

Bulletin...

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Historic*



*Santa Fe
Foundation*

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511 Armijo Street ca. 1915.



511 Armijo Street today.

THE PROFESSOR J.A. WOOD HOUSE

The low adobe house with Territorial trim sits halfway up the slope on a site designated in the 1981s as 511 Armijo Street. In August of 1879 when Rosalia Baca and Diego Gonzales sold the property to Abelerio Nuañez and his wife Victoria Sanches de Nuañez it was described as being "on the northeast side of the River and thus at the shoulder of the hill . . . a house built of four rooms with forty-two vigas." ("*. . . al lado norte este de Rio y asi al espaldo de la loma. . . una casa que constru de cuatro piezas con cuarenta y dos vigas.*") The price paid by Nuañez was \$200, the same amount Baca had paid to Bernardo Sais and Francisquita Ortega fifteen years earlier, in August of 1864

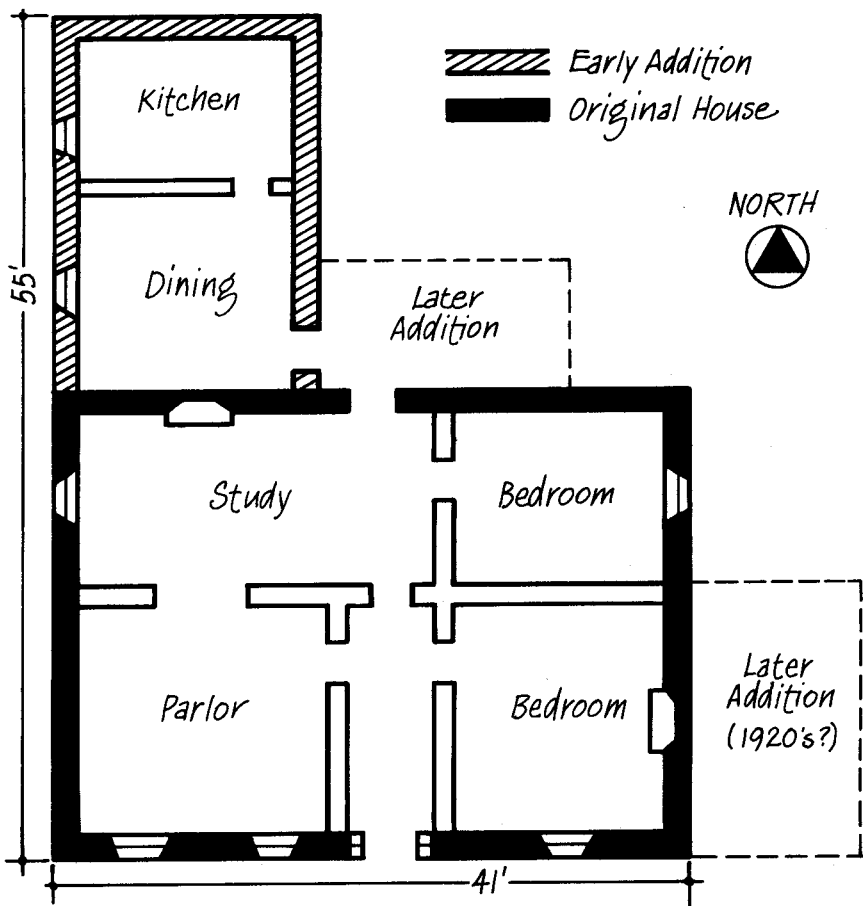
The property first appears in the records in July of 1860, when Bernardino Sais purchased it from José Sandoval and Rosario Sais de Sandoval for thirty pesos, four reales (about \$35.00), with the assurance of the sellers that "nosotros tenemos una posesion irrevocable in fé simple por herencia que obtuvimos de los padres de Rosario Saiz de Sandoval."

By 1883 the value of the house had tripled when Elizabeth C. Guyer and her husband paid \$600 for property "containing and adobe house of four rooms and a passageway erected centrally therein, with a number of apple trees and a well of water in the front and between the house and said Arroyo Saises." Six years and three owners later, on June 15, 1899 James A. Wood is recorded as the owner of the parcel of land and improvements thereon, located 100 yards north of the Santa Fe River, west of Arroyo de los Saises, east of lands of Teodoro Martinez and "lately of Mrs. Chas. H Gildersleeve", and northeast from where Palace Avenue intersects said arroyo. The price was back down to \$200.

The reason for the drop in selling price is unknown, but it seems likely that the previous increase in value during the Nuañez ownership (1879-1883) may have corresponded with a significant enlargement of the house and its rather elaborate embellishment. From an original four rooms of something under 1300 square feet, the house grew to about 1700 square feet with the addition of a two-room wing on the north west.

Possibly at the same time, certainly in the late nineteenth century, the adobe received a fashionable sprucing up with new Territorial style entrance and front window treatments, including a "store-bought" front door with arched panes over panels, sidelights with paneled bases, a transom, and paneled reveals. The four-light sash windows are framed with a molding-accented shallow pediment and shaped side fac-

Floor Plan - showing original rooms and additions.



ings. Plain one-by-four boards frame side and rear windows, however; both entrance door and front window frames closely resemble those of the Francisca Hinojos house just down Palace Avenue.

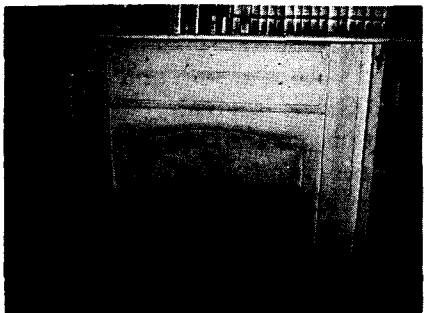
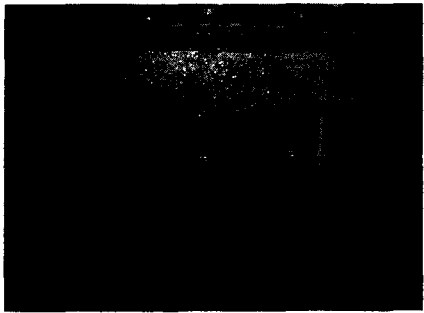
Some interior doors were enhanced with molding-edged facings but others left perfectly simple. The door from the parlor to the hall, a glass-over-panel type like the front door, obviously dates from the renovation, as no doubt does the almost six foot wide opening between parlor and study. This opening, finished with transom and molding, creates an arrangement owing a debt to Greek Revival.

It seems reasonable to suppose that at one time a fireplace occupied the center of the parlor's west wall, but there is no physical evidence to support this theory other than an apparent break in the foundation line on the exterior; many coats of plaster have obscured any certain evidence. Similarly, the forty-two vigas have disappeared above a dropped ceiling.

ARCHITECTURAL DET.



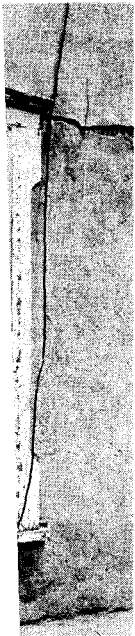
Front door.



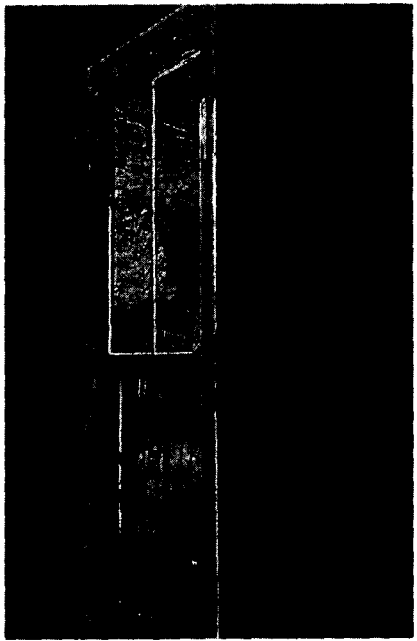
Fireplaces.



OF 511 ARMIJO STREET



Window details



Inside door.



Inside window.

Formerly another glass-over-panel door was installed at the rear center (now opening into a 1920s addition), capped on the then exterior by a small pediment.

The Greek Revival fireplace framing is simple, and as the parallel positioning would have called for framing of some kind, it may predate 1879. In the study, bead-and-quirk ornamented pilasters display a suggestion of strap detail at the base. As well as the fireplaces, the plan of the original house seems to have been influenced by Territorial ideas rather than traditional Spanish Colonial, as its four rooms are arranged in a cluster, not linearly. It may be that the "passageway erected centrally therein" was an innovation by Nuañez, considering the fact that the parlor-hall wall is twelve inches thick while all other walls of the first structure are nineteen to twenty inches deep. The only other twelve inch wall of the entire house separates the two rooms of the added wing.

In any case, by June of 1899 when James Wood bought it, the house was a suitable residence for the new Superintendent of Santa Fe City Schools, a position he assumed in September of that year. Professor Wood, (the title seems to have been an accessory of the job), had received his B.A. and M.A. from Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana. Subsequently he served as superintendent of schools in Salem, Indiana, vice president of Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas, and in 1983 moved to Las Vegas, N.M., as superintendent.

A dapper gentleman who sported a derby, Wood's enthusiasm included bicycling and work with the Baptist church as well as his professional endeavors. The latter were impressive, for while head of the Santa Fe system he reorganized the schools, planned the first high school building, improved old buildings and helped obtain the Ft. Marcy Reservation for the school system.

Among his lighter duties was presiding over events like the spring commencement exercises of 1900. Held at the courthouse, now known as the Coronado building on Palace Avenue, the occasion featured Consuelo Bergere reigning as Queen of the May and the May Day exercises of Mrs. Fletcher's kindergarten. The packed house also was treated to a military drill and many recitations including the affecting "Adelina's Arrival." This event was successful not only aesthetically but economically. The admission prices of 25¢ for adults and 10 ¢ for children grossed \$52.40 with costs of \$14.15 including \$8.00 for diplomas for the eight graduating seniors. The balance of profit was designated for dictionaries with the exception on an outstanding \$2.00 owed on the organ at First Ward School.

Another social highlight of Wood's tenure was the visit to Santa Fe in 1903 by Teddy Roosevelt. For this occasion the superintendent was authorized by the school board to arrange a holiday, write an appropriate song, and have the children meet T.R.

For those varied talents Wood was paid \$100 a month until 1909, then \$115, and in 1910 raised to \$125. School finance suffered a setback in 1907 when it became necessary to raise the mill levy to compensate for loss of tax revenue from licensed gambling which previously had "netted a handsome income."

In 1900 the household at 511 Armijo included, in addition to James, his wife Paula and their two children, Owen and Laura, Wood's mother-in-law and brother-in-law, Mrs. Lucinda Bland and H.Q. Owen.

The children, Laura and Owen Wood, remained in Santa Fe, Owen inheriting the family home in 1931. Laura retired in 1953 as chief clerk of the Santa Fe office of the United States Attorney after thirty-five years service, and died a year later. Owen L. Wood, who because of both a three and a four year high school program had graduated with not only the first but also the second class in his father's regime, pursued a career as draftsman with the U.S. Public Survey and then as an officer with Mutual Building and Loan Association until his retirement about 1965. On his death in 1971, the house on Armijo Street came into the possession of Mrs. Margaret Romero, who, along with her mother, had been a longtime friend and associate of the Wood family.

Fortunately for the continuity of architectural history in Santa Fe, the old Territorial adobe that was in the Wood family for more than seventy years is destined to be preserved, even though a high density development is planned for its surrounding acreage" . . . *al lado norte este del Rio y asi al espaldo de la loma. . .*"

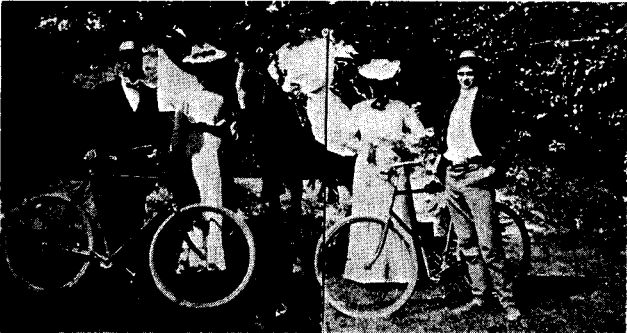
— John O. Baxter

— Agnesa Lufkin



1. Prof. J.A. Wood, Supt. Santa Fe Public Schools
2. Beatrice Harsh, substituting for Myrtle Boyle
3. Amelia Guffman
4. Prof. Grant, Principal High School
5. Freda Smith
6. Valdera Slaughter

Can anyone identify these persons with Professor Wood?



A cycling outing.



In the parlor.

OLD SANTA FE TODAY, 3RD EDITION

The new edition of Old Santa Fe Today is now at the printer, the University of New Mexico Press. They are working toward a publishing date in December, hopefully before Christmas. The Foundation will announce the date when it is available and may have a membership party when the first books are received. The price has not been set.

In the meantime, the 2nd Edition has been reprinted and is available at book stores and at the Loretto Chapel.

HISTORIC DENVER:

On July 2nd Historic Santa Fe Foundation Board members and guests from other Santa Fe historic organizations met with a group from Historic Denver on the patio at the Inn at Loretto for wine and cheese and a discussion of historic preservation in Denver and Santa Fe. About 75 people were present for the evening.

The Denver group was on a tour of northern New Mexico in a charter bus visiting historically rich places in the Taos area such as La Hacienda de Don Antonio Severino Martinez, the original home of Ernest L. Blumenschien, the Millicent Rogers Memorial Museum and the Harwood Foundation. They also traveled the High Road from Taos through Las Trampas, Truchas and Chimayo.

While in Santa Fe, the group visited the Old La Cienega Village Museum, Santa Clara and San Ildefonso Pueblos and the Council Artesans Building at San Juan Pueblo.

They also took in opening night at the Santa Fe Opera and entertainment by Maria Benitez and her flamenco dancers at El Gancho.

HARMONIUM UPDATE:

Mr. Roy Redman of Fort Worth, Texas, the conservator of the Lamy/Debain harmonium, has informed us that the order for the blower has been placed with a German firm. He was notified by them that there will be a two month delay in delivery because the entire firm is on a three week vacation and currently has a month's backlog of orders. Mr. Redman still maintains that he will have the harmonium ready for delivery this fall.