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“A MARTYR TO PROGRESS” THE TIN ROOF COMES TO NEW MEXICO

THE ALEXANDER G. AND KATHERINE (MCKENZIE) IRVINE HOUSE
310 MCKENZIE STREET

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To Our Members and the Community,

This issue of the *Bulletin* features an article on the Alexander and Katherine Irvine House on McKenzie Street. Back in the mid 1980s, there was a proposed plan to redevelop the property into 12,000 square feet of office space. The Historic Design Review Board rejected the plan, causing the owners to file a lawsuit against the city. In the end, District Court Judge Art Encinias defended the Board’s decision sparing the Irvine House from demolition.

There are still threats to the City of Santa Fe’s Historic District Ordinance. There continues to be a power struggle between some members of the development community and preservationists. In our hearts, we all comprehend the wisdom of Judge Encinias’s belief that in some instances, there exists a “community good over economic benefit to individuals.” Our ordinance, one of the oldest in the country, was designed to do just that. Stories such as this remind us of the value of the ordinance.

“A MARTYR TO PROGRESS”
THE TIN ROOF COMES TO NEW MEXICO

THE ALEXANDER G. AND KATHERINE (MCKENZIE) IRVINE HOUSE
310 McKenzie Street

By Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

In the spring of 1871, a young Scotsman in failing health left Peoria, Illinois, for Santa Fe, hauling the tools of his trade. So began a new episode in Santa Fe construction, for Alexander Irvine was a tinner who installed Santa Fe's first metal roofs, nearly a decade before the arrival of the railroad made such innovations commonplace. The two-story home he built in 1881 on the south side of McKenzie Street still advertises his wares with its pitched metal roof and metal-clad

second story. Stylistically the house is a rare instance of Gothic Revival influence in the domestic architecture of nineteenth-century Santa Fe.¹

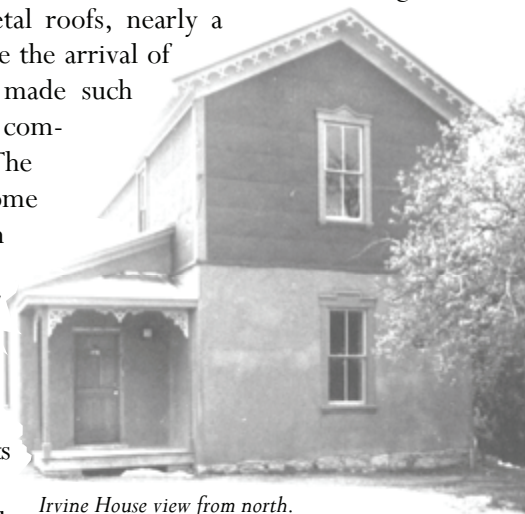
In the mid 1980s, the hundred-year-old structure was the subject of a legal dispute that questioned

the very constitutionality of Santa Fe's historic district ordinance. When refused demolition of this architecturally significant building within the Santa Fe Historic District, developers sued the city claiming unreasonable economic

hardship if they could not replace the dilapidated old home with a three-story, Spanish-Pueblo-Revival office complex. The district court judge supported the community benefit of preservation over private profit, upholding

what he called “the City's commitment to deeply held aesthetic principles valued more highly than dollars.”²

Apparently unknown at that time was the significance of the house and its first occupant to the history of building in Santa Fe.



Irvine House view from north.
© 1986 Photo by Corinne Sze

Perhaps because he only lived ten years after settling in Santa Fe and left no descendants, Alexander G. Irvine is a forgotten figure. In addition, metal roofs suffered a dramatic loss of favor. Welcomed as a solution to the age-old problem of the traditional flat earthen roof that leaked water and dust, the metal roof had altered the profile of the Santa Fe's skyline by the end of the nineteenth century. In the first decades of the twentieth, it was banished as "a hideous monstrosity of tin" by advocates of the historical "Santa Fe style."³ Most Santa Feans today are conscious of Irvine, if at all, as a street name off Agua Fria.

Born in Perth, Scotland, in 1843, Irvine was the son of the overseer of an estate. He was ten when the family immigrated to the United States and an orphan five years later. His father died at the age of thirty-five, just six weeks after the family settled in Peoria, Illinois. His mother passed away five years later at the same age. Though yet a boy, Alexander had by then completed his formal education. Since this had included practical bookkeeping, he found work as a grocery clerk. In 1862, he went to war for the Union with

Company M of the 14th Illinois Cavalry. From September 1862 to July 1865, he was reputedly twenty-three times under fire. Military service left him with chronic illness and a ten-year pension. For a time he returned to the grocery business in Peoria and then spent five years learning the tinner's trade with Walker, McIlvaine, and McClure, a firm of fellow Scotsmen.⁴

Irvine was a slight man, five feet ten inches tall and weighing about 150 pounds, with very dark hair and gray eyes. He was brave and hardworking, but seemed to share the restlessness of many Civil War veterans. In 1872, still troubled by ill health, he determined to try the salubrious western climate. He may have chosen Santa Fe because he had acquaintances from Peoria there, including his future brother-in-law, James McKenzie.

Irvine's departure, picked up from the Peoria paper, was front-page news in Santa Fe:

Mr. Alexander G. Irvine . . .
. . . has made arrangements to go to the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico. He will take out a full line of tinner's

stock and set up shop in that far off country. . . . He is a steady and industrious man . . . and universally respected. We wish him a recovery of health and a profitable business among the Mexicans [sic]. Peoria, *Illinois Democrat*.⁵

With \$800 Irvine launched his

on a partner, William A. McKenzie, the brother of James. Beginning with joint capital of \$5,000, they launched the new business as “Irvine and McKenzie, Dealers in Hardware and Stoves” and “Manufacturers of Tin, Copper, and Sheet Iron Ware.”⁶

Santa Fe Trail merchant James L. Johnson placed the first order,

earning the approval of the *Weekly New Mexican*: “Mr. Irvine has doubled up a most appealing pile of tin for the roof on Johnson’s new building. We hope to see it soon spread and others following the good example of safe roofs.”⁷ One of Santa Fe’s most prosperous merchants, Johnson kept his two-story business block on the



1878 Advertisement from the Santa Fe New Mexican.

business, advertising as “Alexander G. Irvine, Dealer in Stoves, Tin, Sheet Iron and Hollow Ware;” with the slogan, “All kinds of jobbing promptly attended to.” Slowly Irvine’s expensive metal roofs began appearing on Santa Fe’s most prestigious buildings. Within a couple of years he took

northeast corner of the Plaza in the forefront of modern improvements. In the same period, his home on Canyon Road, was described as “one of the finest villas on the edge of the city . . . built without regard to expense.”⁸ The Historic Santa Fe Foundation has owned the Johnson home, now

called El Zaguán, since 1979.⁹

About a year later Irvine was working at the west end of the Palace of the Governors. The rigors of his profession were described by an admiring reporter:

The sun in a corner where it can get at a fellow is called hot, but to appreciate it, you should get on one of our new tin roofs. This morning we went up to see Mr. Irvine where he is spreading

it takes something like a salamander to stand such heat as he roasts in from morn to night when tin roofing. Such men are truly martyrs to progress.¹⁰

For reasons unknown, Irvine took a respite from sweltering tin. Health was the reason given later, though his new line of work was not notably healthy.¹¹ Perhaps business was slow and he saw a better opportunity. He could have

been looking for adventure and a change of scene as well. He obtained both when he accepted an appointment from President U. S. Grant as the Indian Agent at Cimarron—a job that was not without incident.



Irvine House view from east. © 1986 Photo by Corinne Sze

the shining metal above an addition to the U.S. Depository. We stayed just long enough to convince ourselves that he is better prepared to stand the tortures of the other world than we are. We don't want to call Mr. Irvine names, but

According to newspaper accounts, while receiving weekly rations, an Indian expressed dissatisfaction with the meat that was issued and threw a piece back into Irvine's face. Revolvers were drawn; two Indians were shot in the wrist and shoulder respectively, and Irvine through

the hand. The incident was attributed to whiskey; no investigation of meat quality is recorded.¹²

Irvine's next post was at the Navajo Agency, where, it was said, three earlier agents had been killed within ten years. His immediate predecessor had been driven from the job when the Indians refused to allow him to return after a trip to Washington, DC. In announcing Irvine's new appointment, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* editorialized on the job of Indian agent:

Under the present Indian system . . . it does not seem to matter much whether an honest and humane agent or an agent that is "on the make," is placed over a given tribe. In either event, the agent is set upon critically and unscrupulously, or both, and in the end is ruined in character, if any he ever had, and soon replaced by another agent who in time is subjected to the same round of treatment; the Indian in any event is either swindled or neglected or both in the continual

change.

Of Irvine it was said that "notwithstanding this unsavory service, he preserved the confidence and respect he commanded when entering upon the duties of that service," and that "it is quite problematic whether [he] . . . for whom we all now entertain high regard and unbounded confidence will succeed in either controlling the Indians, or in maintaining his character, if indeed, he succeed in saving his scalp." He remained at the Navajo Agency until July 1877.¹³

In June 1875, Irvine had returned to Peoria to marry Katherine McKenzie, the sister of his business partner. They began life together at Cimarron, and the following year their only child was born.

Katherine and her brothers were the children of Henry Graeme McKenzie, a native of Carlisle in northwest England near the Scottish border. Henry's grandfather, it was said, had been the Anglican rector at the Carlisle Cathedral, and his father an attorney and a color bearer under Wellington in the Napoleonic wars.¹⁴

Henry McKenzie was a trained carpenter and builder in 1848 when he immigrated to the United States with his Scottish-born wife, Eliza Richardson Armstrong and their young children. The family landed at New Orleans and soon settled in Peoria, where there was a considerable population of British immigrants. There McKenzie became a respected carpenter and builder; his Santa Fe obituary calls him an architect.¹⁵

In the early 1880s, Henry and Eliza settled in Santa Fe to be near their children, William and Katherine. (The oldest son James returned to Peoria about this time.) Henry came alone first and lived for a time with the Irvines.¹⁶ The McKenzie's fourth child, an unmarried daughter named Annie Graeme, may have accompanied them to Santa Fe. Eliza McKenzie died there in 1897; her husband died four years later at the age of eighty-two.

James C. McKenzie had been the first of the family to come west. Having trained as a lawyer in Illinois, he was in Santa Fe by 1870. Two years later, shortly after his own arrival, Alexander Irvine was one of two groomsmen when James married Gregoria Delgado, a woman from one of

Santa Fe's most distinguished families.¹⁷ From 1871 to 1878, the governor appointed James McKenzie territorial librarian. In the early 1880s, he left his wife and two children to return to Peoria and the practice of law.¹⁸ Although he remained in New Mexico for only about ten years, the known McKenzie descendants in the state today are his.¹⁹

In the fall of 1877, Alexander Irvine was once again roofing at the Palace of the Governors. For the hefty sum of \$875, Irvine and McKenzie put a metal roof on the east end, which contained the territorial library and the legislative halls.²⁰ The new roofs were catching on for commercial buildings as well as a few special residences. As the newspaper boasted, ". . . whenever the money can be spared [they] are taking the place of the proverbial dirt roofs in the business centres because of their durable and fire-proof qualities."²¹ Ironically, despite its safe metal roof, the Johnson Block (by then the Catron Block) burned down in 1888. At that time, the building was said to have had the first tin roof in New Mexico.²²

The firm of McKenzie and Irvine seemed to be prospering. In



Hartmann Map, ca. 1886. Irvine house (right) is to the east.

1881, they claimed operating capital of \$20,000 with annual sales of \$60,000, two thirds in cash and the balance on credit. Nevertheless, that year the partners separated. Irvine kept the original business, and McKenzie went into plumbing, gas, and steam fitting. Irvine's 120 by 18 foot store on the south side of the Plaza was described as full of merchandise from floor to ceiling; a second store on San Francisco Street he intended to turn into a jobbing shop.²³

In 1881, Irvine sought a different outlet for his energies

when he petitioned the New Mexico governor for an independent military company to be known as the Governor's Rifles. The petition was signed by eighteen members including Irvine as captain. A week later, he received a commission as Captain in Company G, 1st Regiment Militia of the Territory of New Mexico.²⁴ Elsewhere, he was losing control.

The cause of Irvine's troubles may have been an insufficiency of his tinning business, unwise speculations, the tightening of credit that accompanied the arrival

of the railroad, or some combination of these and unknown factors. He had been buying up property in the years between 1879 and 1881, including land in the Duran Grant and lots in the subdivision called "Valuable Building Lots Adjoining AT&SF Depot." Some of his large tracts south of the Santa Fe River, near the present intersection of Agua Fria and Dunlap Streets, later became the Irvine Addition on what is still called Irvine Street. On the future McKenzie Street property, he constructed the Irvine House and built or remodeled another dwelling directly to the west.²⁵

Many were speculating in land at this time in expectation of an economic boom to follow Santa Fe's connection with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF) in 1880 and the anticipated arrival from the north of the narrow-gauge Denver and Rio Grande (D&RG), completed as far as Española in early 1881. For the most part these hopes went unrealized, and for some they meant ruin. Another Plaza businessman, who invested in much more property than Irvine, was James L. Johnson. He lost his business, his home and most of his

other property in 1881.²⁶

It was from Johnson that Alexander Irvine and several others purchased lots at auction in a subdivision newly surveyed as "33 Choice Lots Belonging to James L. Johnson." In June 1880 Johnson and José Ortiz had opened a street along the south side of the lots, a street then regarded as a westward extension of Palace Avenue. They chose the name Garfield, after the U.S. president, but Johnson Street it soon became and remains today.

Most of the lots were sold on November 27, 1880, at a well-publicized public auction at the site. The *New Mexican* called attention to the property as, "splendidly located for first class residences . . . and about two minute's walk from the monument." A front-page advertisement stressed the location "in the finest and most desirable part of the city . . . a quiet and healthy location for the erection of dwellings or homes for the purpose of renting." Existing buildings were not used as a selling point.²⁷ Deeds were recorded for the sale of all but three lots. Nevertheless, the following March, Johnson's business failure was announced, and Irvine, too,



Gaynor Map, 1892. D&RG tracks coming from the north with original north-side depot.

was about to go under.²⁸

The area sometimes known as the Staab/McKenzie neighborhood lies northwest of the Plaza and west of the Presbyterian Church. Before 1846, when the so-called Army of the West claimed New Mexico for the United States, the few buildings here were scattered amidst cultivated fields.²⁹ Development only began with Johnson's 1880 subdivision and was continued somewhat later and further north by merchant Abraham Staab.

The incentive for this activity was the anticipation of a railroad coming from the north. The D&RG from Denver halted in Española by agreement with the AT&SF to maintain exclusive territories. A group of Santa Fe merchants, including Abraham Staab's brother, Zadoc, formed their own railroad company—called with typical exaggeration the Texas, Santa Fe, and Northern—to build a connecting line to Española. Although it was expected that the new line would soon arrive in

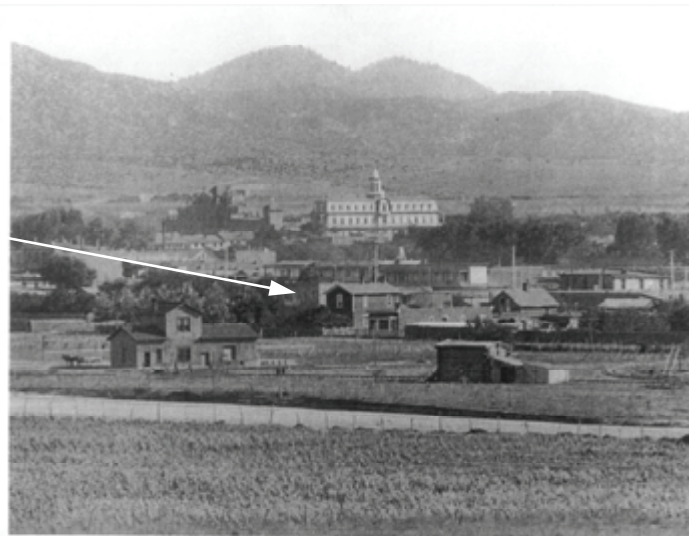
Santa Fe, it was not completed until the beginning of 1887; development of the neighborhood was correspondingly delayed.³⁰

Another indication of a lagging neighborhood may be the frequent change of street names. Chapelle was called Jackson Street in the early years of Johnson's subdivision; Staab Street was not named until after the turn of the century. McKenzie Street, which had the most changes, did not exist in 1882, had no name in 1886, and was called

Colorado in 1892 in deference to the nearby railroad. In 1901, the name was Irvine and so it was on the 1908 Sanborn Map. The 1902 Sanborn gave the name Church, perhaps a guess based on the proximity of the Presbyterian Church. By 1912 the street name stabilized as McKenzie.³¹ Since 1907 Annie Graeme McKenzie

had been the only living member of the McKenzie family associated with the street.

Amid the high expectations of late 1880, Irvine paid \$1,000 in December for lots 1-4 of Johnson's subdivision. The property lay one hundred feet



Taken from St. Catherine Indian School, ca. 1890 . Photo by T. J. Curran. Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, neg. no. 30590

north of Johnson Street and was bordered on the east by present Chapelle Street. McKenzie Street did not yet exist; a public *acequia* formed the northern boundary of the lots.³² There is no evidence of buildings at the time of Irvine's purchase. When he transferred the property on December 20, 1881, almost a year to the day later,

there were two dwelling houses: a two-story, gable roofed structure and a long, single-story building extending back from the street (310 and 314 McKenzie Street). The property on the east remained vacant.³³ Irvine was dead within two months. Thus, confirmation of the 1881 building date of the Irvine House was provided in 1985 when the removal of interior plaster revealed two boards with the name A. G. Irvine painted on them, one in a first-floor ceiling of the entry hall, and the other in the second story.³⁴

Irvine's buildings were some of the first to appear in the Johnson subdivision. To Santa Fe's boosters, two-story houses were indicative of American-style progress. Irvine may have inspired the terse pronouncement in the newspaper of March 1881: "Two-story houses are superseding the old Mexican style of architecture."³⁵ As completed in that year, the house was a simple rectangle with two rooms on each floor and a one-story entry room with a small porch. The first-story walls are adobe; those of the second story are wood frame sheathed in metal, as are the front-gable and porch roofs. Windows, generally distributed one per

room, per façade, are double-hung wooden sashes with two-over-two panes and wooden exterior surrounds. Especially distinctive for Santa Fe are the jig-sawed bargeboard and delicate post brackets with centered pendent of the front porch. A porch on the back addition, built before 1902, also has decorative wooden brackets.

With likely the assistance of his carpenter/builder father-in-law, Irvine constructed a house that would have stood out as much in its time and place as it does today. The vertical emphasis of the two narrow stories with a high-pitched roof and the ornamental woodwork are suggestive of the Gothic Revival, an influence rarely found in Santa Fe domestic architecture—the woodwork a simplified version of the intricate "gingerbread" that was commonplace in the Midwest whence both Irvine and his father-in-law had come to Santa Fe. Also idiosyncratic was the second story clad in metal stamped to suggest ashlar, perhaps providing Irvine with a demonstration model of the possibilities of his trade.

Irvine also uses elements of the locally prevalent Territorial style, including window size, type, and

trim. The mixing of styles was commonplace in nineteenth-century New Mexico, but this combination of the Classical Revival (Territorial) and Gothic Revival was extremely rare. Gingerbread and metal siding never really caught on in Santa Fe; whereas, the metal roofs introduced by Irvine were soon everywhere, becoming a defining element of late Territorial construction.

In December 1881, presumably to evade his debts, Irvine transferred the two-story home and most of his other property to his father-in-law, Henry McKenzie. The rest of his holdings, though insufficient to discharge his indebtedness, were assigned in trust to his brother-in-law, William McKenzie, to be used for the benefit of creditors. Within two months, Irvine had succumbed to pneumonia. His estate consisted of \$270 still owed by the United States government from his service as Indian agent, money that by law could be paid only to the administrator of his estate (Katherine Irvine) and could not be assigned to creditors.³⁶

Alexander Irvine was thirty-seven years old when he died and had lived in New Mexico just over

a decade. Katherine McKenzie Irvine survived him by another twenty-five years. Their only child, a son Graeme, died at the age of fifteen in 1891, and like his parents, grandparents, and the William McKenzie family, is buried in Santa Fe's Fairview Cemetery.

The Irvine House remained in the family because it was sheltered in Henry McKenzie's name. Two years after Irvine's death, McKenzie sold all the Irvine property back to his daughter, Irvine's widow.³⁷ She continued to own the two-story house until her death in 1907. By 1902 she had added a one-story back section with an east-facing porch.³⁸

Katherine McKenzie Irvine worked for the betterment of Santa Fe as a member of the Woman's Board of Trade, which had as its main projects the public library, the plaza, and Fairview Cemetery. For about fifteen years, she presided over the local Women's Christian Temperance Union, which sometimes met at her home. At Holy Faith Episcopal Church, she was superintendent of the Sunday school and organized the Junior Auxiliary, which she directed for many years. An invalid in her final years, she was

nursed by her sister Annie at the McKenzie Street house until her death at about age sixty in 1907. She was eulogized in the newspaper as “a woman of more than ordinary keenness of mind and culture of heart, eager for the advancement of . . .

. . . every cause of righteousness,” in sum “a woman of noble character and a Christian in the truest sense.”³⁹

Annie McKenzie inherited her sister’s property. In 1910, she was living in the two-story house, then numbered 210 McKenzie, with a female roomer and young child. Annie remained in Santa Fe at least until 1912 when she divided and sold the McKenzie Street property. No record of her later life or her death has been found.⁴⁰

Owen L. Wood (1883-1971) purchased the two-story house with the empty lot on the east in 1912. The one-story house on the west (314 McKenzie) was sold to James C. Harvey. Owen Wood was the son of Professor James A. Wood, Santa Fe’s first school superintendent. The younger

Wood was in his father’s first graduating class in 1900. He may have lived in the McKenzie Street house early on. In 1931 he inherited the family home on Armijo Street, which is listed and

plaque by the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. Wood worked as a draftsman for the U.S. Public Survey and later was an officer with the Mutual Building and Loan Association (now Century Bank) until he retired in

1965. He willed the McKenzie Street property to his adopted daughter, Toni Medina Salazar, who sold it in 1983.⁴¹

In the mid 1980s, the house again made history as the center of a dispute that highlighted the essential conflict inherent in the preservation movement between an owner’s right to develop property in his own best interests and the public’s right to preserve resources for the benefit of the community. Commercial interest in the neighborhood seemed to pick up when the massive Eldorado Hotel was approved to replace a lumberyard, just a block

The district court judge supported the community benefit of preservation over private profit, upholding what he called “the City’s commitment to deeply held aesthetic principles valued more highly than dollars”.

south. After years of neglect—at the end it was used by transients—the deteriorated Irvine House with its large vacant corner lot was purchased by a partnership that included developer Charles Klotsche and William “Fritz”

feasible. Architect John Conron, the owner of Irvine’s neighboring building (314 McKenzie), formulated a plan that replaced the Irvine House with a three-story Spanish-Pueblo Revival complex containing 12,000 square feet of



Delicate post brackets with centered pediment of the front porch.

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Kueffer of Santa Fe Design Associates, a landscape design firm.

Although the group’s originally stated intention was to partially finance the restoration of the old building by constructing a new office building on the vacant corner lot, they soon decided that restoration was not economically

office space and an entire ground floor devoted to parking. A courtyard was to connect this new structure to Conron’s building next door.

Claiming that it would cost an estimated \$250,000 to save the old building, the owners requested a demolition permit. The city’s chief building inspector, Gilbert

Catanach, stated that “the dollar cost to rehabilitate the structure would be exorbitant.” Hired structural engineers concurred. The city planning staff took the position that rehabilitation costs should not be a factor in their decision. As the city’s urban designer, John Griego, put it, “Those who choose to develop in the historic district must realize it costs more. It’s a given.”⁴²

The fight over the proposed demolition precipitated a major challenge to Santa Fe’s Historic Design Ordinance involving a curious set of antagonists. Part-owner Fritz Kueffer understood Santa Fe’s zoning and had played a part in saving other buildings during his seven years on the Historic Design Review Committee. John Conron, architect for the project, was vice president of the Old Santa Fe Association, Santa Fe’s oldest preservation group. Myra Ellen Jenkins, the former state historian and president of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, supported demolition. As quoted in the newspaper, she declared, “There’s no particularly great historic event connected with the building . . . You can’t just preserve every building that’s kind of a museum

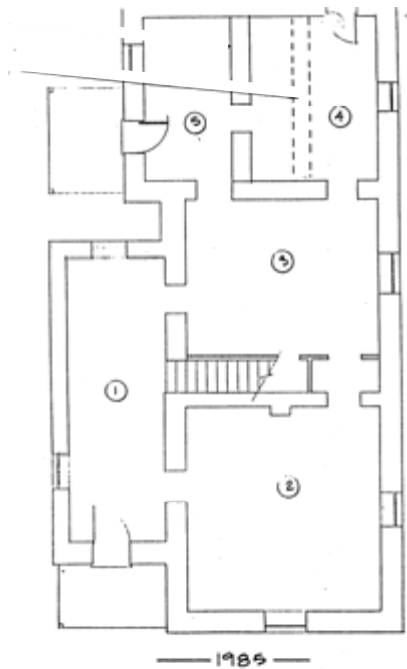
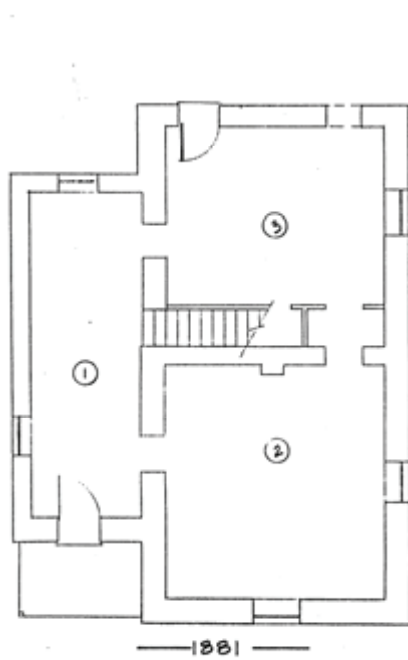
piece.”⁴³ Opposition to demolition was led by Historic Design Review Committee member Thomas Chávez, the director of the Palace of the Governors and president of the Old Santa Fe Association.

In March 1984, the Historic Design Review Committee unanimously denied the demolition request. Tom Chávez was memorably quoted, “It’s an old and rare house and it seems very callous to just go in and tear it down. Are we supposed to feel sorry for these guys because they aren’t going to make a million dollars more?” Chávez also argued that to destroy a building that had been used to set the standards of the recently approved subdistrict of the new Business Capital District would be a travesty that called into question almost immediately the integrity of the BCD zone and the city’s historic district zoning as a whole.⁴⁴

The owners appealed to the City Council arguing economic hardship and their “vested right to develop the property.” When the Council upheld the design committee by a 5-to-3 vote, the owners—Kueffer, Klotsche, Richard Peck, and John Humphrey—promptly sued the city. They directly challenged the

Historic Design Ordinance as unconstitutionally vague, in that the criteria listed did not provide adequate standards by which the city could properly determine the validity of the original request to demolish, and therefore the city's decision was arbitrary and capricious. They argued further that the denial amounted to a

that the Historic Design Ordinance was not constitutionally vague, could be reasonably applied, and provided sufficient safeguards against caprice by having the City Council make the ultimate decision. He further ruled that although the denial of the demolition permit certainly reduced the value of the property,



Plans courtesy Conron and Lent, Architects

“taking” by the city for which compensation was owed.⁴⁵

Three months later District Judge Art Encinias upheld the city. In a forthright decision, he ruled

this action did not constitute a “taking.” Rather the preservation of historic areas and buildings was well within scope of the “general welfare of the public” for which

the city is obligated to use its “police powers,” which include zoning regulations. Judge Encinias unequivocally supported the community good over economic benefit to individuals.⁴⁶ His ruling gave the city a definitive formulation of the court’s fundamental support for the ordinance, which would be called upon again.⁴⁷

The owners did not appeal the ruling and proceeded to rehabilitate the Irvine House for offices. Since the building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributing to the Santa Fe Historic District, the rehabilitation was eligible for federal tax credits. In a three-year project that eventually cost \$132,000, structural deficiencies were corrected; new heating, plumbing, and electrical systems were installed; and defining architectural elements, such as woodwork, windows, roofing materials, and metal siding, were repaired and where necessary, replaced in like materials. Although plans were formulated to construct a new 6,650 square-foot office building on the vacant lot east of the Irvine House, no such building was built.⁴⁸

As a tax credit project, the

work was monitored by the Historic Preservation Division of the State Office of Cultural Affairs, and a complete record of the prior condition and restoration work is on file at HPD.⁴⁹ As it turned out, the adobe walls were relatively sound with two exceptions. A portion of the east wall of the entry room where the foundation had settled was removed, a concrete foundation installed, and a new adobe wall laid. A cavity in the west wall, created by a burst water pipe, was filled with new adobes.

All exterior woodwork was repaired or replaced to match existing materials. A replica of the badly deteriorated bargeboard was constructed. The front porch was rebuilt, removing material believed to date from the 1970s and repairing historic elements, such as the porch brackets and pendent. The side porch was retained and historic elements—four wood posts, decorative post brackets, and fascia—were repaired and repainted.

The windows were repaired and refinished without replacement of any original sash. Only rotted wood was replaced in the repair of the exterior trim. The one altered window had been

cut down to accommodate a cabinet. Using the existing half as a model, a full double-hung window was installed and missing trim restored. Since the front door was a recent addition and no evidence of the original was found, a more historically appropriate replacement was secured.



A porch on the back addition, built before 1902, also has decorative wooden brackets.

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What appeared to be the original standing seam metal roofing was replaced in similar materials. The second-floor metal siding was repaired and painted, keeping all the original panels. Two collapsed, redbrick chimneys on the ridge of the original house were rebuilt to their historic

configuration based on photographic evidence, and a brick chimney on the rear one-story addition was repaired.

Original construction on the interior lacked embellishment. It is no surprise that there was no evidence of fireplaces in the house; Irvine sold stoves, after all. All the

interior plaster had to be replaced with new gypsum plaster, reproducing the smooth finish of the original work. On the first floor, badly water-damaged oak flooring, carpet, or asphalt tile were removed to reveal the original painted pine boards, also in poor condition. In some rooms, they could be retained

as a subfloor for new hardwood flooring. The original wood flooring on the second floor has been covered with an underlay of particleboard and carpeted. The original wood stairs were repaired and refinished, and a new handrail installed to replace a late, single-pipe rail.

Interior doors are typically four-panel wood, some with transoms. As part of the adaptation to office function, some doorways were filled. The remaining doors, transoms, and frames were repaired and finished in original colors. Minor alteration was made in the interior arrangement of partitions. Two new toilet rooms and a mechanical room were created. New plumbing, heating and electrical systems were designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. A new glassed hallway was inserted through the back porch with minimal, dark-colored, anodized aluminum framing, leaving the historic fabric exposed on the exterior.

The justification for saving the house had successfully relied on the age and integrity of its unusual architecture; the human story evoked by the property was not told, and no case was made for historical significance. Irvine's carpenter/builder father-in-law was credited with its design, and the presence of metal siding remained a mystery.⁵⁰

Alexander Irvine's contribution had been forgotten amid the disdain for metal roofs within the new aesthetic of the Spanish-Pueblo Revival. By 1915, for the

promoters of "indigenous" styles, the metal roof was the foremost example of the "devastating wave of commonplace modernism which overwhelmed artistic expression in New Mexico after the American Occupation."⁵¹ With greater historical perspective, we can now recognize that in their time metal roofs were the most significant innovation since 1846, after milled lumber and window glass.

Through the persistence of city officials and the support of a court of law, the Alexander G. and Katherine McKenzie Irvine House has been restored to useful function; its unusual combination of Gothic Revival and Territorial architecture was preserved and Santa Fe's historic zoning was upheld. Now occupied by law offices, this modest house stands as a tangible representation of the struggles and achievements of an intrepid tinner from Peoria.

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■ ENDNOTES ■

THE ALEXANDER AND KATHERINE (MCKENZIE) IRVINE HOUSE

1. This was the only example architect John Conron found in his 1977 survey of styles. *Design & Preservation in Santa Fe: A Pluralistic Approach* (Santa Fe: City Planning Department, 1977) 18-19. See also, Conron and Lent, Architects, "The Architecture of Santa Fe: A Survey of Styles," *New Mexico Architecture* 20.5 (1978) 12-36.
2. Judge Art Encinias, "William C. Kueffer, et al., vs. City of Santa Fe," Decision, September 25, 1984. *Albuquerque Journal North* 26 September 1984.
3. Sylvanus Griswold Morley, "Santa Fe Architecture," *Old Santa Fe* 2.3 (January 1915) 290.
4. *Encyclopedia of the New West* (Marshall, Texas: United States Biographical Publishing Company, 1881) 11-12.
5. *Santa Fe Weekly Post* 6 May 1871.
6. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 5 April 1873; 15 July 1875.
7. 15 October 1872.
8. *Weekly New Mexican* 5 January 1875.
9. For a history of Johnson and his residence, see Corinne P. Sze, *El Zaguán, The James L. Johnson House: A Social History* (Santa Fe: Historic Santa Fe Foundation, 1997) 1-50.
10. *Weekly New Mexican* 23 September 1873.
11. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 21 October 1907.
12. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 17, 18 November 1875.
13. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 29 September 1875. Frank D. Reeve, "The Federal Indian Policy in New Mexico, 1858-1880," *New Mexico Historical Review* 13.1 (1938) 40-41.
14. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 30 June 1875. Henry McKenzie apparently used the longer spelling, MacKenzie, on official documents and on his gravestone at Fairview Cemetery. Listings from Peoria sources use the shorter form, which was consistently adopted by his children and is used here. Biographical information on Henry McKenzie is taken primarily from *Santa Fe New Mexican* 13 July 1901; 21 October 1907 and *The History of Peoria County, Illinois* (Chicago: Johnson & Company, 1880) 673.
15. Throughout his career in Peoria, McKenzie was listed in city directories as a carpenter and sometimes a builder. In 1870, his firm was listed with "carpenters and joiners," some of whom were also "good architects" (C. Balance, *History of Peoria, Illinois* [Peoria: N. C. Nason, 1870] 145). The 1880 United States

Census of Santa Fe lists his profession as carpenter and builder. The conflation of architect and builder reflects the blurred line between the professions of design and production that existed throughout most of the nineteenth century. Nationwide, efforts to define the profession of architecture began after the Civil War resulted in standard qualifications legislated at the state level. In 1897 Illinois became the first state to register architects. New Mexico had a long tradition of owner-builders. As construction became more specialized in the nineteenth century, builders often functioned as designers. Trained architects were generally reserved for major, usually governmental or commercial, projects. New Mexico did not pass legislation to register architects until 1931 (Boyd C. Pratt, *Directory of New Mexico Architects*, typescript [1988] vii-xii).

16. United States Census 1880.

17. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 11 November 1872. Gregoria was the daughter of María Peregrina Campbell and Simon Delgado. Her father was the oldest son of Manuel Salustiano Delgado and María de la Luz Baca. Simon's family home was on the south side of the Plaza next to La

Castrense, the military chapel, which he eventually bought. One of Gregoria's uncles, Pablo Delgado, lived in the HSFF-owned "Roque Tudesqui" House in the 1850s and another, Felipe B. Delgado, built the HSFF-owned Felipe B. Delgado House (Jean Padilla, "Delgado—McKenzie Family History: The Early Years," typescript, 1992. Corinne P. Sze, "The 'Roque Tudesqui' House," typescript, Historic Santa Fe Foundation, 1998. *Old Santa Fe Today* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991] 49-50).

18. *Root's Peoria City Directory*, 1863, 1867-1868. United States Census 1870. *New Mexico Bluebook* (1915)

14. *Gould's Peoria City Directory*, 1881-1882 lists James McKenzie as a lawyer living in the home of his father, Henry.

19. James C. McKenzie's younger son, Daniel, was much loved in Santa Fe for his music. In the decades between the two World Wars, he conducted Los Conquistadores Band in Sunday evening summer concerts on the Plaza and for most other community celebrations. For Santa Fe's September Fiesta, the band played three concerts a day for three days and marched in all of the parades and religious processions. Daniel McKenzie also directed the St. Michael's

- College band for many years, helped start a band at Santa Fe High School, and directed bands at various times at the Santa Fe Indian School, St. Catherine Indian School, and the Loretto Academy. Among his many compositions was “La Villa de Santa Fe,” once considered the official city song. The HSFF is indebted to Jean Padilla for information on the James McKenzie family. Her late husband, Daniel Padilla, was James McKenzie’s great grandson (Jean Padilla, “Dan McKenzie and the St. Michael’s College Music Program,” typescript, n.d.; “Santa Fe’s Own Music Men and Women: Los Conquistadores Band,” typescript, 1989).
20. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 18 October, 11, 13 November, 1 December 1877. *Weekly New Mexican* 9 March 1878. Although the Palace was the most important government building in the territory, sections of the building were controlled simultaneously by different jurisdictions and even major improvements were made piecemeal. In 1883, when the government finally reroofed the flat middle section—the governor’s home and office—it was done in tar and gravel. Irvine was no longer available. He had died the previous year (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 2 February, 18, 27 September 1883).
21. In 1877 J. G. Schumann and Felipe Delgado had Irvine roofs installed on their new two-story business houses and Johnson used Irvine again to roof a new section of his building. *New Mexican* owner William Manderfield had engaged Irving to roof his home. In 1880, W. H. McBroom contracted with Irvine and McKenzie for a tin roof on a large lower San Francisco Street house that he was fitting up for a residence. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 1 December 1877; 3 March 1880.
22. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 21 July 1888. The HSFF is indebted to Chris McKay for this article from an otherwise lost newspaper edition.
23. *Encyclopedia of the New West* 11. McKenzie continued to do business on the south side of the Plaza until his death in 1900. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 24 November 1900.
24. A. G. Irvine to Governor Lionel A. Sheldon, Petition (31 August 1881) TANM, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives. Alexander G. Irvine, Oath of Office (9 September 1881) TANM, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.

25. Santa Fe County Deeds P-1: 295, 416, 417; R-2: 34, 36.
26. Sze, "El Zaguán" 14.
27. *Weekly New Mexican* 14 June 1880. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 21, 27 November 1880. No copy of the "33 Choice Lots" survey has been located.
28. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 10 March 1881.
29. W. H. Emory and J. F. Gilmer, "Reconnaissance of Santa Fe and the Environs," August 1846. J. F. Gilmer, "Plan of Santa Fé, New Mexico" [1846-1947]. A history of the neighborhood is found in Corinne P. Sze and Beverley Spears, *Santa Fe Historic Neighborhood Study* (City of Santa Fe: Planning Department, 1988) 86-93.
30. "The D. and R.G. extension will reach Santa Fe in the next two months. At least that is what is proposed" (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 3 March 1881). The tracks came into town by way of present Jefferson Street. A railroad yard with a two-story, wood frame passenger depot was situated on present Jefferson Street between Staab and Catron streets on land owned by Abraham Staab. This depot was replaced in 1904 by a new brick station (presently Tomasita's Restaurant) at the AT&SF rail yard (Gordon Chappell, "To Santa Fe by Narrow Gauge: The D&RG's 'Chili Line'" [Golden, Colorado: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1973] 3-17).
31. J. J. Stoner, "Bird's Eye View of the City of Santa Fé," 1882. H. Hartmann, "Map of the City of Santa Fe," [1886]. P. C. Gaynor, "Map of Santa Fe, New Mexico," 1892. John L. Zimmerman, "A Portion of Plats of Precinct Nos. 17 and 4, Santa Fe County, New Mexico," 1901. Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., "Santa Fe, New Mexico," 1902, 1908. N. L. King, "King's Official Map of the City of Santa Fe," 1912.
32. Santa Fe County Deeds R-2:36. Santa Fe County Deeds M:537.
33. Santa Fe County Deeds R-2:236. Stoner, "Bird's Eye View," 1882. The two houses are very different in form and materials. The single-story, flat-roofed linear plan of 314 McKenzie suggests a Hispanic origin and thus the possibility that this building, or some part of it, is an older structure that was already on the property.
34. Conron and Lent, Architects, "Irvine/McKenzie House: Brief History of the Property, Architectural Description, and Proposed Alterations," Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division (16 May 1985) 2-3.

35. *Daily New Mexican* 3 March 1881.
36. Santa Fe County Deeds R-2: 236, 241, 144. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 14 February 1882. Santa Fe County Probate.
37. Santa Fe County Deeds N:537.
38. Sanborn Maps of Santa Fe 1902, 1908.
39. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 21 October 1907.
40. United States Census 1910. Annie McKenzie does not appear in the 1920 United States Census of New Mexico.
41. Santa Fe County Deeds L-2:541; M-2:107. (The deed to Wood is apparently mistaken in its specification of a one-story house.) John O. Baxter and Agnesa Lufkin, "The Professor J. A. Wood House," *Bulletin of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation* 9.2 (October 1981) n.p. Conron and Lent, Architects, "310 McKenzie Street: A Brief History of the Property," typescript [c.1985] 1. Marian Meyer, *Santa Fe High School, 1899-1999: Centennial History*. (Santa Fe: Marian Meyer, 1999) 1-3.
42. *Albuquerque Journal North* 3 April 1984.
43. *Albuquerque Journal North* 3 April 1984.
44. *Albuquerque Journal North* 3 April 1984. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 20 April 1884.
45. *Albuquerque Journal North* 3, 11, 12, 26 April; 6 June 1984. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 12, 15, 20 April 1984. Judge Encinias, Decision, September 25, 1984.
46. Judge Encinias, Decision, September 25, 1984. *Albuquerque Journal North* 26 September 1984.
47. Heather Pierson, City Planning Department, personal communication, February 5, 1997.
48. *Albuquerque Journal North* 6 December 1984; 24, 25, 29 May, 18 August 1985. *Santa Fe New Mexican* 29 May 1985; 11 June 1986.
49. Conron and Lent, Architects, "Irvine/McKenzie House: Brief History of the Property, Architectural Description, and Proposed Alterations." Conron and Woods, Architects, "Irvine/McKenzie House: Completed Restoration and Renovation," 3 January 1986. "Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part 2: Description of Rehabilitation," 2 April 1986. Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division.
50. John Conron, interview, 25 February 1997.
51. Morley, "Santa Fe Architecture," 292.

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB HILGENDORF
OWNER OF THE IRVINE HOUSE

Q. First of all, you have an interesting background. Didn't you go to school with both Joseph Lieberman and John Ashcroft?

A. Yes, both Lieberman and Ashcroft were classmates of mine graduating from Yale in 1964. I played freshman football with Ashcroft, but neither of us was varsity material, although I tried my luck again my senior year. Joe Lieberman was politically active in college, and we all

know he was going to pursue a political career because he seemed such a natural at it.

Q. I must know, what position did Ashcroft play?

A. Definitely offense.

Q. How did you end up in New Mexico?

A. I came to Santa Fe in 1975, having spent eight years as a lawyer on the Navajo Indian Reservation. The first house we bought was an old, but recently renovated, house on Acequia Madre. So, I was

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THE SCANDAL OF MISS FERTILITY

By Elaine Bergman

Sometimes stories come to you as if they want to be revealed. My friends recently purchased a house (now within a compound) on Camino del Monte Sol. In the courtyard is a bas-relief that, they had been told, was designed by the house's original owner. At the same time, I was reading "*Santa Fe: The Autobiography of a Southwest Town*" by Oliver La Farge. In it, he chronicles the controversy surrounding terra cotta panels created during the 1950 renovation of the State Capitol building (now Bataan Memorial Building).

In this transformation, architects Kruger and Associates converted our turn of the century neoclassical capitol into Territorial Revival style extravagantly removing the dome and temple-front entry. The renovation included the Mabry Hall addition in which part of the design solution was the commission of six terra cotta elements.

The controversy surrounding one of the panels pitted The Ministerial Alliance, led by a local

Baptist minister, against William Longley, a young Santa Fe artist and sculptor. Longley designed the set of rectangular terra-cotta panels for the exterior capitol's walls. One of the panels, *Earth*, which featured a reclining nude, was the subject of the attack.

With a coalition of artists aligned on one side and ministers on the other, the public debate was lively. *Earth*, (renamed "Miss Fertility" by the press) which repeated four times around the building, remained covered with paper during the hullabaloo.

On Longley's side were artists John Sloan, Randall Davey and Will Shuster. Writer William McNulty, who was featuring the proceedings in his "poor man's editorials" published in the *New Mexican*, reported that the controversy attracted national attention.

Reverend Brown of the Berean Baptist church led the charge, "I'm not an art critic. The only thing I can interpret is morals. As a minister of God I feel that this thing is repugnant on a public

building.” Stating that the female figure was “extremely suggestive” Brown added, “man is fertile and woman isn’t.”

Artist Sloan countered that many people readily claim their ignorance of art. “Would they be proud if they couldn’t read?” he asked. Davey inquired, “How is it

“It’s up to us to educate those people,” Sloan responded. “It’s up to us to educate you,” countered the church member.

“I can show you things in the Bible that would make this look like lemonade.” Sloan told the ministers. Rev. Brown replied, “I can explain morals and you can’t.”

Shuster asked the minister if he got any erotic stimulus out of “Fertility.” “It’s repulsive and that’s all,” the minister replied.

In the end, it’s not clear whether Governor Mabry or the architect W. C. Kruger made the final decision to remove the offending bas-relief;



Earth as seen today in a Santa Fe Garden. Photo by Dr. Dwight Holden

possible for Mr. Brown, if he knows nothing about art, to say this is immoral?” Shuster added, “None of the artists was as ignorant of morals as Mr. Brown was of art. Evil be to him who evil thinketh,” Shuster quoted.

“There are other people in the state besides artists,” retorted a member of the Baptist Church.

each referred to the other when questioned.

According to La Farge, at least one undamaged *Earth* was set up in a Santa Fe garden. Perhaps this is the one found in the compound’s courtyard on Camino del Monte Sol.

Continued from Page 25...

BOB HILGENDORF INTERVIEW

hooked on historic Santa Fe from the beginning.

Q. How did you come to own the Irvine House and what was its condition at that time?

A. I was looking for new law office space in 1985 and a realtor showed me the Irvine House as a possible rental. It had been recently renovated, since the City had turned down the developer who wanted to demolish the house and construct a new office complex on the property, which included the vacant lot next door. The architects Conron and Woods had done a study of the condition of the property in support of the demolition permit, showing significant water damage to one side and the general disrepair of the property. Fritz Kueffer was the owner and after the City decided that the building could not be demolished he did an extensive renovation preserving as much of the original elements of the

building as possible. The original tin siding was preserved, as well as transoms, doors, etc. However, the mortgage went into default and the RTC took over the property when Sandia Federal Savings and Loan went into receivership.

Q. Can you tell me some of the unique features of the property?

A. I love the two mature fruit trees on the property. I was able to get the RTC to move over the property line to include a pear tree at the rear of the property and avoid the demolition of a garage that was built later. The garage was sort of a hangout for the homeless who populated the area. In fact I hired one of them to paint the doors for me. The apricot tree in the front has borne fruit almost every year. I am told that the vacant lot next door was an orchard, and the rich soil attests to that fact. Ultimately I bought the parking lot when

it went on the market, and sold it a few years back when the O’Keeffe Museum needed it to meet city parking requirements.

Q. What is your philosophy for the use and future development of your property?

A. What I most like about the Irvine House is its character to have survived the onslaught to “tear down” development. It was the same quality I tried to bring to my law practice,

which was geared to ordinary people who are the bulk of my clients. I feel a real kinship with the Irvine House and plan to keep it always. It is this kind of personal connection with a historic structure that cannot be measured in dollars and cents. I feel fortunate to have been able to have made such a connection.

Robert Hilgendorf was interviewed by Elaine Bergman on June 11, 2002.



Katherine McKenzie Irvine and Alexander G. Irvine are buried in Santa Fe’s Fairview Cemetery. Their only child, a son Graeme who died at the age of fifteen in 1891, lies between them.
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THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

Mailing Address: PO Box 2535 Santa Fe, NM 87504-2535

Street Address: 545 Canyon Road Telephone 505.983.2567

The mission of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation is to own, preserve and protect historic properties and resources of Santa Fe and environs and to provide historic preservation education.

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation believes that preservation of historic resources and their environments should be a priority in Santa Fe. To that end, the HSFF supports: landmark designation of appropriate buildings, sites, and districts; preservation of existing neighborhoods and historic districts; continued development of federal, state, and local programs, grants, and tax incentives that support preservation; and adoption and creative application of codes, standards and land use regulations supportive of historic preservation.

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