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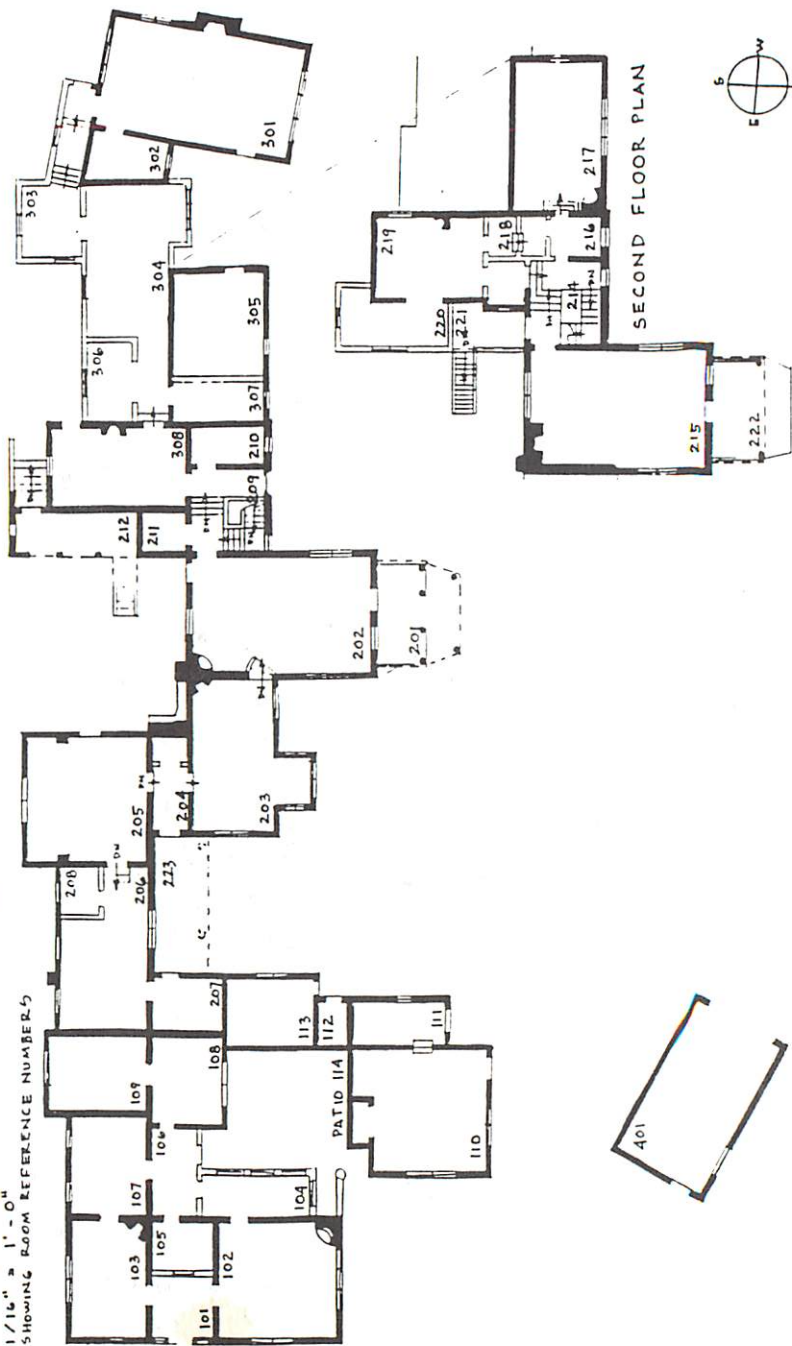


Photo: Vincent Foster

Witter Bynner House, 1992

FLOOR PLAN, EXISTING

1/16" = 1'-0"
 SHOWING ROOM REFERENCE NUMBERS



From: J. Iowa Architects
 "Historic Documentation
 The Witter Bynner Houses"
 9/13/89

THE WITTER BYNNER HOUSE

Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D.

The Witter Bynner House is a rambling, partially two-story structure of more than 30 rooms located on the southwest corner of East Buena Vista Street and the Old Santa Fe Trail. It faces north from the crest of a steep rise at the south end of a large lot. Although it incorporates two older homes, the sum was created over a period of four decades by the poet Witter Bynner.

Not widely known today, Bynner was a major figure in the American modern poetry movement of the early twentieth century. Primarily a lyric poet, he produced 18 books of verse in a working life that spanned over 50 years between the publication of his first (1907) and last (1960) works. He also published poetic translations from Chinese, French, and Classical Greek; verse satire; plays; and prose.

Beginning with a small, three-room house with little land and no landscaping, Bynner combined several tracts to form this large property. By adding new rooms and incorporating another existing dwelling, he increased the size of his original home tenfold. He also did extensive landscaping, constructing stone terrace

walls, concrete benches, flagstone steps and walkways; plus planting trees, shrubs, and flowers, to create the distinctive grounds that contribute to the special character of the property.

In its final form, which remains intact today, the Bynner House is a linear structure of one-story rooms strung out irregularly from either side of a central two-story section. It is Spanish-Pueblo Revival in character having such defining elements as a linear, asymmetrical form; flat roof and irregular roof lines; *canales* protruding from parapet walls; and unevenly cut, exposed *viga* ends. The distinctive feature of the main facade is the two-story porch and balcony. On the interior many rooms have corner fireplaces and most ceilings are constructed with exposed *vigas*. It appears that no two rooms are on the same floor level, so often are there steps between them.

Harold Witter Bynner (Witter Bynner professionally and Hal to friends) was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1881. After the separation of his parents (1888) and death of his father (1891), Bynner, his mother Annie Louise, and brother lived with relatives first in Norwich, Conn., and later in

Brookline, Mass. In 1901 his mother married a successful businessman, Walter Liveridge Wellington. A talent for writing had appeared in earlier generations of the Bynner family; his grandfather was a newspaper editor and an uncle was a historian and the author of popular American historical novels.

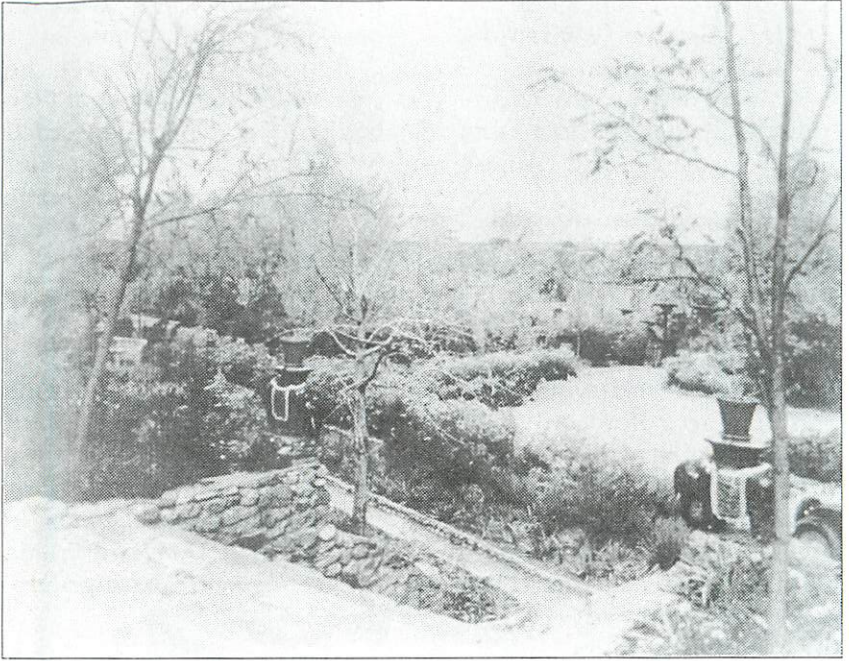
After his 1902 graduation from Harvard University, Bynner began a literary career as an assistant editor at *McClure's* magazine in New York City, editing fiction as well as poetry. While there he worked with Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell and arranged for the first American publication of the poetry of A. E. Housman. He edited Willa Cather's work and became a close friend of O. Henry, whose short stories he secured for the magazine.

In 1906 Bynner left *McClure's* to concentrate on his own writing and a year later published his first book, *An Ode to Harvard and Other Poems*. For the next 10 years he was based in Cornish, New Hampshire. Experimenting with other genres, such as drama, he wrote a one-act play with Cecil B. De Mille, composed songs, and wrote a musical comedy called *Anygirl*, which failed in Brooklyn. To support himself he lectured throughout the United States on the subjects which interested him most:

poetry, minority rights, and suffrage. Later he would refer to himself during this period as a "commercialized troubadour."¹ His poetry was well received and Bynner became one of the leading "new poets" who sought to express everyday subjects in clear, simple language.

As he would throughout his life, Bynner established and maintained friendships with the leading artists of the time, poet and Harvard classmate Wallace Stevens, Mark Twain, Henry James, Booth Tarkington, and painters John Sloan and Robert Henri, who were in the vanguard of artists who "discovered" Santa Fe in the early years of the twentieth century. He helped Ezra Pound publish his first book and was a close friend of Edna St. Vincent Millay, who accepted his proposal of marriage although they both soon thought better of the idea.

In 1915 Bynner translated the fifth century B.C. Greek tragedy *Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripides for Isadora Duncan, who wanted to stage a version that was not scholarly or stilted. Although Duncan was unable to produce the play, in 1956 a polished revision of the translation was included in the University of Chicago's distinguished collection of the complete Greek tragedies in English edited by Grene and Lattimore.



Witter Bynner's garden, no date.

Modern poetry in the teens was rife with "schools" bearing names like "Imagism," "Vorticism" and "Futurism." Irked by what he viewed as the silliness of these schools and their proponents (the "gists" and the "cists"), Bynner with his closest college friend, poet Arthur Davison Ficke, perpetrated one of the most successful hoaxes in American literary history. Their school, "Spectrism," was centered in unlikely Pittsburgh. For a year and a half Bynner and Ficke published Spectric poetry under the names Emanuel Morgan and Anne Knish, respectively. Their work was praised by critics and seriously discussed by fellow poets, often in Bynner's amused

presence. The satire was not recognized until Bynner himself finally revealed the truth.²

In 1917 Bynner took the first of two trips to China that would affect the rest of his life and indirectly bring him to Santa Fe. In Chinese poetry he found a brevity and specificity which influenced his own work profoundly. He also began collecting Chinese paintings, jades, and other art and artifacts that gave his Santa Fe home its special character. During a stint at Berkeley in 1918, first as a voice instructor for army officers, then as a "poet in residence" after the Armistice, he began a collaboration with Chinese scholar Kiang Kang-hu, which led to the publication 11 years

later of two volumes entitled *The Jade Mountain* containing some 300 T'ang poems.

A lecture tour on China brought Bynner to Santa Fe in February 1922 and illness caused him to linger. He arranged the lecture schedule so he could visit two old friends, painter Willard Nash and poet Alice Corbin Henderson, who was a guiding force of the writers' wing of the Santa Fe art colony. Bynner had met Corbin when the two sparred over the relative merits of Spectrism and Imagism during a Bynner lecture in Chicago.³ The Palace Hotel had recently burned down and Bynner was lodged at Sunmount Sanatorium. Although he was himself unwell, he spoke for two hours to 70 people in the Sunmount auditorium on the theme, "The Heart of China."⁴ Illness forced him to cancel the rest of the tour and he stayed on at the Sanatorium longer than the six weeks needed to recover. There he took part in the poetry readings and literary discussions that were part of the Sunmount experience and realized

that he would like to make his permanent home in Santa Fe.

Bynner was 41 when he came to Santa Fe and until then had led a somewhat unsettled life. Upon leaving Sunmount he rented a small adobe home from the recently widowed painter Paul Burlin. This he later purchased and greatly enlarged with new construction as well as the addition of contiguous land and a neighboring house to create the present structure, his home for the remainder of his 86 years.

During his first September in New Mexico, D.H. and Frieda Lawrence were brought by



Courtesy Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry

Frieda Lawrence, Witter Bynner, and Willard "Spud" Johnson at Witter Bynner's house ca. 1923

Mabel Dodge Luhan of Taos to spend their first night in New Mexico under Bynner's roof—among the first of numerous artists who would enjoy the hospitality of Bynner's home. That spring he traveled with the Lawrences to Mexico and first visited Chapala, where he would spend a part of nearly every year. In 1940 he bought a home there, which he renovated and greatly enlarged. Bynner was the source of a minor character in Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* and in 1951 published a prose account of the trip entitled, "Journey With Genius." His relationship with Mabel Dodge Luhan soon deteriorated into a malicious rivalry and he satirized her in a 1926 verse play, *Cake: An Indulgence*.

In Santa Fe Bynner found a stimulating intellectual atmosphere combined with a refreshingly "simple" life and an easy-going acceptance of the unconventional. He became a leader of the literary colony and his home was the center of a prodigious social life. He cut an unusual figure, even among Santa Fe's unconventional artists, often dressing in Chinese robes or Navajo shirt and *concha* belt. His schedule was also his own. He habitually worked at his desk until dawn and then perhaps gardened before going to bed. He breakfasted at about one o'clock and then worked until the late afternoon when he was

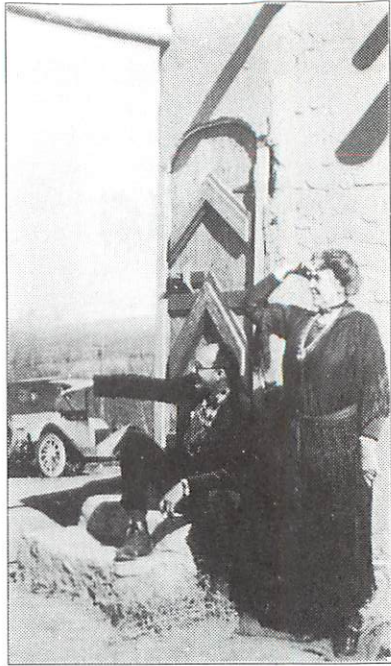
ready to receive guests. A sign on his door made by John Sloan announced that no one should call before five in the evening. One could, however, remain until any hour after which Bynner would write until daylight. His parties were legend and he was particularly remembered for entertaining at the piano with songs sometimes composed on the spot and often bawdy. It was said that everybody who was anybody visited his home when in Santa Fe.

Bynner was deeply interested in politics and said that to him "poetry and politics were the two most important things in the world."⁵ Throughout his life he championed the rights of women and minorities. While at Harvard and in succeeding decades, he actively campaigned for women's suffrage. A 1911 photograph shows him and John Dewey leading the men's contingent of a suffrage parade down Fifth Avenue. In New Mexico he continued his interest in politics and was a dedicated advocate for the rights of American Indians. He strongly supported Senator Robert LaFollette's 1924 Progressive Party candidacy for president and in 1926 ran unsuccessfully as a Democratic candidate for the State Legislature.⁶ In 1937 while in Mexico he met with Trotsky, the exiled Russian revolutionary, whom he had met years before in Greenwich Village.

Trotsky, knowing of Bynner's membership in the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, sought his help in re-entering the United States.⁷

In Santa Fe he could be counted on to forcefully speak at meetings on issues of concern to artists. Active in the successful campaign to prevent the Federated Women's Clubs of the Southwestern States from establishing a summer "culture colony" in Santa Fe, he wrote a long article for the *New York Times* explaining the opposition.⁸ He was a prime mover in the Pasatiempo—Fiesta activities that the artists devised as an alternative to the more formal ceremonies staged for the price of admission by the Museum of New Mexico and the Chamber of Commerce. For years Bynner, an exceptionally tall man, led the Fiesta parade with John Sloan's diminutive wife, Dolly.

In 1930 Robert Nichols Hunt, whom Bynner had met four years earlier through Paul Horgan, came for a visit and remained with Bynner until his (Hunt's) death in 1964. Hunt, then 24 years old, was the son of Myron Hunt, one of southern California's foremost architects—designer of the Hollywood Bowl, the Rose Bowl, and the Huntington Library in San Marino.⁹ Robert Hunt, who had worked briefly for his father's firm, evidently had a



Courtesy Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry

Witter Bynner & his mother, Annie Louise Wellington, at his new home in Santa Fe, 1922.

talent for architecture although he never practiced formally. He designed rooms for Bynner's home, alterations to the Chapala house, and a living room for the Peter Hurd ranch in San Patricio. Hunt created the house on San Acacio Street which, through a gift from Bynner, is now the St. John's College president's house. He also served as Bynner's business manager, edited his work, and took care of him as he grew into old age. Also a poet in his own right, Hunt published a book of verse in 1936, the same year that he assembled and edited Bynner's *Selected Poems*.

Bynner's passion for collecting led him to acquire great numbers of objects which he used to adorn his home. In China he collected paintings, of which 139 examples on silk or paper were exhibited in a special showing in Santa Fe in 1928.¹⁰ He also amassed over 300 Chinese carved girdle clasps, or belt buckles made mostly of jade but also of other materials, such as chalcedony, jasper, ivory, amber, brass, wood, and Peking glass, each on its own teakwood stand.¹¹ In 1953 he gave portions of his collection of oriental art to the Roswell Museum.¹²

Shortly after his arrival in Santa Fe, Bynner was given a silver Indian bracelet by Willard Nash. Intrigued, he began collecting Indian-made jewelry with his usual fervor. In the 1920s he formed the Spanish-Indian Trading Company with the painter Andrew Dasburg, Mabel Dodge Luhan's son John Evans, and others. At their store across from La Fonda they successfully sold jewelry and other handmade items weeded from their own collections or purchased on frequent buying trips. For 25 years extensive loaned displays from Bynner's personal collection formed the nucleus of exhibits of American Indian jewelry at the Museum of New Mexico. In 1954 he deeded an impressive collection of 222 Navajo and Pueblo pieces to the School

of American Research and in 1956 added 130 examples of his "better pieces."¹³

After settling in Santa Fe, Bynner continued to publish poetry, plays, satire, translations, and less frequently, prose. His national recognition as a poet peaked in the 1920s coinciding with the popularity of lyric poetry. Thereafter, poetic fashion turned toward less accessible artists like Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Nevertheless, he continued until 1960 to regularly publish volumes of poetry, which were nationally reviewed. The vein of satire continued with his 1935 *Guest Book*, a collection of poems each portraying an unnamed specific friend or acquaintance as a type, such as the Debutante, Communist, Ghost, Gourmand, Poetess, or Spouse. Among his subjects were Thornton Wilder, Amy Lowell, Carl Van Vechten, Max Eastman, Robinson Jeffers, and of course Mabel Dodge Luhan. In 1944 he published his most popular work, his version of Laotzu entitled *The Way of Life According to Laotzu*, which had been refused by Knopf, his usual publisher, for fear that it would not be successful.

The Bynner House grew from a three-room adobe dwelling first rented from Paul Burlin in June of 1922.¹⁴ In 1920 Burlin's wife, Natalie Curtis, had purchased from Adela Rivera de Alarid, a house con-

sisting of "two rooms and a hall" on a small interior lot with a 15-foot-wide access to College Street.¹⁵ The Burlins soon added a kitchen to the original two rooms.¹⁶

Paul Burlin, who had arrived in Santa Fe in 1913, was an early member of Santa Fe's art colony. An exhibitor in the Armory Show of 1913, he represented the avant-garde among Santa Fe's artists, painting traditional New Mexican subjects in impressionistic and semi-abstract style.¹⁷ He married Natalie Curtis in Santa Fe in 1917.¹⁸

Curtis was from a prominent New England family that had produced two presidents of Harvard University. Her father, Dr. Edward Curtis, was an eminent New York physician and medical researcher who, in his youth, had assisted at the autopsy of President Lincoln.¹⁹ Trained as a concert pianist, she was inspired by a visit to Arizona to undertake the recording of American Indian songs at a time when federal government policy was attempting to eradicate native languages and songs. A pioneer in the field of ethnomusicology, she published painstakingly achieved transcriptions of Native American, African American, and Native African music and folklore.²⁰ Curtis was also able to effectively convey to President Theodore Roosevelt as a personal friend

her concern for the destruction of indigenous American culture.²¹ On October 23, 1921, Curtis was fatally struck by a Parisian taxicab just after she had delivered an address at the Sorbonne.²² The following June Paul Burlin rented his Santa Fe home to Witter Bynner. Burlin eventually returned to his native New York City and enjoyed a long and successful career as a painter.²³

Bynner immediately set about making the house his own. By July he had decorated the living room with Chinese paintings and was enjoying the impression they made on visitors.²⁴ There was also a "little shack outside of the house just big enough for a fellow to live in" where a painter from Berkeley briefly stayed.²⁵ Bynner began to contemplate buying the property and expressed his infatuation with it to Alice Long, the wife of his friend, writer Haniel Long:

Softly just between ourselves, let me whisper that I begin to think of buying the little house I inhabit if I can bring the owner down to about half of what he asks for it. There is a hand's breath of land belonging to it...its own pink lines crumbling though they be are something I have dreamed and its three quaint rooms, leaks and all are surely fashioned with a wand.

Nobody else will ever like it as well as I like it and no other part of America is so rewarding.²⁶

To his deep disappointment, while he was renting the house and formulating plans for its enlargement and decor (and perhaps hesitating too long over the price), it was sold for \$2,500 to Margretta Dietrich of Hastings, Nebraska.²⁷ A reluctant Dietrich was finally prevailed upon to sell the house to Bynner who officially assumed ownership of this first segment of the property on March 7, 1925.²⁸ Dietrich went on to purchase and restore three Canyon Road properties, the Prada House, the Borrego House, and El Zagan, all plagued by the

Historic Santa Fe Foundation and the latter now owned by the Foundation.

Bynner immediately began working on the house in earnest, "touching it up" now that it was at last his.²⁹ The "little shack" he "fitted up" for a comfortable study away from the house and constructed a storeroom alongside the out-house. He added a bay window in the studio and had heavy white curtains woven in Mexico for it.³⁰ It appears that the original Curtis/Burlin rooms on the property were included in what are now Rooms 203, 204, 205, and 206.

Within months Bynner enlarged the property with purchases of tracts adjoining on the

John Meigs Collection, courtesy of J. Iowa.



Ansel Adams photo of Bynner, no date.

west and north from Harry Dorman,³¹ who owned all of the surrounding land with the exception of a parcel on the north and the tract directly to the east, which included another home. The next summer (1926) he extended his property to Buena Vista Street by purchasing from Dorman the large corner tract north of the house.³² Dorman lived across College Street (Old Santa Fe Trail) from the Bynner property on the corner of West Buena Vista Street (Camino de las Animas). On this last and largest parcel that he sold to Bynner, Dorman had stabled his children's horses.³³

At about the same time, Bynner began the foundation for a two-story addition "just off of the corner door of the study" fronted by a porch and balcony supported by four round posts on each floor. It consisted of three new adobe rooms, a concrete-lined vault and a lavatory. The upstairs study (Room 215) was to be "away from the rest of the house, but nearer the moun-

tains."³⁴ By November of 1927 Bynner was sleeping in his new bedroom (Room 308).³⁵ The large front room, called the "library," on the first floor of the addition (Room 202) was lined with books from floor to ceiling and also served as the main living room where guests were entertained. The former study (Room 203) became the "music room." Bynner financed this major construction project by selling the manuscripts of three short stories O. Henry had given him in repayment of one of his frequent loans. For many years he called the upper floor the



John Meigs Collection, courtesy of J. Iowa

Rita Hayworth, Witter Bynner and Errol Flynn at Bynner's home during the world premiere of Santa Fe Trail in 1940.

"O. Henry story."³⁶

Within a short time the porch and balcony were extended toward the north. A first-floor storage room was added on the west (Room 305), and above it a second-floor bedroom for Bynner (Room 217). In the early 1930s a bedroom and bathroom were added on the second floor for Bob Hunt (Rooms 218 and 219). Other additions built in the 1930s included a detached garage before 1935, (401)³⁷ and the "outside study" (Room 301) before 1938, described in a letter to Robert Frost as "a study detached from the house in which to work free from domestic interruptions."³⁸ On the walls of the study he put the "faces of friends." A total of 163 framed, signed photographs are in the Bynner collection at the Houghton Library of Harvard University. They include leading figures from a wide range of endeavors, such as Booth Tarkington, Ezra Pound, Igor Stravinsky, Franklin Roosevelt, Ellen Terry, W.B. Yeats, George Meredith, Ethel Waters, Carl Sandburg, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Katherine Hepburn, Mark Twain, and Mrs. Samuel Clemens. Bynner was photographed in this room with Errol Flynn and other actors from the movie, "Santa Fe Trail," when he entertained the cast members who appeared in Santa Fe for the premiere of the film.

In addition to enlarging the house, Bynner landscaped the grounds. He terraced the bank leading up to the house with stone retaining walls and built flagstone steps and walkways. He planted pine trees and shrubs, particularly lilac bushes, which are still very much in evidence in the spring. He created secluded spots with stone benches for places of solitude where he sometimes wrote. Hollyhocks were all over the place and there were pansies, sweet peas, woodbine, nasturtiums, and even roses.³⁹ At the base of the hill a circular driveway surrounds a bed of cactuses and other native plants. His correspondence indicates nearly as much interest in the garden as in the house itself. He revels in "scores of purple iris" and "five dazzling great clumps of azure flax." "Each shoot of green and each new blossom are like happy heart-beats to a gardener patient this long while."⁴⁰ What he would call in retrospect "my bleak little yard"⁴¹ grew into a show place.

In 1949 Bynner added to his property the adjoining house on the east (Rooms 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, and 109). This dwelling, which faces the Old Santa Fe Trail, had been owned by Ida Von Nyvenheim since 1924.⁴² The property can be traced back to 1886 when it contained a two-room house that was purchased by Lucas Archuleta from Maria

Gertrudis Gonzales.⁴³ The Archuleta family sold it to Harry Dorman in 1911, who kept it until 1919. In that year B.B. Dunne owned it for six months before selling it to Milo G. Pray, who in turn sold it to Mrs. Von Nyvenheim five years later.⁴⁴ After Von Nyvenheim's death in 1946, a dispute based on conflicting surveys arose between Bynner and her heirs over whether Bynner's house encroached on the Von Nyvenheim property or vice versa.⁴⁵ The conflict was settled when Bynner purchased the property, which he used as a guest house and called the "Ric-Rac Villa." Among those remembered to have stayed there were the Igor Stravinskys, Stephen Spender, J.B. Priestly, and Thornton Wilder.⁴⁶

The last rooms to be added to the house (303, 304, and 306) connect it to the "outside study" (301). These were built in about 1963 and designed by Robert Hunt.⁴⁷

The decor of the house strongly reflected Bynner's passion for collecting and his fascination with Chinese, American Indian, and Spanish art. The woodwork was painted black and touched with gold leaf. Chinese carvings decorated doors and windows. A profusion of Chinese paintings contrasted with white walls. Spanish *santos*, Indian pottery, Navajo rugs and Chinese

porcelains abounded. A case in the study contained his many examples of carved girdle clasps. On the occasion of Bynner's 75th birthday his home was described as exemplifying what Santa Fe homes should be, "outer conformity to our native architecture and the inner expression of individual taste."⁴⁸

In the late 1940s Bynner began to have trouble with his eyes that eventually led to total blindness and in June 1951 he suffered his first severe heart attack. Despite declining health he produced two more books of poetry, *Book of Lyrics* (1955) and *New Poems* (1960). Bob Hunt had a fatal heart attack on January 18, 1964, at the Buena Vista Street house and a year later Bynner suffered a severe stroke from which he never recovered. He lived on for three and one-half years under constant care. All but the very closest of friends were discouraged from visiting and a doctor's sign on the door warned that visits were limited to one minute. A sadly ironic ending for this most gregarious of men.

According to the terms of his will, the contents of the house were sold at auction. Robert O. Anderson, the successful bidder, reportedly paid \$32,000 for the collection including Chinese scrolls, jade, Indian pottery, other Oriental and Southwestern Indian collec-

tions, books, and furniture.⁴⁹ The house itself was willed to St. John's College on the condition that it was not to be rented to persons not directly connected with the college and could not be sold. If these terms were violated, the property would revert to the trustees of the Witter Bynner Foundation. For a number of years St. John's used the property as housing for students, tutors, and staff. In 1988, when the college no longer wanted the house, an agreement was reached whereby the Foundation sold it and shared the proceeds with St. John's, which applied the funds to a new library.

Among the foremost of America's lyric poets, Bynner published over 20 books. In his lifetime his poems appeared in major periodicals as well as small magazines and were anthologized with the work of other modern American poets. He served as president of the Poetry Society of America in 1920-22 and in 1962 was elected to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, a group limited to 250 of the nation's most notable working artists in various fields.⁵⁰ Today he is largely unknown outside of New Mexico except to scholars.

Bynner believed passionately in the power of poetry to make a difference in the world. He actively advanced the cause of poetry and supported the work

of aspiring artists. For a number of years he conducted an undergraduate poetry contest and gave a cash prize to the winners. His influence contin-

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ues through the Santa Fe-based Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry founded in 1972. The Foundation awards grants nationally to non-profit organizations that support the poetic art. Among the 204 projects the Foundation has supported are the publication in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Farrar, Straus and Giroux of five volumes of Bynner's collected works, including poetry, satire, Chinese translations, prose, and letters; poetry workshops in New York City for minority poets in their home neighborhoods; and Santa Fe's Shakespeare in the Park.

The Witter Bynner House has not been altered in any significant way since it was Bynner's, although one can see only scant reminders of the Chinese decoration that once distinguished it. The present owners have repaired the porch and balcony which were in poor condition, retaining origi-

nal material where possible. Three first-floor rooms are open to the public as an art gallery. The house and grounds are exceptionally worthy of continued preservation.

NOTES

1. Bynner, "Alice and I," 36.
2. *New York Times*, June 2, 1918.
3. Bynner, "Alice and I," 35-36.
4. *El Palacio* 12 (March 15, 1922): 83.
5. *The New Mexico Sun and El Palito*, October 29, 1926.
6. Santa Fe Scene, 7.
7. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, February 9, 1937.
8. *NYT*, December 19, 1926.
9. *NYT*, May 29, 1952.
10. *SFNM*, June 23, 1928.
11. *SFNM*, November 20, 1955.
12. *Roswell Museum Bulletin*, 1.
13. Dutton, *EP* 62, 68; *SFNM*, January 15, 1956.
14. WB to Annie Louise (Bynner) Wellington. June 16, 1922. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
15. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. M-3, p. 335.
16. Bynner, *Journey*, 1.
17. Gibson, 33.
18. *EP* 4 (1917): 87.
19. *NYT*, November 29, 1912.
20. Her four published works are, *Songs of Ancient America*; *The Indians' Book: An Offering by American Indians of Indian Lore, Musical and Narrative*; *Hampton Negro Folk Songs*; and *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*. The latter received a lengthy favorable review in the *New York Times*, February 6, 1921.
21. Curtis, 162-165.
22. *NYT*, October 29, 1921; November 6, 1921; *EP*, 11 (November 15, 1921): 135.
23. Obituary. *NYT*, March 15, 1969.
24. WB to ALW. July 8, 1922. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
25. WB to ALW. June 16, 1922. WB letters, by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.
26. WB to Alice [Long]. September 15, 1922. WB letters, by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.
27. WB to ALW. October 31, 1924. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. T-Ms, p. 145, dated February 9, 1925.
28. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. T-Ms, p. 157.
29. WB to ALW. May 7, 1925. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
30. WB to ALW. May 19, 1925; June 7, 1925; October 18, 1925. WB letters, by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.
31. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. 10, pp. 161, 169.
32. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk 6, p. 302. Dated July 9, 1926.
33. Orlan P. (Red) Dorman, oral communication to Jerome Iowa, n.d. Iowa, "Historic Documentation," 3.
34. WB to Haniel Long. July 29, 1926. WB letters, by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

35. WB to Robert Hunt. November 26, 1927. *Selected Letters*, p. 119.
36. Dutton, p. 72.
37. WB to Arthur Davison Ficke. July 10, 1935. *Selected Letters*, 144.
38. WB to Robert Frost. November 28, 1938. *Selected Letters*, 157.
39. WB to ALW. May 19, 1925. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
40. WB to ALW. Spring 1929. WB letters, by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.
41. Bynner. *Journey*, 1.
42. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. M-5, p. 443.
43. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. S, p. 213.
44. Santa Fe County Deeds, Bk. L-2, p. 407; Bk. M-3, p. 227; Bk. M-3, p. 294.
45. Santa Fe District Court, Civil Cause #22926. James C. Harvey Survey of the Von Nyvenheim Estate, November 3, 1947. Samuel P. Davalos Survey of the Witter Bynner property, January 1948 and February 1953, amended April 1963.
46. Levy, interview.
47. The Harvey plat, revised April 1963, shows this construction roughly drawn and labeled "New Construction Area." Iowa, Historic Documentation, p. 9 cites an undated 1/2" scale drawing by Robert Hunt in the collection of John Meigs.
48. Ruth Laughlin Alexander, "On Hal's Birthday," *SFNM* (August 12, 1956): 5A.
49. Calla Hay. *SFNM*, Undated article in the files of the History Library of the Museum of New Mexico.

50. *NYT*, February 13, 1962.

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THE OLD DON GASPAR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

ANOTHER IN A SERIES HIGHLIGHTING ASSOCIATIONS INTERESTED IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

by D.F. Zinn, former president

The Don Gaspar neighborhood represents a unique sector of downtown Santa Fe. The history of the area is related to the development of "American" brick-style bungalows and merchant mansions along tree-lined Don Gaspar Avenue. Some houses date from the 1880s, but, for the most part, the neighborhood developed from 1910 to 1945. Very little infill construction has taken place since that time.

The neighborhood is defined by the boundaries of Cordova Road, Galisteo Street, Paseo de Peralta and Old Pecos Trail and contains roughly 1,200 households. At the time of the first neighborhood survey around 1985, about 40 percent of the residents were owner-occupants and the remaining were renters or commercial tenants. The area has a great many community facilities including six churches and a synagogue, plus public and private schools, the Armory for the Arts, the Children's Museum, and the Center for Contemporary Arts. There are no public parks in the neighborhood, but the Wood Gormley school playground, formerly the Harrington Jr.

High site, has offered open space to the residents since the 1930s.

In 1981 the State Historic Preservation Division conducted an architectural survey of a portion of the neighborhood to support a nomination to include the neighborhood in the Santa Fe National Historic District. The area nominated includes some of the Don Diego neighborhood and is described as an architecturally cohesive section of the city. The south boundary of the historic district is Coronado Street.

One of the major characteristic features of the architecture is the small- to medium-sized Spanish Pueblo Revival-style houses built on Gildersleeve, Gomez, Sena and other quiet residential streets of the neighborhood. The Revival style was primarily an institutional and large-house phenomenon until the 1930s when these homes were built.

An excellent example of the Revival style was designed by the architects Gastra and Gladding of Albuquerque. It was designed and built for Judge David Chavez in 1935 and is located at the corner of Gildersleeve and Buena Vista

streets. The house remains in much the same configuration as when designed. Gladding liked the design well enough to reproduce it in Albuquerque; that home was placed on the State Register of Cultural Properties.

There are approximately 44 structures in the Don Gaspar neighborhood considered historically significant and 231 historically contributing structures. Of particular note, however, are the Witter Bynner home at the corner of Old Pecos Trail and Buena Vista, and the Carlos Vierra House located at Coronado Street and Old Pecos Trail. The Vierra House, built about 1920, exemplifies the Revival style, the style most zealously promoted by Sylvanus Morley, Jesse Nusbaum and Carlos Vierra, himself. John Gaw Meem acquired some of his knowledge of this style through his early commissions, with Vierra as collaborator.

In addition to historic buildings, there are several interesting *acequias* and old irrigation ditches in the neighborhood. The *Acequia Madre* runs through the lower portions of the district and is used by some residents to irrigate family garden plots. Another ditch now abandoned runs through the neighborhood from Old Pecos Trail near Arroyo Tenorio and disappears after it passes under Don Gaspar at a 1928 concrete

bridge. The Judge Chavez house is built over the river rock-filled irrigation channel created to carry water to the vegetable gardens of the old State Penitentiary, which was located roughly at the site of the Joe Montoya State Office Building on Cordova Road. The ditch can still be seen as it is contained within riverstone walls at 711 and 715 Don Gaspar. It appears that the water must have defied gravity as the ditch found its way to the Pen site through what is now the curving streets of Houghton and San Isabel.

The neighborhood association was formed in 1980 by residents concerned with the speed of traffic and congestion plus the intrusion of commercial zoning into the district, which was named the primary concern in an Association newsletter.

The neighborhood plan submitted to the City of Santa Fe, but never approved, cites the intention to support new construction and remodeling that embodies the original architectural character of the residential streetscapes.

The original neighborhood group was instrumental in forming the first city-wide neighborhood coalition that the city formally recognized.

SETON VILLAGE—LANDMARK AT RISK

Mary Ann Anders

Ernest Thompson Seton, artist, author, scientist, and naturalist of world renown, settled at the age of 70 about six miles southeast of Santa Fe. There, on a 2,500-acre tract of land Seton established his summer center for the American Woodcraft League and constructed three houses. The last, called the "Castle," was the most ambitious, becoming home, museum library, art gallery and institute for creative people in every discipline. The community, known as Seton Village, that grew up around the Castle was composed of like-minded individuals. Here, in this creative environment, Seton lived, created and taught until his death in 1946.

The National Park Service designated Seton Castle and portions of Seton Village a National Historic Landmark in 1965 for its association with Ernest Seton, ". . . a conservationist active in the Boy Scout movement."¹ After the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966.

Buildings identified on the nomination for the National Register as part of the Landmark are Lagunita, Seton's

second house, the Pullman Car house, the adobe house, the red barn, the print shop, the craft shop, the submarine, Zoo Lodge, Foothill Lodge, and an assortment of other small houses constructed either of adobe or built around other structures such as a trailer, the Castle or two structures that represent a Pueblo kiva and a Navajo hogan.²

U.S. Department of Interior staff inspected the buildings within the boundaries of the landmark in 1981 and reported that "All of the features described in the original nomination are still standing and are in relatively good condition. The hogan and kiva are correct in dimension and configuration, and they include outstanding murals painted by a Kiowa artist. Both of these structures are in need of rehabilitation work on the roofs and some stabilization around the foundations."³

In 1985-86 the National Park Service prepared a condition assessment report for the Castle, kiva and hogan. All three structures were given the Park Service Priority 1 Endangered status because all three structures have suffered loss of architectural and artistic features and historic materials from lack of maintenance or repair and from vandalism.

Since this report was issued the National Park Service has continued to list the three structures in its Section 8 report to Congress as Priority 1 Endangered structures. They continue to deteriorate, however. The kiva and hogan may be now beyond repair.



Seton Village

Photo by Murry Ann Anders

The Castle is a castle in the figurative sense only. It is a rambling essentially one-story building with a second- and third-floor "lookout" to the rear. It is made of stone, adobe, stucco, has handcarved and applied wood elements and tile plus polychrome Indian design components. The interior features stucco and cement wall finishes, exposed vigas, varnished wood door and window lintels, and consists of over 20 rooms. It is the single most significant building within the Landmark district and reflects Seton's creative and social values during the last years of his life.⁴ Rehabilitated and maintained, the Castle could be an important interpretative tool for the life of Ernest Thompson Seton, much like the Witter Bynner House. Left to deteriorate, it may be an irreplaceable link to the life of a man whose contributions to conservation had international impact.

Properties that are designat-

ed as historically significant do not automatically preserve themselves. They are lost through urban renewal, benign neglect, a desire for the new, lack of resources for repair, and a public uninformed or uncaring about the importance of the physical links to our nation's heritage.

NOTES

1. "Catalog of National Historic Landmarks, 1987," United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.
2. Nomination prepared by Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Project in 1975.
3. Letter from Margaret Peplin-Donat, Assistant Regional Director, Cultural Programs, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, to Carol Shull, Acting Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, April 16, 1981.
4. "National Historic Landmark Condition Assessment Report," National Park Service, 1985-86.

OUR VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS

Photo by Hope Curtis



STEPHANIE DAVIS

Stephanie Davis loves the Bandelier Garden at El Zagan. It is evident in the way she speaks of it and in the work she has given it. We are proud to honor her for all the time she has given to the Foundation and to Santa Fe in recreating this matchless showpiece for all to enjoy.

Stephanie's involvement in the garden began when her husband, Rick, a Foundation board member at the time, volunteered her services to bring the garden from maintained chaos into defined order, a quality of all Victorian gardens. To this day she has not regretted that act of her husband's.

Stephanie started her garden work in the summer of 1989 by taking a long look at what was growing where, what could be weeded, and what could be safely moved. Finding diverse confusion such as Cosmos

growing inside Columbines, Stephanie decided that too much needed to be done and she had very little information to guide her from the Foundation files or elsewhere.

That winter Stephanie spent researching Victorian gardens in the area. In the spring of 1990 she and other volunteers began their work. The result is a glorious garden that everyone enjoys.

Stephanie said that the work was "far more rewarding than anyone thought. The greatest reward was the reception the garden received from all kinds of people—an unexpected joy. And, everyone who worked on it just loved being in the garden!"

That is quite evident, indeed. And we thank Stephanie Davis for all her hard work. It will be appreciated for years to come.

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I would like to volunteer

“GANG MEMBERS” AS TOUR GUIDES

Dwight Young

The young man leans against the fender of a car, one booted foot propped on the bumper. Although it is a warm day, he wears a black leather jacket with the collar turned up. The sun glints on rows of silver studs, on the frames of his mirrored sunglasses, on the switchblade with which he is cleaning his fingernails. He is the picture of repose—cigarette dangling from his lips, a shock of oiled hair falling across his forehead—but his obscured eyes miss nothing. At last he sees what he has been waiting for: the tour bus. A small crowd of tourists steps down from the bus into the dusty plaza, glancing around uncertainly. The young man, laughing mirthlessly to myself, pockets his switchblade and moves toward them like a shark.

That's how I had envisioned it. When I first heard that the Heritage Tourism Project in El Paso, Texas, was using “gang members” as tour guides, this is the picture that immediately popped into my head. So I called Rosario Holguin, who directs the project, to find out whether I was right. Boy, was I wrong.

What really happens is this: You board a trolley in El Paso for a tour of three historic missions a few miles southeast of

the city. At Mission Ysleta, founded in 1680, your guides may be some local seventh graders from the nearby school of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. A bit farther down the Mission Trail at the Chapel of San Elizario (established here in 1773), more middle-school students may be performing folk dances in the plaza or re-enacting a local 19th-century jail-break in which Billy the Kid played a major role.

These youngsters are not gang members, and that's the whole point. By training them as tour guides and enlisting them to show their communities to visitors, school officials and the El Paso Heritage Tourism Project are offering these kids an alternative to involvement in the pervasive and often violent youth-gang culture. In the process, the students get a real hands-on immersion in local history, thereby strengthening their sense of community pride, and visitors get a unique exposure to the rich stew of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo cultures that is El Paso. . . .

. . . In the pilot states of Wisconsin, Indiana, Tennessee and Texas, [the National Trust's Heritage Tourism Initiative] is

helping communities and regions develop tourism in ways that focus on the area's unique history and culture. The initiative urges communities to ensure that tourism is of economic and social benefit to the community itself—in other words, that the quality of life for local residents is not sacrificed in pursuit of the tourist dollar, and that measures are established to protect the very elements that attract visitors in the first place.

The initiative also urges communities to remember that the visitors' experience should reflect the uniqueness of the *genus loci*—the spirit of the place. Galveston Island is not like Gary, Ind., after all, so tourism efforts in each place (both of which are HTI pilot areas) should emphasize that very "differentness." The concept seems so very obvious, but the American genius for homogenization can work wonders in making one place seem pretty much like any other.

Another principle espoused by the Heritage Tourism Initiative is, on its surface, equally simplistic: History Can Be Fun. From what I've heard, this particular tenet is getting strong play in El Paso. In fact, I understand that it's hard to tell who's having the better time: Visitors to the missions or the kids who show them around. The folks at the El Paso

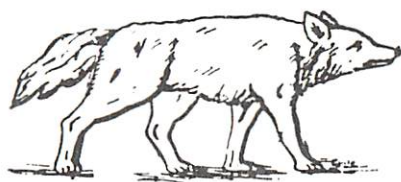
Heritage Tourism Project aren't keeping the kids off the streets. Instead, they're putting the kids out on the streets in a good cause, and both the kids and the streets are better for it.

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NEW MEXICAN ADOBES

*Here in this autumnal Spain
Adobes live with little rain,
And even crumbling seem to me
Sweeter than a spring can be
In any other place but this,
Where an eternal autumn is.*

WITTER BYNNER



From: *The New Mexico Quarterly*
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