

## Santa Fe Plaza

The Plaza is a National Historic Landmark located in the Santa Fe Historic District on a square block bordered by San Francisco Street, Washington Avenue, Palace Avenue, and Lincoln Avenue, south of the Palace of the Governors in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The city of Santa Fe sits on an ancient site, Oga Pogeh Owingeh, which was home to the Northern and Southern Tewa people for thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish settlers. Lived experiences and historical stories of Oga Pogeh continue to be passed down through the oral tradition, by the people of Taytsúgeh Oweengeh (Tesuque Pueblo) who continue to maintain social and cultural connections to the land.

Don Pedro de Peralta, considered New Mexico's first governor, officially named the city, "La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asís, or The Royal Town of the Holy Faith of St Francis of Assisi in 1610. During the 1600s, Spanish colonists created a plaza in the heart of the city, in an area that had been a communal gathering area for the Pueblo people. The Plaza was in the center of a small presidio, or fortified walled fort, erected by the Spanish, and was surrounded by buildings that had been constructed by the Tewa people.

The Spanish village included a church, located on the eastern side of the central square of the plaza, which symbolized the "holy faith" that was the cornerstone of the city. The plaza was the site of the battle of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, and the War for Mexican Independence which ended after 11 years of revolutionary fighting. In 1821, during the reign of the new government, the Mexican flag was flown above the Palace of the Governors and the plaza was renamed La Plaza de la Constitución, until General Stephen W. Kearny arrived in Santa Fe in 1846. Kearny met no opposition as he entered the city. Legend says that he proclaimed the New Mexico territory part of the United States from the plaza grounds that day.

Prior to colonization, the plaza was a well-known open marketplace and center of commerce for traders. During the second half of the 19th century, the Anglo-American population in Santa Fe grew rapidly due to the influx of travelers of the Santa Fe Trail. From 1845 – 1880, boarding houses, gambling halls, and other businesses were fueled by the traders of the Santa Fe Trail network. The La Fonda Hotel, located on the southeast corner of the plaza, was known as the Inn at the End of the Trail.

In 1920, the Daughters of the American Revolution erected the End of the Trail Monument located on the southeast corner of the plaza. This monument marks the end of the Santa Fe Trail for Missouri merchants. Once the railroad was established, travelers of the Santa Fe Trail slowed and eventually ended when the Route 66 highway became available to independent vehicle owners.

Lumber and new resources were brought in on freight trains, which transformed the city and expanded buildings and commerce. The city constructed a wooden bandstand on the plaza, where the United States infantry bands performed free music for the public. An archival photo from 1886 shows local farmers selling produce on the bandstand in the plaza. Early 1900 photos show burros packed with firewood tied in bundles on their back, circling the plaza and congregating along Burro Alley, and a plaza surrounded by a white picket fence with alfalfa grass planted within the square. During this period, criminals were sent to the state penitentiary in Santa Fe until their trial; 19 men found guilty of crimes were publicly hung on the west corner of the Plaza.

Funding was appropriated by the New Mexico Territorial Legislative 1866-1867, for the creation of a Soldier's Monument or Obelisk, to honor the lives of men who died in the Civil War battle at Apache Cañón in Glorieta, and at the battle in Valverde, as well as the Indian Wars. In 1868, the 33 feet tall stone monument, consisting of an obelisk and a plinth, was situated at the historic center of Santa Fe and commemorated with great fanfare.

Inscriptions on the panels of the monument were codified into law. One panel reads, "Erected by the people of New Mexico through their legislatures of 1866-7-8. May the Union be perpetual."

Another panel reads, "To the Heroes of the federal army who fell at the battles of Canon del Apache and Pigeons Rancho (La Glorieta) fought with the rebels March 28, 1862, and to those who fell at the battle fought with the rebels at Peralta April 15, 1862."

The third panel reads, "To the Heroes of the federal army who fell at the battle of Valverde. Fought with rebels February 21, 1862."

And the fourth panel reads, "To the heroes who have fallen in the various battles with the savage Indians of the Territory of New Mexico."

In Wilson's book, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition*, complaints from local residents over the monument's derogatory reference to indigenous people as "savage" or "Indios bárbaros," began in the 1950s and escalated during the 1960s. Oliver La Farge wrote an article, *Record Put Straight on Odd Folk-lore of Misinformation*, which explained that the wording "savage Indians" meant Navajo and Mescalero Apache and the "rebels" were reference to these Native tribes as well as Confederate soldiers from Texas.

According to a Santa Fe Newmexican article written in 1961:

"An elder of Tesuque Pueblo stated that his first realization that he was a second-class citizen was when he read the words "savage Indian" on the panel as a child. He added, the word should be changed stating, "Why should future generations of American Indian children continue to have this insulting reminder that the conquerors considered them little more than blood-lusting beasts, not notable martyrs fighting for their homes?"

In 1973, the American Indian Movement leadership wrote the governor of New Mexico requesting that the state change the wording of panel 4 because of the derogatory word "savage" or remove the Soldiers Monument from the public space. In response, Governor Bruce King told the Santa Fe council that the reference on the 1868 Soldier's monument to "savage Indians" had aroused criticism, and he asked that the council remove it.

The City Council determined that the monument was owned by the State of New Mexico, and a unanimous vote rescinded the previous vote to remove it. Federal grant funds had been sought earlier for the preservation of the monument, so the state government proposed that a plaque be placed to explain the context of the terms "Rebel" and "Savage Indians" as a resolution to the governor's request.

A brass plaque on a concrete stand was placed on the south side of the monument, prepared in 1973, by the State Cultural Properties Review Committee. The text explains the context for monument wording and reads, "Monument texts reflect the character of the times in which they are written and the temper of those who wrote them. This monument was dedicated in 1868 near the close of a period of intense

strife which pitted northerner against southerner, Indian against white, Indian against Indian. Thus, we see on this monument, as in other records, the use of such terms as 'savage' and 'rebel'. Attitudes change and prejudices hopefully dissolve."

In 1974, an unidentified man wearing coveralls chipped the word "savage" out of the inscription on panel 4 of the obelisk. In August 2017, the word "courageous" was written with a permanent marker by an unknown person.

On June 18, 2020 City of Santa Fe, Mayor Alan Webber, signed a Proclamation of Emergency - Civil Unrest from Institutional Racism. This proclamation called for the removal of the Don Diego de Vargas statue from Cathedral Park, the Civil War obelisk and the Christopher "Kit" Carson monuments.

At this poignant moment in time, the mayor hastened all members of the community in Santa Fe, stating in the proclamation:

"The removal of monuments in Santa Fe was to allow our community the opportunity to have overdue conversations: we need to take an honest look at all of our history, move forward with truth and reconciliation, and create a better future based on our shared values, to maintain the peace in our city; to reject expressions of anger that involve violence or hatred. The Mayor is asking our community to use this moment to engage in respectful dialogue about our city's past and prayerful reflection on our city's future; and to embrace peace and reconciliation as a true fulfillment of the shared values of the people of Santa Fe. The proclamation also called for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to make recommendations to the City regarding the future of the City's historic statues and monuments, relevant sections of the City's Code, and other matters of education, historic trauma, and systemic racism that the City has the responsibility and opportunity to address."

In the early morning hours on June 22, 2020, the Soldier's monument was heavily damaged by vandals who spray-painted it, and used a blunt force object to bludgeon the panels. Elena Ortiz, an Ohkay Owingeh tribal member and chair of the Santa Fe-Red Nation Freedom Council, said to the Santa Fe Newmexican that she neither condones nor condemns the damage to the obelisk, but was upset with the public's reaction to the vandalism. "I think it's appalling that people are more upset about this than they would be upset over women and children being sold into slavery [on the Plaza] and people having their foot cut off by conquistadors," Ortiz said.

On October 12, 2020, Indigenous People's Day, protesters toppled the central obelisk memorial. In response, the City of Santa Fe boarded the remains of the monument with a plywood box and posted a plaque of RESOLUTION NO. 2021-6, which explains the City's CHART process and the context regarding the controversy. The formation of a committee that would deliberate and make recommendations for the disposition of controversial monuments and statues was initiated. Then, sponsors of the resolution, Mayor Alan Webber, Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth, Councilor Roman "Tiger" Abeyta, and Councilor Chris Rivera, decided on a grassroots process that invites and facilitates community dialogue.

On July 14, 2021 the City's Governing Body approved a contract with the non-profit organization, Artful Life, to be the hired consultant, recommended by the evaluation committee, to lead the Culture, History, Art, Reconciliation and Truth (CHART) public engagement process over the span of a year. An

opening event, where the public could meet and greet the CHART facilitators, was held on Sunday, November 14, 2021 at Frenchy's Field, along the Santa Fe River Trail.

### History of Fiesta de Santa Fe

The plaza is host to the oldest community celebration known as Fiestas, which dates back to 1712. During the week of the Fiesta de Santa Fe, La Conquistadora, a Marian statue originally carved as an image of Our Lady of Assumption representing Mary's miraculous assumption into heaven, is venerated in a procession around the plaza. Tree-ring dates reveal, La Conquistadora was carved between 1448 - 1648, however the country of her origin and maker are unknown. The statue was brought from Mexico to Santa Fe by Franciscan priests in 1625.

During the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, the church was set on fire, and the statue incurred some damage but was not destroyed. Spanish settlers carried her to the El Paso area, the temporary settlement called El Real de San Lorenzo. During the period of Spanish exile from New Mexico, the first record of clothing and jewels made for the statue was in 1686, and included dresses of silk and satin with gold galloon trim, strings of pearls, gold and silver earrings and a filigree cross. In August 2014, 60 garments out of a collection of 200 outfits made for the statue, were on exhibit as part of the 300th anniversary celebration of the Chapel of La Conquistadora.

The statue of La Conquistadora accompanied Don Diego de Vargas, friars, families and soldiers on their expedition to resettle Santa Fe in 1692. According to author and historian Fray Angélico Chávez, De Vargas believed that La Conquistadora had answered his prayers to regain the city without too much bloodshed. He rebuilt the parish church that had been destroyed during the revolt, to honor the Marian image, which he called Nuestra Señora de la Conquista.

In 1717, La Conquistadora was placed in what is now the Catholic Basilica of St. Francis. In 1771, La Conquistadora was proclaimed patroness of Nuevo México and Queen of Heaven by the Cofradia del Rosario or confraternity that continues to care for her. Annual church functions and the Fiesta de Santa Fe were created to give thanks for her role in the reconquest. A re-enactment, also known as The Entrada, was performed annually during the Fiesta de Santa Fe each September; celebrating what organizers call the "peaceful resettlement" of the city by De Vargas in 1692.

The Entrada was invented by an Episcopal minister in 1911, in an effort to increase tourism. It was one of many events that took place during the annual Fiesta de Santa Fe, each September that sparked controversy and incited protests. In 1977, the All Pueblo Council of Governors formally expressed its disapproval of the Fiesta de Santa Fe, "for its offensive display depicted by the reenactment."

In 1992, a documentary film, *Gathering Up Again: Fiesta in Santa Fe* was made. The film focused on the Native American who accepted the role of Cacique Domingo in a pageant that reenacts the "peaceful reconquest of 1692". The reenactment depicts inaccuracies in the historical representation of the reentry of the Spanish, with Hispanics and Anglos dressed in Plains Indians costumes and war paint on the face during the pageantry. Due to the controversy over the Fiesta re-enactments, Archbishop Robert Sánchez renamed La Conquistadora to Our Lady of Peace in 1992.

During The Entrada reenactments, September 2015, 2016 and 2017, protesters gathered on the plaza calling for its abolishment. Eight protesters were arrested in 2017, which led to months of closed-door discussion with various stakeholders, including the Santa Fe Fiesta Council and the Caballeros de Vargas,

a fraternal organization that puts on the annual commemoration and reenactment. In 2018, the Santa Fe Fiesta Council decided to drop The Entrada, and agreed to return to the original intent of the proclamation signed in 1712, which states that the purpose of the Fiesta event is to celebrate the faith that founded the city.

Santa Fe continues the Fiestas as an annual event in September, with traditions of Catholic vespers, mass, sermon and procession around the Plaza. The week-long Fiestas celebration culminates with the burning of Zozobra, a figure resembling an old man in a suit with bow tie, stuffed with shredded paper, is meant to help drive away the doom and gloom of the previous year. In 1924, Will Shuster created the first ever Zozobra as part of a private event at his home, as a celebratory event for residents who were not Catholic and did not participate in Festas.

Shuster was inspired by the celebrations of the Yaqui Indians of Mexico, and chose the name, Zozobra, which translates to "The Gloomy One." Zozobra has grown in size over the years, and stands over 50 feet tall today, making the marionette one of the largest in the world. After the figures' construction the public is encouraged to participate in stuffing it with shredded papers of memories and negative issues they wish to rid themselves of, which may include police reports, divorce papers and bankruptcy documents.

Another annual tradition is the Desfile de Los Niños or otherwise known as the Children's Pet Parade. This annual event was established in the early 1920's, and pays homage to St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of Santa Fe. Children and their pets dress in costumes for the event, which culminates with an awards ceremony held on the Plaza. Priests from the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi conduct a Blessing of Animals ritual on the Feast Day of St. Francis each year.

#### Community events

Since 1909, the Museum of New Mexico has worked to protect and promote traditional southwestern Native American arts and crafts. Native American Artisans sell their handmade pottery, textiles, and jewelry made of traditional materials such as turquoise, coral, and silver from under the portal of the Palace of the Governors, as they have for decades.

In 1988, a car crash was staged on the Plaza, in front of the Five 'n Dime store, for the film *Pow Wow Highway*. Actor Mario Lopez also filmed, *Holiday in Santa Fe*, a Lifetime network movie, on the Plaza in April 2021. The Lifetime network crew filmed in various locations around the city, and the Plaza was decorated with Christmas decorations for the movie's storyline of a tight knit family that runs a business creating ornaments inspired by Mexican Christmas traditions.

For many hundreds of years, "buskers" or street performers, some are local residents and others are visitors passing through town, have put on different types of performances on the Plaza including juggling, music, dance and theater. In April 2014, the Plaza was packed by so many performers that the City of Santa Fe drafted a new ordinance for buskers, requiring them to apply for a license from the City and submit a declaration of what kind of performance they intend to put on for public audiences. Performers were also required to have a photo identification to show while performing, and each performer must stay at least 50 feet away from each other as well as other vendors on the plaza.

Street performers were required to move at least 100 feet every two hours, and those on the Plaza must leave after two hours of performance, with a maximum of five buskers allowed on the plaza at any given time. Vocal and musicians must not be audible at a distance of 50 feet, and sound amplification can only be used between 1 and 3 p.m. daily, and never on the Plaza. Performing on the Plaza bandstand was also prohibited, as well as any act that involves fire, spray paint or aerosols. During annual festival events such as Indian Market, Spanish Market, arts and crafts fairs, or evening musical performances, buskers are allowed to perform with written permission from the event's sponsor. Buying a 30-day busker's license for \$10 was eliminated, and a \$35 license for one calendar year became the only option.

For eight decades, native New Mexican, Antonia Apodaca, wrote songs and performed on the Plaza. Her family members said that when Antonia was 13, she won a contest against adult accordion players at Santa Fe's La Fonda on the Plaza. She won many more awards over the course of her lifetime, including the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1992, the Premio Hilos Culturales in 2011, and the New Mexico Music Commission's Platinum Music Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2018.

German-born guitarist, Ottmar Liebert, moved to Santa Fe in the 1980s and is still a resident. Ottmar also performed guitar on the Plaza during the 1990s, continuing to perform shows at the Lensic with his band, Luna Negra (2000-2021). During the mid-1990s, the musician and dancer known as Chuscales also performed guitar flamenco music on the plaza. Chuscales emigrated from Antequera, Spain to North America in the 1980s, and spent decades touring with the famous Maria Benitez flamenco troupe. His grandfather was a Gypsy who grew up in a family known for its performers. One of Chuscales' childhood mentors was flamenco master Paco de Lucia. He also grew up playing and listening to flamenco music in the famed caves of Sacromonte.

Many other styles of music have been performed on the plaza. Between 2016 - 2018, a Dixieland gypsy jazz band from Seattle also performed regularly on the Plaza of Santa Fe. Native American hand drum musicians, pow wow dancing using digital recordings, hoop dance performances by the Pojoaque Lightning Boy Foundation, Afro-Native American flute player (Johnny "Nailman" Alston), solo saxophone, violin, and guitar performers, as well as local mariachi bands.

Today, the Plaza is a public park used as a community-gathering place for civic celebrations including local artisans' markets, free music from live bands during the summer, parades, lowrider and classic car shows, CommUNITY non-profit organizations information and educational awareness day events, winter holiday displays that include New Year's Eve fireworks, ice sculptures, and bonfires in the streets surrounding the square.

The Plaza is also host to annual events such as the Indigenous People's Day celebration, Contemporary Hispanic Market, Spanish Market and the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) Santa Fe Indian Market. Restaurants, galleries, boutiques, and museums line the streets around the Plaza. Wedding parties often grace the Plaza with a promenade around the square after their ceremony, often with live mariachi serenading the newlyweds and cheers from local residents.

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