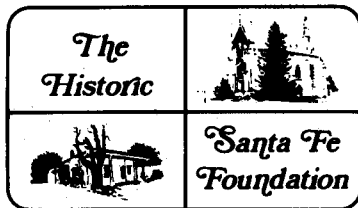


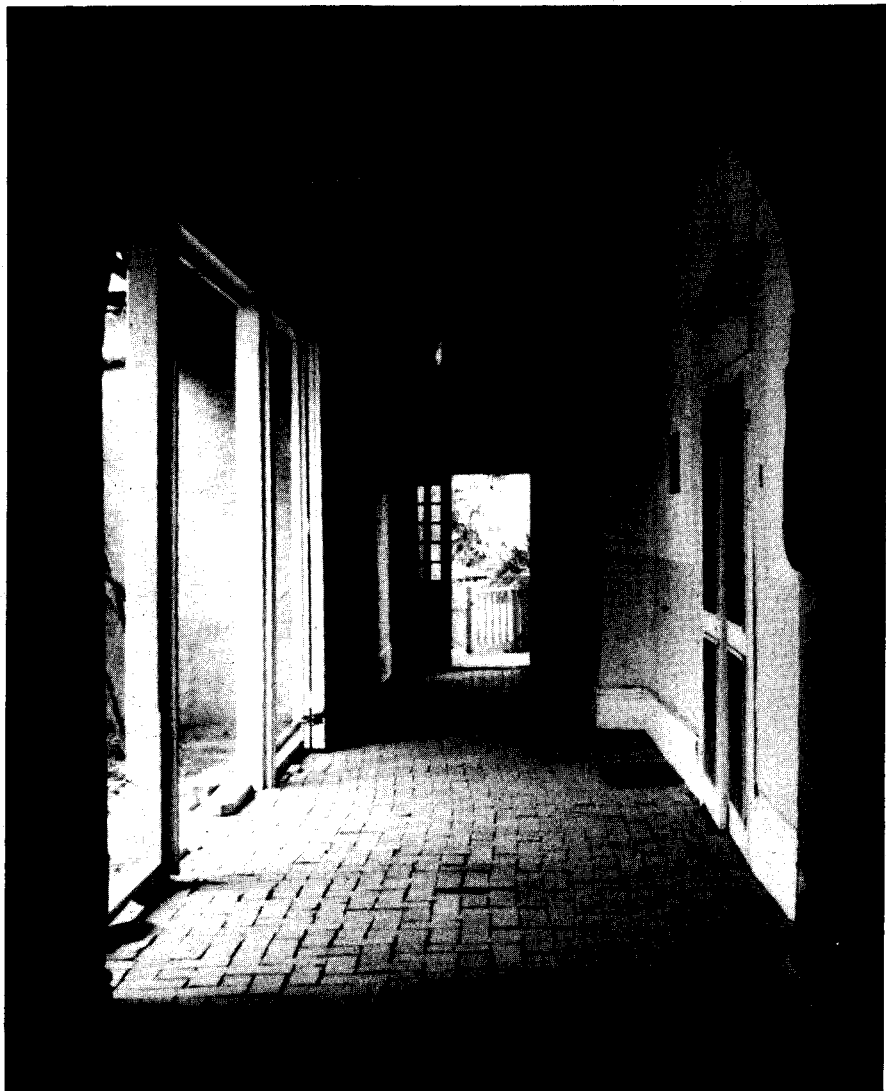
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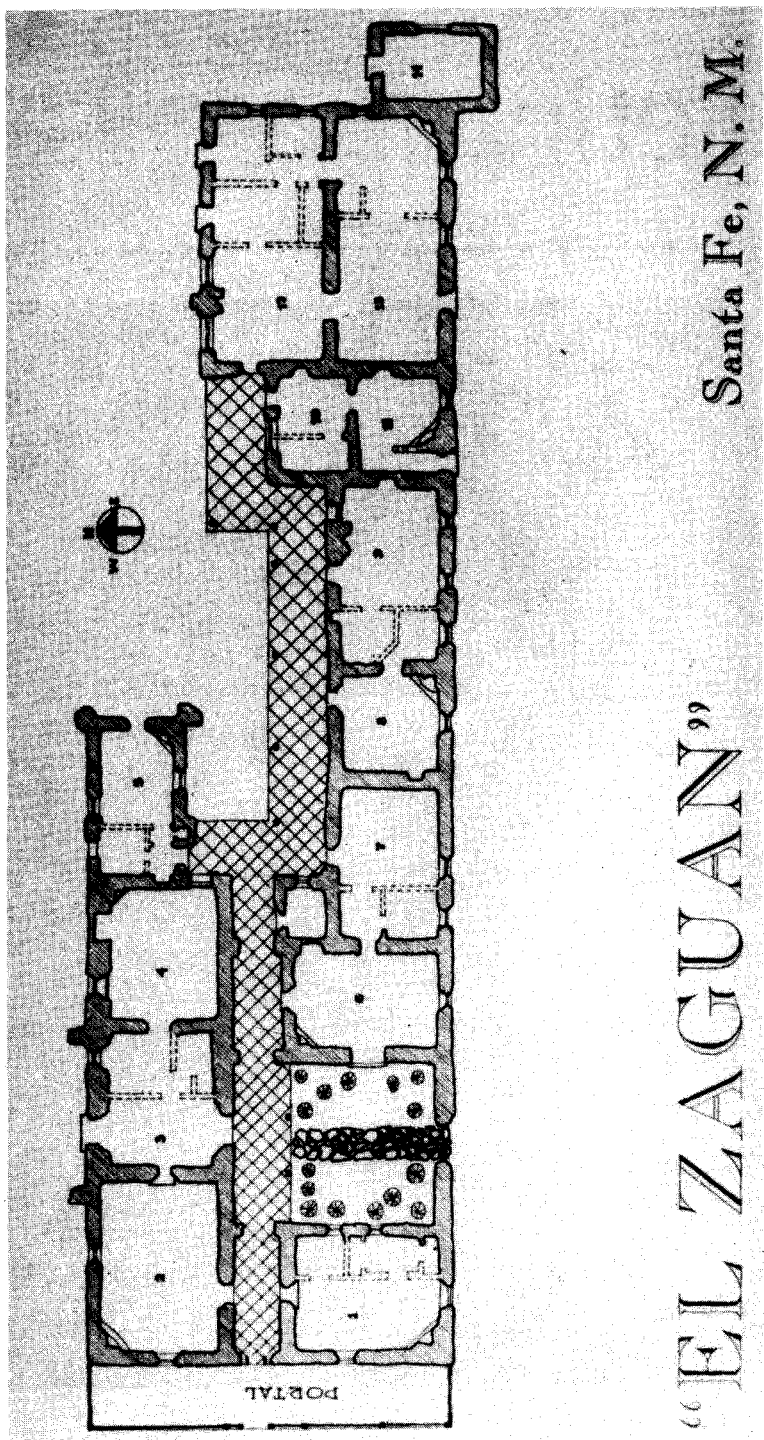
March/April 1977

No. 1



EL ZAGUAN — 545 Canyon Road

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation Collection State Records and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



“EL ZAGUAN”

Santa Fe, N. M.



El Zagan as viewed from Canyon Road.

Cultural Properties Review Committee – State Planning Office Filex, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

EL ZAGUAN

The visitor or architect in quest of old Santa Fe inevitably finds his way to Canyon Road. Although the street as a whole has a charming character, thanks to an engaging sequence of architectural forms and an unpredictable building line, specific houses of architectural merit and genuine antiquity are rare. One may wander for blocks without being able to single out a particular house of distinction. At 545 Canyon Road, however, the visitor inevitably stops in admiration before the long rambling Territorial house. This old mansion, called "El Zagan," has long been regarded as one of the show places of New Mexico.

Originally it was the home of James Johnson, one of the first Yankee merchants to settle permanently in Santa Fe. Mr. Johnson purchased the property in 1849 but this should not suggest that the house as it appears today dates from that time. Variations in wall thickness (two to four feet), changes in ceiling height and construction and differences in trim indicate that the place was built over a period of time.

Several rooms were on the land which Mr. Johnson bought. Although conjecture, one might suspect that these were the file of

rooms, #7-8-9 and possibly #10-11. The larger scale and the somewhat greater degree of formality in plan would suggest rooms #1 and #2-3-4 to be later additions, probably the late 1860's when so much building activity was afoot in the Territory. The pedimented window and door frames, the glass in the double-hung windows and the trim of the west *portal* suggest such a date. Rooms #12 and 13, despite later remodeling, may also have been added in the nineteenth century. Rooms #5 and 12 probably were added later. However, the danger of trying to reconstruct the life of an adobe building is perilous.

A good many of the interior doors connecting rooms in sequence have been blocked up, but their presence is still announced by closets or deep shelves. Probably in the 1920's new windows were installed in most east portions of the structure and the porches of both patios were rebuilt. The oldest surviving trim, the only of unusual architectural interest, is to be found in the rooms at the west end. The adobe fireplaces, although following old designs, were also probably rebuilt.

The plan of El Zagan is informal. Essentially the house wraps



The Builder of El Zagan,
James L. Johnson
Miscellaneous Collections, State Records and Archives, Santa Fe,
New Mexico.



Margretta Stewart Dietrich in 1925.
Reprinted From: *New Mexico Recollections* Part II, 1961.

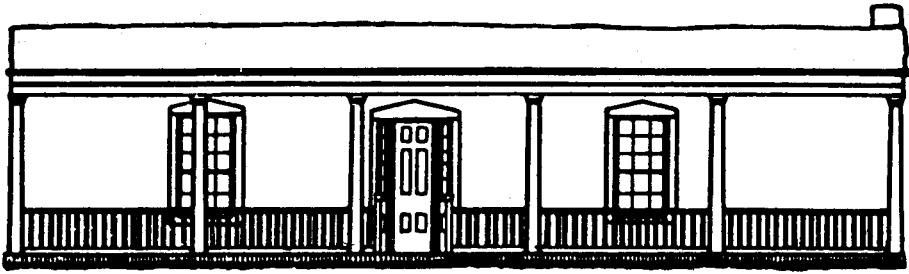


Mrs. Dietrich shortly before her death
in 1961. Reprinted From: *New Mexico Recollections* Part II, 1961.

itself around two patios. The central patio serves as the entry from the street and about it are grouped the larger, more formal rooms. The east patio, which opens into a kind of terrace, was the center of household activities. The west *portal* and its formal garden are at the end of the long corridor, or *zaguan*, which runs the entire length of the house and gives it its name. Appropriately, the library, #1, and the main sala, #2, were situated in this area.

The handsomest architectural feature of the house is the long *portal* that runs along the west facade and looks over the garden. The irregular spacing of the columns and unsymmetrical fenestration are in keeping with the usual informality of Territorial architecture. Particularly charming are the simple decorative accents which have been achieved with a few home-cut wooden moldings applied to posts or door trim as a faint recall of the columns, architraves or pediments of the Classical style. The lattice along the end of the *portal* nearest the street is a simple decorative feature that provides privacy and clarifies the relation between public and private areas.

The mansion's other interesting feature is the main corridor that, beginning with the east patio, moves through the center of the house,



West Elevation by Bartlett Gilbert

fusing with the entrance patio and prolonging onto the west *portal* (see illustration). This space has a charming ambiguity, and the viewer is never certain whether he is inside or out.

Despite these architectural features, the real merit of "El Zagan" lies in the placement of the house on its site — or better still, the manner in which the house seems to have grown out of its location. Situated on a long, narrow terrace, the structure is closely bound by the road on one side and a high terrace on the other. From this terrace one drops down to the level of the once open fields.

The late owner, Mrs. Margretta S. Dietrich, about 1948 compiled a brief history of the house from assorted legends and documents. According to this, the house which today consists of fourteen rooms at one time contained twenty-four. This included a chapel (#5), a special "chocolate room" and Mr. Johnson's library (#1), which once housed the largest collection of books in the Territory. The services of a resident carpenter are said to have been required to make doors, windows and furniture for the mansion. Servant quarters for the establishment were located across from the house on the south side of Canyon Road. The west garden, according to this account, was laid out with the advice of Adolf Bandelier; peony bushes were imported from China and the horse chestnut trees brought from the midwest.

The subsequent history of the place has been checkered, often melodramatic. The Johnson heirs forfeited the house about the time of the First War. For a while "El Zagan" served as a desirable *pensione*. In the twenties it was restored under the direction of Kate (Mrs. Kenneth) Chapman who advised on the restoration of many old Santa Fe homes. Mrs. Dietrich bought "El Zagan" in the late twenties and although she divided it into seven apartments, she respected the nineteenth century character of the old place. Her recent death again raises the question of the building's future. It is a landmark that must be preserved.

—Bainbridge Bunting

Editor's Note – The preceding article first appeared in the May-June 1961 issue of *New Mexico Architect*. Following Mrs. Dietrich's death, El Zagan, Inc. was formed. The corporation purchased the building and has preserved it up to the present time. On March 31, 1976 John and Faith Meem transferred the majority of the stock in El Zagan, Inc. to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation thus assuring the continued preservation of this historic structure.

THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION
Annual Membership Meeting, January 10, 1977
Museum of International Folk Art

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by the Chairman, Dr. Edward S. Cook.

The minutes of the 1976 Annual Membership Meeting were read and approved.

The Treasurer distributed copies of the 1976 Balance Sheet and Operating Statement. In his report, Mr. Sawtell pointed out the increase in net worth – \$108,857.02. He said that the Foundation was now the majority stockholder in El Zagan, having been given 80% of its stock. The report was accepted.

Dr. Cook thanked all Board members for their work during the year, with special thanks to committee chairmen Val Van Soelen for the traditional Christmas lighting contest and Jody Ellis for the Bulletin. The year had seen the Tully House renovation well underway and the membership increase to more than 500, on the whole an active and successful year in which the Board of Directors had met monthly and the Executive Committee several times. He then asked for the following committee reports:

Loretto Chapel Mr. Smith reported a very active year. He thanked Mr. Martinez for the installation of the alarm system and smoke detection devices and Mr. Thompson for the signs and tapes which are now in use. The chapel is staffed by volunteers each Wednesday under the direction of Mrs. Chilson and they were responsible for the Christmas decoration, working with Mrs. White.

Historic Research Mr. Purdy reported two houses plaqued: Hayt-Wientge House, 620 Paseo de la Cuma, and Jail House Ranch in Pojoaque. One plaque was removed during the year because of alterations: El Rancho Viejo, where remodeling had destroyed its architectural integrity. He said documentation is underway on other houses, in particular the Carlos Vierra house. Mr. Purdy thanked Mr. John Baxter for his help in documentation.

Tully House Miss Quasthoff reported on progress of renovation which she illustrated with slides.

Membership Mrs. Chilson reported that membership at the end of 1976 was increased by some 200. She thanked the people who had helped with this, a group at El Castillo who addressed envelopes, and Mrs. Clayton, Mrs. Ham, Mrs. Warren and Mrs. White who were active in soliciting members. In 1977 each member will receive a shield to be displayed in window or car, small ones for all membership classes except Commercial in which case a larger one will be supplied for display.

Election of officers being the next order of business, Mr. Register gave the Nominating Committee's Report:

Members whose terms expire in 1977 are: Ken Bateman who is serving a second consecutive term
James H. Purdy who is serving a first term
Philippe Register who is serving a first term
Lewis Thompson who is serving a first term
Charlotte White who is serving a first term

in addition, John Dendahl whose term expires in 1978 has resigned.

The Committee recommends: *George Ewing* to replace Mr. Bateman: *Don Van Soelen* to fill unexpired term of Mr. Dendahl and re-election of those serving a first term: *James H. Purdy, Philippe Register, Lewis Thompson, Charlotte White.*

Mr. Vedder moved that nominations be closed and the Secretary instructed to case a unanimous vote for the candidates recommended by the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

Dr. Cook introduced Sylvia Loomis, formerly Executive Secretary for the Foundation.

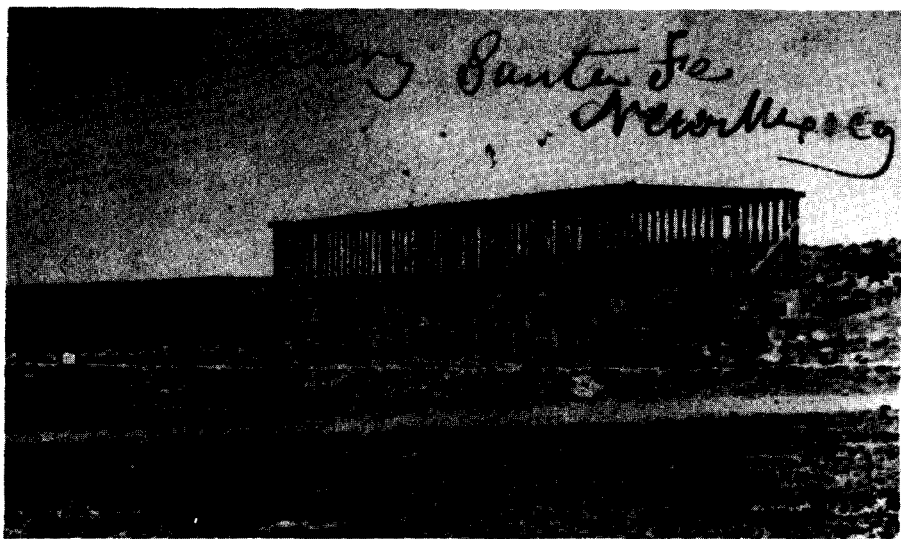
There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to hear Dr. Marcus Smith speak on "The Five St. Vincent Hospitals: 1865-1977"

Respectfully submitted,

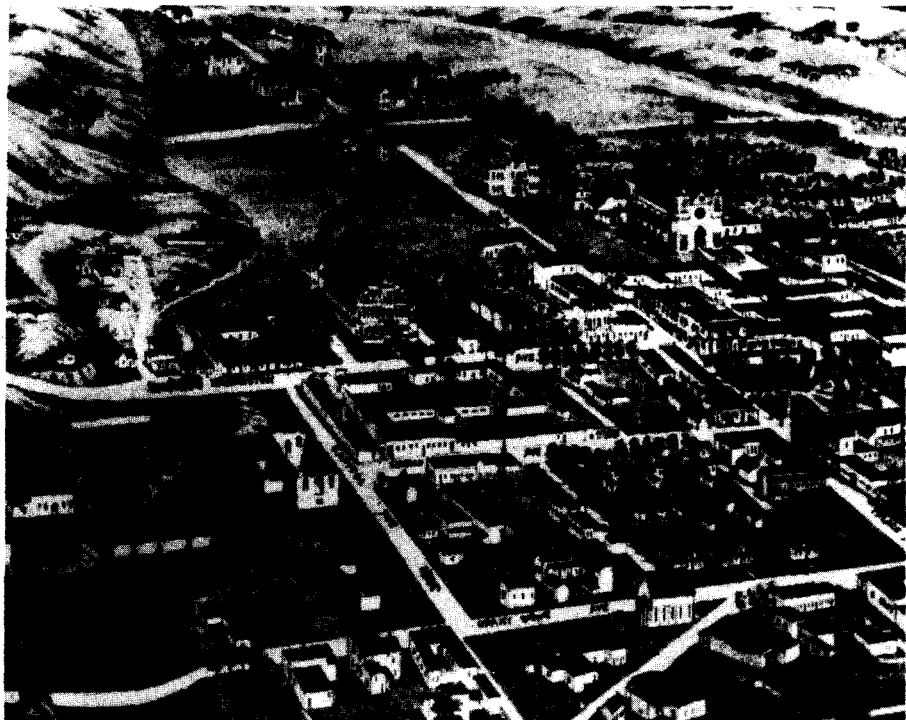
Approved:
Charlotte White
Secretary

Mary M. Gilliland
Executive Secretary

SANTA FE YESTERDAY



Records of the Territorial Capitol Building Boards and Commissions, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

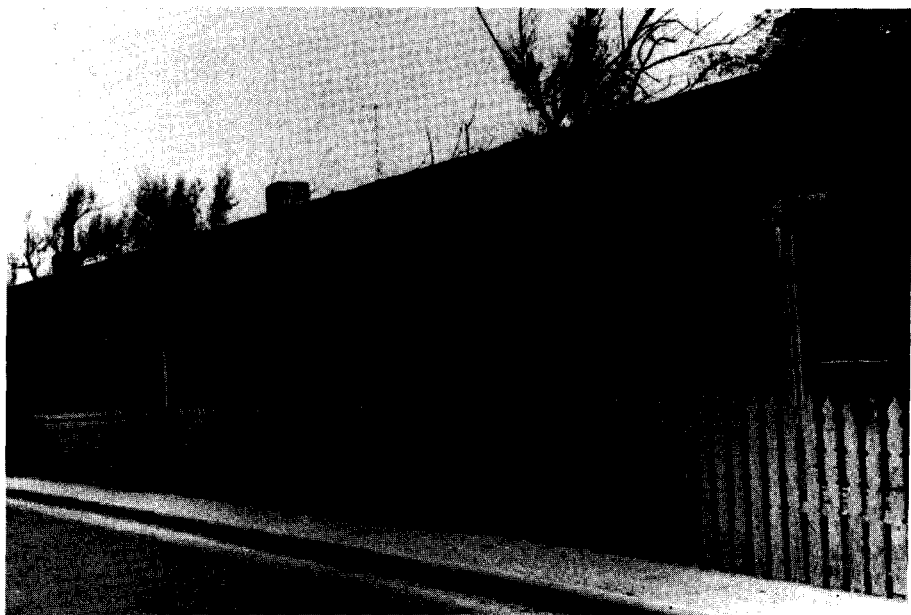


Portion of J.J. Stoner, Bird's Eye View of Santa Fe 1882 (reprint).

In the mid-1850's Santa Fe was the scene of the first attempt at establishing a penitentiary in the Rocky Mountains area. Construction of the penitentiary started during the winter of 1854 and spring of 1855. However because of insufficient funds and the protesting of Santa Feans who did not want a penal institution located facing South Federal Place where the Post Office is situated today, the project was halted in April of 1857. The photograph taken in 1867 shows the new penitentiary in an uncompleted state. As late as 1882, as is indicated by the lithograph, remnants of the ill-fated penitentiary could still be seen facing Capitol Ave. (South Federal Place) and situated just west of the uncompleted United States Court House. A new penitentiary was finally opened south of Santa Fe in August of 1885 fronting what is known as Pen Road. In June of 1956 the present penitentiary was established nine miles south of the city.

James Purdy

Sources: Capitol Rebuilding Board, LR 1867-1873, and Records of the Territorial and State Penitentiary, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



East Portion of El Zagan

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



MEMBERSHIPS FOR 1977

Just a reminder to those of you who have not as yet sent in your renewal for membership in the Historic Santa Fe Foundation for 1977.

Individual memberships are a modest \$3.00 – family memberships are \$5.00 and business firms \$10.00.

Your loyal support of our endeavors and goals has been appreciated and we hope you plan to continue with your renewal for 1977.

