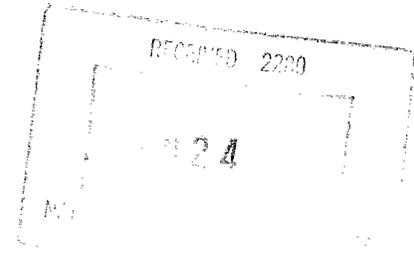


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing
Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

N/A

C. Form Prepared by

name/title David Kammer, Ph.D
organization consulting historian
street & number 521 Aliso Dr. NE
city Albuquerque

date Dec, 2002
telephone (505) 266-0586
state NM **zip** 87108

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jan D. Bell
Signature and title of certifying official

1/23/03
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Seth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

3/10/03
Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B)*. Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	3
F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	27
G. Geographical Data	31
H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	32
I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	34

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 3 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

BUILDINGS DESIGNED BY JOHN GAW MEEM, 1925-1959

Nowhere in the United States is a regional architecture more evident than in New Mexico and sections of surrounding states where elements of prehistoric, Spanish colonial and Territorial building practices continue to find expression in many contemporary residences as well as public, civic and institutional, and ecclesiastical structures. Prior to the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, a limited range of materials and their resultant building precedents determined construction practices and design in the region. The opening of the commercial trail and the growing influence of Americans, culminating in the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the creation of New Mexico Territory in 1850, resulted in the importation of some Greek Revival decorative elements then popular in the eastern United States. This trend saw a much broader range of imported designs and materials become available following the arrival of the railroad in New Mexico in 1880. Despite the popularity of these imported styles during the late Territorial period, following statehood in 1912, many cultural and civic leaders, especially in Santa Fe, advocated a building style that evoked the region's design precedents.

While many architects and builders became versed in the vocabulary of these Spanish-Pueblo building traditions, no one embraced them more broadly or sensitively as to their historic roots and spirit than John Gaw Meem (1894-1983). Like many health seekers who came to the Southwest during the early 20th century, Meem became infused with a sense of place, heightened by what he termed the "great legacy" that the region's historic peoples had left to contemporary architects working in the region. Laboring along parallel tracks of designing buildings and seeking to preserve the architectural resources of the past, Meem began designing buildings in 1925 and continued his architectural practice until his retirement in 1959, after which he continued both to consult on selected projects and champion historic preservation efforts. Although he undertook projects entailing a variety of architectural styles, his articulation of regional design is apparent in both small and large residences, in institutional and public buildings, and in several religious buildings. Although concentrated in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, his buildings appear throughout New Mexico as well as in Colorado and Arizona. So substantial were Meem's contributions to defining the southwestern regional style that he remains the most recognized architect who practiced in New Mexico during the 20th century.

The breadth of John Gaw Meem's contribution to shaping the Southwest's built environment becomes readily apparent through an appreciation of his life and three distinct stages in his professional career. Born in Brazil, educated in Virginia, and returning to work in Brazil, he was stricken with tuberculosis. In 1920, he arrived in New Mexico, hoping to convalesce in the Southwest's high, arid climate. During a convalescence marked by exposure to New Mexico's diverse people, culture, landscape and architecture, Meem briefly undertook architectural studies in Denver, designed an expansion of a home for a friend, and, by 1925, received his first commission to design a residence. These early years, extending from 1924 to 1928, were marked largely by residential projects but included commercial and institutional commissions. They were also marked by Meem's growing familiarity with the area's historic building practices and his increasing efforts to preserve some of its best examples, especially churches. By 1928, he had emerged as Santa Fe's leading architect and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 4 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

embarked on the middle phases of his career, which would extend through the Great Depression and World War II, events that resulted in a broadened need for public buildings, many funded through New Deal programs. During this period, Meem also continued his ongoing interest in preservation, stimulated, in part, by his role as regional director of the New Deal-created Historic American Building Survey (HABS). He continued to design numerous residences, expanding the range of the region's historic building traditions to include elements associated with the 19th century Territorial period in New Mexico, and began his tenure as architect for the University of New Mexico, a relationship that would last for nearly a quarter century. Finally, during the post-war period, extending from 1946 to his retirement in 1959, the third phase of his career unfolded. In varying partnerships, first with Hugo Zehner (1941-1956) and Edward Holien (1944 until Meem's retirement), he continued to design residences and ecclesiastical buildings. Increasingly, however, he left the design work for the firms' commercial and institutional projects to other staff members as he concentrated on bringing business to the firm as well as participating in efforts to promote historic preservation in Santa Fe. Addressing Meem's work during each of these phases, as well as his growth as a preservationist, reveals the breadth of his contributions to the Southwest's rich regional architectural heritage.

The Formative Years (1894-1924)

Many of the experiences shaping John Gaw Meem's formative years involved cross-cultural adjustments. Born in 1894 in Pelotas, located in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, he was the son of John Gaw Meem III, an engineer turned Episcopal missionary, and Elsa Upton Krischke, a German-Brazilian. The fourth male to bear his name, the young Meem came of age as an American minority living in a city whose landscape and buildings reflected the Portuguese heritage of many of its residents. During those formative years, he had his first immediate exposure to architectural planning in 1908 when his father designed and then supervised the construction of the city's Gothic-style Episcopal Church. Familiar with the plazas and stepped flat planes that characterized many of the city's buildings as well as with at least two languages, Meem had an early exposure to how communities whose citizens came from diverse backgrounds found common grounds to shape their collective lives. The move to Lexington, Virginia and the campus at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in 1910 brought with it yet another cross-cultural experience. Following in the engineering footsteps of his father, who had briefly taught at VMI, and grandfather, a Confederate Army officer who later served as supervising engineer for the Treasury Department, he also saw an American culture in which racial differences resulted in racist-inspired antagonisms. Later, during the 1940s, he would deplore this racism as he urged residents of Santa Fe, with its "reputation for tolerance," to remove the unofficial racial taboos that then existed toward Blacks in the city's leading hotel and theater (Meem in Wirth 1994: 43-52).

Graduating in 1914 with a degree in civil engineering, the nineteen-year old Meem moved to New York where he worked for his uncle's firm, Underpinning and Foundation Company, specializing in developing tunnels for the city's expanding subway system. This experience exposed him to the then emergent "scientific management techniques and a rhetoric of professional expertise" that came to characterize practices in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 5 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

architectural firms as well (Wilson 2001: 8). When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, Meem, a member of the Officers' Reserve Corps since his graduation from VMI, was called to active duty where he was charged with training recruits in Iowa. By the following winter he was serving with a National Guard unit on Long Island where he succumbed to the influenza that swept the United States during 1918-19. While in recovery, he was promoted to captain before he left the Army. Shortly thereafter, he assumed a position with National City Bank of New York, underwent training, and, because of his Portuguese language skills, was sent to Rio de Janeiro as an overseas credit manager. This family reunion of sorts, however, was short lived when Meem, weakened from the flu virus, contracted tuberculosis and returned to New York, seeking treatment from the bank's physician. Typical of the treatments then advocated, the doctor recommended complete rest, a regimen best realized through convalescence at a sanatorium. He suggested three popular locales: Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; Asheville in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina; or the high, arid desert of the southern Rocky Mountains.

As the disheartened Meem left the doctor's office and walked the streets of New York at dusk pondering his seemingly bleak future, he spotted an advertisement for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railroad. With its display windows characteristically filled with images of the Southwest, including native residents, desert landscapes and the recently completed New Mexico Fine Arts Museum, he immediately determined that he would seek to regain his health in the Southwest (McNary 1977: 5). As it did for thousands of other pulmonary disease victims, the AT&SF's romanticized advertising campaign for the exotic Southwest combined with the current medical thinking, which held that elevations above 5,000 feet in the arid Southwest offered health seekers a "zone of immunity," attracted Meem. Arriving in Santa Fe in early 1920, he entered the Sunmount Sanitarium located near Sunmount Hill, or Monte Sol, southeast of the city, a facility that a friend had recommended based upon the positive experiences of a cousin, Mary Vilura Conkey. There, in the second floor hospital ward, he convalesced under the supervision of Dr. Frank Mera, the facility's director. With a regimen consisting of a carefully regulated diet and prolonged periods of bed rest, which some health seekers described as "taking a long, horizontal view of the world," Meem passed the next 18 months, drawing some solace that the government would cover his convalescence expenses since his illness stemmed from his days in the Army.

Spending nights in a screened sleeping porch, a key element of Mera's climatological therapy, gave Meem ample opportunity to gaze out across the vast expanse of land comprising the Rio Grande Rift and the mountains, the Sandias to the south and the Jemez to the west that lined it. Accompanying this contemplation of the land were the thoughts raised regarding the past and future of Santa Fe from the encounters he had with both fellow health seekers at Sunmount and visitors who gave public talks on Sunday afternoons in the sanitarium's common room. Among these visitors were writers and artists, such as Witter Bynner, Mary Austin, Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsey. More immediate to Meem's future work was the contact he had with Santa Fe residents who also visited and had become committed to preserving the picturesque and historic character of the small city of 10,000. Sometimes described as a "conservative-conservationist" group, they consisted of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 6 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

diverse, civic-minded individuals, some who had relocated for health or other reasons, and found the older aspects of the city picturesque and romantic. Drawn to Santa Fe, in part, because of similar sentiments, the group included businessmen Daniel T. Kelly, photographer and painter Carlos Vierra, and architect Issac Hamilton Rapp. Conversant in a broad range of architectural styles, Rapp pioneered what is now termed the Santa Fe or Spanish-Pueblo Revival style (Sheppard 1988: 73-100). Incorporating the suggestions of some of the more ardent conservationists within the group, Rapp designed both the main building at Sunmount and the Gross Kelly Almacen (Gross, Blackwell & Company Building), the first commercial building employing the style, in 1914. Over the next six years his subsequent projects included the New Mexico Building at San Diego's California-Pacific International Exposition (1915), the Fine Arts Museum of New Mexico (1916), which had first caught Meem's eye in New York, and La Fonda Hotel (1920).

Also involved in shaping Santa Fe's future were several archaeologists. Senior among them was Edgar Lee Hewett, a key proponent of the Act for the Preservation of Antiquities created in 1906. A year later, he successfully convinced the Archaeology Institute of America to locate its field school, the School of American Archaeology (renamed the School of American Research in 1917) in Santa Fe. Conducting a field school a year earlier, Hewett had met some 20 young, aspiring archaeologists. From these he selected two, Sylvanus Morley and Jesse Nusbaum, as well as Indian pottery authority Kenneth Chapman, husband of Kate Chapman, an early restorer of Santa Fe's adobe residences, to be his staff at the new field school. Over the next several years Hewett and his colleagues fought to save the Palace of the Governors from demolition in 1909 and then participated in the Nusbaum-led restoration of the building that culminated in the *New-Old Santa Fe Exhibit* held at the restored Palace in 1912 (Bunting 1983: 7). The restoration and exhibit signaled a new direction for Santa Fe, preparing the way for Rapp's revivalist buildings. Instead of embracing the typical American city's quest for a modern appearance defined by Beaux Arts institutional buildings and increasingly larger civic buildings organized to conform to City Beautiful plans, the group convinced Santa Fe's leaders to commit the city to a conscious pursuit of its past. Rejecting the commonly held definition of the City Beautiful, they applied the term to Santa Fe to include an "architectural homogeneity with a local revival style based on a study of the city's old architecture" (Wilson 1994: 122). Thus, an historic cultural landscape consisting of narrow, crooked streets and buildings that produced, according to Morley, a "low and long rather than high and narrow" effect served to define Santa Fe, offering at once a "city beautiful" and a "city different."

It was within this context that Meem's "enthusiasm and taste for the [Spanish-Pueblo Revival] style right here in Santa Fe" grew as he convalesced (Meem in Wirth 1994: 168). Two experiences, in particular, sparked his growing enthusiasm. One grew out of his early contact with Anne Evans, the daughter of a former Territorial governor of Colorado, who during Lent in 1921 accompanied Meem and Dan Kelly on a visit to the church in the village of Trampas. Seeing the old church and its state of disrepair drew Meem into the movement to restore the state's numerous old and endangered churches and to "become specialized in their architecture." Beginning two years earlier when Evans, Mary Conkey, Hewett, Mera and others began working with church officials to survey and preserve these buildings, by 1922, the effort grew into the Committee (later Society) for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 7 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

the Preservation and Restoration of New Mexico Mission Churches (CPRNMMC) in which John Gaw Meem became an active member. A second experience grew from the respect that Meem held for the collaborative efforts between Jesse Nusbaum and Kenneth Chapman in researching the history of regional architectural details that resulted in the "very high standard" that I.H. Rapp brought to the Fine Arts Building of the Museum of New Mexico. Most important for Meem was that while respecting the "spirit and character of the original" buildings they drew upon for their inspiration, they also understood that the use of new materials, such as masonry block, assured the permanence of the newer buildings. In effect, even during the early days of his residence in Santa Fe, Meem was beginning to shape an important part of his architectural philosophy regarding ways of reconciling historic regional building design with the availability of newer, more long-lasting materials.

Even though "from his first day at Sunmount, he became literally immersed in the revival of the pueblo forms," Meem soon found that his engineering background and emerging sketching skills were unable to offset his growing interest in aesthetic and design. These deficiencies became particularly apparent after a fellow patient, Hubert Galt, and then others approached him with architectural questions regarding additions or renovations they hoped to undertake for homes they owned in Santa Fe (Bunting 1983: 11). Frank Mera had obligingly provided him not only with merchant sets of sample blueprints for buildings designed by practicing but with an old building that served as a drafting room, but Meem sought a more formal setting for his architectural pursuits.

Sufficiently recovered by the fall of 1922 to travel, he moved to Denver where he became an apprentice in the city's leading architectural firm, Fisher & Fisher. No doubt exposed to an office project aimed at developing standardized plans for smaller, middle class homes under the architects' Small House Service, Meem labored over a drafting table by day and attended the Atelier Denver at night. Using the architectural curriculum offered from the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design in New York, the studio emphasized mastery of standard designs for various building types as well as a thorough study of historical design precedents (Wilson 2001: 12-13). By combining this attention to small details with an appreciation of historical precedent, the curriculum sought to enable students to master the process of solving complex design problems. Although much architectural practice involves beginning with the broad plan and then applying appropriate details, the exercise of moving from specific details to general composition equipped Meem with an eye for detail that would characterize much of his work. Working under Burnham Hoyt, the Atelier Denver's director also reinforced the importance of learning from the past, a concept that Meem had already encountered with his new group of "conservative-conservationist" friends in Santa Fe and one that would eventually inspire him to broaden his use of regional historical antecedents. Capping his first year at the atelier by winning First Mention for a design he prepared for an entrance to a Marine Museum, Meem fell victim to another bout with tuberculosis and in January 1924 withdrew to Sunmount, his formal architectural training having lasted only 15 months.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 8 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

The Early Years (1924-1928)

Meem's return to Santa Fe sufficiently restored his strength, and by late February he and fellow patient, Cassius McCormick, had established a partnership, Meem and McCormick, Architects, with their office located on Sunmount's grounds. With McCormick managing the business side of the firm, the partnership lasted for four years until McCormick returned to Chicago in 1928. Opening an architectural firm in Santa Fe in 1924 proved to be most fortuitous. The regional revivalism sparked by the New Old Santa Fe movement into which Meem had become immersed upon first arriving in Santa Fe four years earlier continued to grow, spurred in part by the arrival of like-minded writers, artists, health seekers, and wealthy Easterners drawn to the "city different." Despite the interest in residing in a city committed to defining and reviving an historic regional architecture, the city's already small number of architects had diminished during the early 1920s. The deaths of two partners in his firm prompted I.H.Rapp's departure from Santa Fe shortly after the completion of La Fonda in 1921. Two years later, T. Charles Gaastra, who had come to Santa Fe in 1918 and designed buildings using the emergent Santa Fe style, had moved his practice to the larger, more promising Albuquerque. Thus, Meem and McCormick found themselves in demand, a circumstance perhaps made even more attractive because of Meem's congenial personality, which encouraged clients to be forthcoming, and permitted him to use his listening skills to hear and to respond to their interests and concerns.

Of this group of early clients, many were "women ten to twenty years older than he was, well-to-do individualists with opinions and accomplishments of their own" with whom Meem established friendships that "progressed to an affectionate informality" (Wilson 2001: 15-17). Their recommendations to other potential clients as well as additional projects would account for many of his projects during the first two decades of his career. His first complete building project, for instance, was designing a home along Palace Avenue for Mrs. Ashley Pond. Uncharacteristic of the body of Meem's work, its sharp clean lines delineating the one and three-story sections of the building and its details, including wrought-iron balconies and window grills, were more evocative of Spanish revivalism than any local antecedents. The project most likely contributed to obtaining a larger project that soon followed, when Mrs. Pond's husband, founder of the Los Alamos Ranch School, engaged Meem to design the school's Fuller Lodge. Completed in 1928, the lodge was a grand rustic structure in which massive load-bearing vertical logs supported contrasting horizontal logs comprising the intervening spandrels. With a great portico lining its east façade and exposed decorative log trusses framing the interior dining room, the building, in concert with the Pond residence, suggests a design versatility, sometimes overlooked, that Meem demonstrated at the start of his career.

More central to his legacy, however, were the projects embracing the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. The firm's job files indicate that between 1924 and the end of 1928 Meem undertook 23 projects including several additions, ten houses, nine of which were located in Santa Fe. With the exceptions of the Ponds' projects, a church hall, a school and the Clarkson House, all of the complete building projects drew upon the historic regional designs with which Meem was becoming increasingly conversant. Already committed to preserving

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 9 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

New Mexico's historic mission churches and reviving the area's historic building designs, Meem turned to Carlos Vierra for additional information regarding the specific details and decorative elements associated with the old Pueblo and Spanish building practices. Serving as a mentor, Vierra shared a six-volume collection of photographs depicting architectural views of pueblos and Hispanic villages. He also shared a series of oil paintings depicting New Mexico's mission churches that Meem attributed to having sparked the renewed interest in the old buildings and to the interest in restoring them. Vierra was regarded by Cyrus McCormick Jr., a client for whom Meem designed the buildings at Los Acequias Ranch in Nambe in 1931, as "one of the best experts from an archaeological standpoint on the history and traditions of the Santa Fe style architecture" (McNary 1977: 12). So important were Vierra's contributions to Meem's early work, McCormick noted in a letter to John D. Rockefeller Jr., that they enabled Meem to "bring to his problems the experience of a greater artistic tradition than is usually the case among architects." In fact, this tutorial relationship sparked a proposal in 1932 for the Lippincott Publishing Company to publish Vierra's volumes with Meem supplying the text, a project that never came to fruition (Bunting 1983: 44).

Vierra's eye for details and Meem's growing appreciation of the region's historic built environment was soon reflected in the smooth integration of historic elements into his own designs. The often uneven contours of the hillsides surrounding Santa Fe, which many clients preferred, required retaining walls, a problem that he resolved through the use of masonry walls and foundations, a practice previously used in Anasazi pueblos. He began to modify previously undersized porches, or *portales*, generally braced with small supports, enlarging and deepening them and adding more substantial, sometimes buttressed, corner piers or stepped walls to provide a more picturesque framing, a quality readily apparent in the Meadors-Staples-Anthony Residence (1925) in downtown Santa Fe. In some instances, as in the large guesthouse near Pecos, New Mexico that he designed for the rodeo entertainer, Tex Austin, Meem arranged the eleven-bedroom house around a courtyard but included a long *portal* extending along the exterior of the façade. In addition to including the standard elements defining the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style, such as exposed wood beams, or *vigas*, and wood roof drains, or *canales*, the emphasis he gave to these other details enhanced the picturesque appearance of the building.

Although he seemed comfortable working with the traditional New Mexico building material of sun-dried adobe brick, he also advised clients that while it would cost less, "in the long run it is not as satisfactory as a more permanent material, such as hollow tile" (Meem in Wilson 2001:29). In such instances, he would then face the tile with a coat of adobe-colored stucco. In his mind, builders sensitive to the spirit and character of the Spanish and Pueblo building styles could maintain the spirit of the style even as they worked with new materials. In Meem's case, this sensitivity is particularly apparent in the way in which the tile blocks were laid to evoke irregular, hand-made walls and the way in which parapets assumed a wavy, undulating quality. These elements became a standard component in his specifications to contractors in which he reminded them that "the chief characteristics of this building are the irregular contours of its wall surfaces and silhouettes" (Meem in Wilson 2001:19). Similarly, appreciating the importance of light and the circulation of air, he departed from the relatively few windows characteristic of housing before the availability of glass and included numerous wooden

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 10 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

casement windows set deeply into the walls but topped with wood lintels recalling the load bearing role they had played in the earlier adobe construction. This ability to work with traditional designs but to infuse them with practical modern materials and technology so that they met current needs was essential to Meem's thinking as both an engineer and architect. Years later, responding to Frank Lloyd Wright's dismissal of the incorporation of the style into the buildings at the University of New Mexico campus as "imitation and all imitation is base," Meem defended the practice. Instead, he countered, architecture often underwent a "natural evolution whereby fragile materials were replaced by more permanent ones all the time retaining the spirit and character of the original" (Meem in Wirth 1994: 169).

The issue of maintaining the spirit and character of traditional building practices even as the scale and functions of buildings expanded and changed became manifest in both the largest project Meem undertook during the early phase of his career and in one of the first institutional buildings he undertook. The first, the expansion of La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, came at a point in which Meem was serving as the volunteer architect for the CPRNMMC's restoration project of the San Esteban de Acoma mission church. One of the key questions facing him was reconstructing the church's towers in a historically sympathetic form. Rejecting the towers that had been reconstructed in 1902 as "stiff," Meem offered towers with thicker, battered walls. As he set aside his volunteer project and turned his attention to the project that Bainbridge Bunting terms the "master work" marking the "end of his apprenticeship" and his emergence as a "full-fledged master," he approached the project with the insights regarding the church's towers clearly in his mind.

The La Fonda expansion project grew out of the efforts by the Fred Harvey Company to initiate the Indian Detours, excursions designed to permit railroad travelers to tour the Southwest in motorcars to visit pueblos, archaeological sites, and the region's scenic locales before returning to their railroad cars. To accomplish this, Hunter Clarkson, the Indian Detours operator had convinced the Fred Harvey Company to purchase the recently closed La Fonda Hotel. Designed by Rapp and Rapp and opened in 1920, the hotel was the largest building incorporating the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. The very intricacy of its design details, however, had rendered it unable to function as a profitable hotel. Upon purchasing it, the Fred Harvey Company and its chief architect, Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, had determined that it needed to be larger and more efficient to serve the expanding requirements of the Indian Detours. Terming it "too nervous and indented," Colter, the self-assured, experienced designer, engaged the young Meem to design a program that would meet the needs of scale, service facilities, room size, and access to large public spaces while melding sympathetically with the existent building.

First meeting with Colter in June, 1926, over the next year Meem traveled the AT&SF's lines, visiting other hotels and soliciting funds for the Acoma church restoration project as he met travel promoters (Chauvenet 1985: 37). A year later he submitted his design. Responding to Colter's concerns, he offered a stepped, six-story addition with its southwestern corner tower suggestive of the design he had prepared for the tower restoration at Acoma. Noting that the setbacks and recesses "will recall the terracing in the more ancient

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 11 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Pueblos of Taos and Acoma,” he asserted that the emphasis of the addition “will be more mass than ornament” (Bunting: 74). The enlarged La Fonda that reopened in July, 1929 reflected the qualities Meem ascribed to his design, achieving the efficient massing the program required. Through set backs and multiple horizontal planes and a grade below that of the original hotel, the six-story addition did not substantially detract from the original design. What Meem relinquished in design ornamentation, he added in rich interior detailing, such as terra-cotta bas-relief sculptures with Indian motifs, a practice that would appear on the doors, ceilings, beams, and metal work of many of his early residential projects as well. Not only was the addition compatible with the original building, it also respected the scale of downtown Santa Fe, deferring to the towers of the city’s Saint Francis Cathedral as Meem had planned. This ability to work within the idiom of a much earlier design tradition yet adapt it to the scale and massing required in modern buildings serving notably different functions, first displayed in this enlargement project, would become one of Meem’s distinguishing characteristics.

The second project involved the first design that Meem completed for the Santa Fe Board of Education, the Manderfield School. The building is a significant one in Meem’s career for two reasons. First, while he described it in the plans he submitted to the Board of Education as “having an elevation in the Indian or the Spanish type of the Santa Fe style of Architecture,” the building’s details marked an early effort on Meem’s part to broaden his growing vocabulary of historic regional details. Using hollow tile block as he did in the majority of his projects, Meem resisted rounding the building’s corners, giving its simple massing sharper, stiffer edges. He also capped the parapet with a brick coping and included molded wood columns for the façade’s recessed *portal*. Although some of these details also appeared in the Pond House two years earlier, additional ornamentation such as the wrought iron grill work and balconies rendered its overall composition more analogous to the Spanish revivalism then popular in California than to any New Mexican precedents. At the Manderfield School, however, inclusion of these elements associated with the Territorial Period in New Mexico signaled Meem’s efforts to broaden the way in which a regional architecture drew from the past. Secondly, the first of several public and private school projects that he would undertake in Santa Fe over the next 30 years, including two enlargements of the Manderfield School, the building was necessarily modest in its details. Indicative of limited funds that characterized public school construction in Santa Fe, the building suggests Meem’s efforts to respond to his clients’ economic constraints but to create a design that nevertheless conveyed the spirit of the style in which he was working. With its additions stepping down the slope of the hill on which the building is located, the school, now a Head Start facility, remains a modest but handsome harbinger of the Territorial Revival style three-quarters of a century after Meem designed it.

In November 1928, Meem’s partner, Cassius McCormick left Santa Fe, returning to his home in Chicago. With ten residential and two school designs among his completed works and the La Fonda enlargement moving toward completion, John Gaw Meem was now alone in a practice that had compiled an admirable record in less than a half decade. In April 1927, he had been elected to the American Institute of Architects, recognition of the mastery of his profession. At the same time, Meem continued to study the historic architecture of the Southwest, working with like-minded conservationists to preserve not only New Mexico’s

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 12 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

mission churches but the historic character of Santa Fe as well. Critical to later preservation efforts within the city was the formation in 1926 of the Old Santa Fe Association (OSFA). Founded in reaction to plans promoted by the Texas chapter of the National Federation of Club Women for the city to acquire a large tract of land and to use it for summertime Chautauqua programs, the OSFA feared the consequences such a program would have on the "city different." The formation of OSFA, with Meem's strong support, marked the formal creation of the preservation movement in Santa Fe. While tax issues and fund-raising consideration would later lead to the creation of a second organization, the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, whose goal it was to acquire and preserve historic properties, the founding of the OSFA in 1926 complemented Meem's efforts to define a regional New Mexican architecture.

The Middle Years (1929-1945)

During the late summer of 1928, John Gaw Meem agreed to design a residence for Mary Conkey, a former fellow patient at Sunmount. One of several projects, including his own home, that he undertook in the vicinity of Sunmount, the building was completed in 1929 and marked a period in his career extending to the outbreak of World War II that Meem described as his "flowering or creative" period. Coinciding as it did with the Great Depression, the breadth of projects that Meem undertook during this period of scarce resources suggests the recognition that was coming to this proponent of a historically inspired regional architectural design. During these years, he and the draftsmen comprising his office staff designed some 20 houses with a slight majority employing the Territorial Revival style and the balance the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. Perhaps of greater significance with regard to the application of a regionally-based design to buildings of varying functions, over three-quarters of his projects involved institutional and church buildings. The former included both private school buildings, such as those designed for the Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs (1931-36) and the Sandia School in Albuquerque (1936-37) as well as New Deal-funded projects for buildings at several of New Mexico's colleges as well as the University of New Mexico. It also included the Santa Fe municipal building and the county's courthouse, the administrative headquarters for the Federal Emergency Recovery Act (FERA) in New Mexico (1935), and the Laboratory of Anthropology. The latter included the remodeling of the First Presbyterian and design of the Cristo Rey Churches (1939) in Santa Fe, several mission churches, and a series of stabilization projects for St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe. As the likelihood of war became imminent, Meem designed two armories and then, during the war, several utilitarian military facilities.

As his practice grew, Meem expanded his staff. In 1930, he hired Hugo Zehner, a mechanical engineer, as his chief drafter, made him an associate in 1934, and a partner in 1940, a relationship that endured until Zehner's retirement in 1956. Working for Meem during World War II, Edward O. Holien, a Beaux-Arts trained designer, also became a partner in 1944 and remained in a partnership with William Buckley after Meem retired in 1959. Since these partners brought engineering and drafting, as well as administrative and cost estimate skills to the office, they generally freed Meem to work more closely with clients regarding the design issues of a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 13 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

project and, later, to bring new commissions to the office (Bunting 1983: 27-28). As needs arose, Meem also hired a series of drafters who worked under his supervision. Skilled designers themselves, they often moved on as they gained the necessary experience with some, such as Gordon Street, becoming notable designers conversant in the regional styles they had encountered in working with Meem. Following World War II, the firm's designers undertook more of the actual design work while Meem concentrated more on bringing in commissions. Although the results of the office's collaborative process generally remain identified with Meem, associates often undertook design responsibilities for the larger institutional projects while Meem generally continued his hands-on involvement with ecclesiastical and residential projects.

For Meem, the residential projects of the late 1920s and 1930s permitted him to take the lessons he had learned regarding the Southwest's historic building traditions and to apply them to his growing sensibility regarding appropriate house forms and plans and how to enrich them with exquisite yet subtle details. On a grand scale, he designed Las Acequias, the country residence of Cyrus McCormick Jr. Located in the valley of the Rito Pojoaque with a magnificent view of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east, the house illustrates the attention to plan and siting found in Meem's more modest designs as well. Rather than being bound by linear or L or U-shaped plans associated with the traditional regional housing from which he drew his inspiration, Meem devised a three-wing building. At the center was the dining room with a living room and study located along a south-facing wing. The family's rooms were located in an L-shaped wing extending to the east and then south while a third wing, extending northwest, contained the kitchen and servants' quarters. Multiple *portales* lined portions of each wing, facing either on gardens or a terraced courtyard. They also permitted access to some rooms with no interior circulation, a common characteristic of the Spanish linear house plan. Since McCormick had expressed an interest in authenticity, Meem chose to use adobe bricks covered with adobe plaster and a concrete floor covered with mastic to simulate traditional earth packed floors. Rather than simply designing doors and cutting wood for the specific dimensions of the building's beams and corbels, Meem had Carlos Vierra search throughout northern New Mexico to obtain authentic items that could be incorporated into the building.

While Las Acequias represents perhaps the most extensive quest for authenticity of material in any of Meem's residential projects, it nevertheless is indicative of the attention he brought to his residential projects during the middle phase of his career. Listening to his clients' concerns, scrutinizing the topography of the land on which they planned to build, and drawing from his own sense of asymmetrical balance in massing and growing experience, he designed some of his finest Spanish-Pueblo Revival residences. Although most of them included concessions to modern life such as garages, interior patterns for circulation, separation of public and private spaces, they also contained the details that linked them to the region's past. Walls were generally hard plastered and painted in light or cream colors. Small corner fireplaces, or *fogónes*, some with low dividing, or *paredcito*, walls, were common, with several appearing in some designs. Wood grills over windows, exposed roof structures featuring large *vigas*, and small cross logs, or *latillas*, and finely crafted wrought iron or tin lighting fixtures also conveyed historic associations. So, too, did the variety of built-in details such as adobe

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 14 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

seats, or *bancos*, often located at windows, wall niches and shelves. To these traditional elements, Meem also drew from the Craftsman penchant for space-saving details, adding cabinets, closets, breakfast nooks, and bookcases, many framed with wood trim.

Drawing from both the traditional vernacular practice of using L and U plans to create courtyards that captured the winter sun and the Craftsman ideal of integrating outdoor and indoor spaces, Meem also modified the traditional *portal* to create an outdoor living space. Whereas earlier *portales* were approximately six to eight deep, Meem widened them, in some case doubling their depth, and often added a fireplace and provisions for a glazed enclosure in the winter (Wilson 2001: 121). By adding a flagstone covering to a concrete floor on these south and southwest facing spaces, he also increased the thermal massing in winter, while the greater depth of the *portal* increased the shaded area in summer. This modification of the traditional *portal* to make it more solar sensitive and to expand living quarters to include an outdoor space, suggests Meem's evolving vision of a regionally inspired yet modernistic home. By using floor-to-ceiling glass panels along the south elevation and adding overhangs to protect adobe walls with their greater heating efficiency, he envisioned a partial solar solution to the home energy issue.

This idea received further attention when Meem received a commission from the Santa Fe Builders Supply Company (Sanbusco) in 1943 to adapt elements from the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles to develop a new housing concept labeled in one set of plans "A Santa Fe style House for Contemporary Living." In these plans Meem sought to create a modern, middle-class residence with a glass curtain wall along the south side of the house to utilize solar energy. Taking the traditional *portal*, which he had previously widened and to which he added a *fogón* and, sometimes, glass enclosures to transform it into a living space, he now envisioned the *portal* as a central space. As such it would function as both a living and dining room, separated from a garden by only the glaze of the wall. Using a design he had experimented with in the Heflin Residence (1940), Meem adjusted the traditional flat roof to include an overhang, suggestive of the International style that would shield residents from the sun during the summer (Wilson 2001: 48). Two years later, in 1945, Meem returned to this housing issue when he designed a prototype solar house suited for New Mexico for Libby-Owens-Ford Glass Company. Using the same general plan as for the Sanbusco design, he paid particular attention to include local energy efficient materials such as adobe bricks, log beams, and flagstone floors as well as curtain and metal casement windows employing the new double-pane Thermopane that the company hoped to market. While these design efforts illustrate Meem's ongoing effort to find ways of adapting traditional regional building styles to meet modern residential needs, his reputation for historicism resulted in clients continuing to prefer the revival designs for which he was best known.

Even as he was achieving his greatest successes in articulating the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style in his residential work, Meem found himself seeking to broaden the range of the Southwest's historical antecedents that he incorporated into his work. In the early 1950s, while speaking to a University of New Mexico audience, he asserted that southwestern architecture "reflects our history," having both "American and regional" origins

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 15 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

“that few other styles of architecture can boast of” (Meem in Wirth: 83). This broader perspective reflects Meem’s efforts in the 1930s to include the bricks and millwork, as well as paints that became available following the opening of the Santa Fe Trail and the subsequent occupation and creation of the Territory of New Mexico during the mid-19th century. Combining traditionally used materials such as adobe with newly available brick used as a coping to waterproof cornices and milled lumber used around windows and doors to replicate Greek Revival details then popular in the eastern United States, and central hall house plans, these newcomers created the Territorial style. Terming it a “variant of our regional style, which is in wide use today,” Meem began, as early as the Manderfield School (1928), to adapt some of these details to his regional design vocabulary.

Beginning in 1929 with the Tilney House in Santa Fe and during the 1930s, some clients, particularly those seeking residences conveying both a regional flavor yet a more formal appearance than they felt the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style offered, began to favor the Territorial Revival style. While a few of these houses were relatively small, the majority tended to be located on large parcels of land, which permitted Meem to situate them in a broad setting that their balanced, if not symmetrical, plan required. Most notable among these buildings were the Los Poblanos Ranch (1932) and its accompanying entertainment building, La Quinta (1934) that Meem designed for Ruth and Albert Simms in the Rio Grande Valley north of Albuquerque.

Located on the Rio Grande floodplain with its high water table able to sustain stands of giant cottonwoods and with a grand vista of the Sandia Mountains to the east, the two projects offered Meem his first opportunity to display his design skills in Albuquerque. Working with an already existing L-shaped ranch house, he designed a house with a full courtyard lined with a uniform *portal*. The older portion of the house retained many colonial details such as multiple *fogónes*, exposed *vigas* with corbels and lintels above a large double wooden door suggestive of an historic carriage, or *zaguán* entry. The overall composition, however, with pedimented lintels above windows, shutters, sidelights and transoms framing some entries, a courtyard with its formal planting beds and star-shaped fountain, and a dentiled brick cornice, conveyed the Classicism that the Americans brought to New Mexico. Similarly, the H-plan of La Quinta with its symmetry, the raised portico permitting a clear view through the heightened windows of the ballroom onto the tile-lined pool, and the ballroom with its intricate cross-beam ceiling attest to these imported materials and building techniques. Perhaps Meem’s most elaborate Territorial Revival style project, La Quinta suggests a formality applicable to public places as well.

In fact, while a few of Meem’s other Territorial Revival style residences, such as the McLane House in Colorado Springs, added other details including jigsaw work and brackets and bay windows at alcoves, the style seemed more pertinent to the requirements of civic or institutional buildings. In those buildings, where design, in part, conveyed the prestige of the institution it housed, the often imposing formality of classical details signaled the importance of a government agency, educational facility, or religious body. The FERA or the New Mexico Public Welfare Building (1934) in Santa Fe, for instance, signaled the federal government’s presence

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 16 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

near the state capitol during a time when New Deal programs were providing work relief and hope to millions of Americans. Analogous to the Territorial-era forts such as Fort Union of the previous century, the two-story FERA Building contained an array of classical details conveying the presence and prestige of the federal government as the initiator of major public works projects. Similarly, when he undertook yet another project for Ruth McCormick Simms to design the six buildings for the Sandia School (1936-37), a private girl's school, he further expanded his Territorial style vocabulary. While adding pitched tile roofs and balconies to the buildings that were two stories, he maintained that while the details "were very similar...to the architecture of Monterey," they were still "fundamentally New Mexican as to essentials" (Meem in Wirth 1994: 102).

Despite having broadened the definition of an historic architectural regionalism to include the 19th century influences brought down the Santa Fe Trail, Meem also continued to design non-residential buildings using the Spanish and Pueblo-inspired elements. For a 10 year period beginning in 1930, he designed five buildings and enlarged several others at the private Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs, developing designs for larger scale buildings that anticipated work he would later undertake at the University of New Mexico. In Santa Fe he designed the Public Works Administration-funded (PWA) two-story Santa Fe County Fe County Courthouse (1938), including an extensive *portal* along the east elevation, spiral wood frames at some of the windows, and small wood balconies at some second floor windows. In Bernalillo, he designed the Kuaua Museum (1937), a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project at the Coronado State Monument. A relatively small building with a flat stepped roof lined with *vigas*, Meem added recessed *portales* along both the east and west elevations, lining both multiple windows to allow the morning and afternoon sun to illuminate the interior.

Most notable of these institutional commissions, however, were the designs he prepared for the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe in 1930 and those that he prepared for the University of New Mexico beginning in 1933. Both projects demonstrated that Meem was able not only to render a finely detailed Spanish-Pueblo inspired building as he did with individual residences or conventional institutional designs as he did at Fountain Valley School or with the courthouse, but that he was able to work on a much larger scale. The vision for the laboratory grew out of the intention of John D. Rockefeller Jr. to create an anthropological study center in Santa Fe that would include laboratory facilities, a museum, a library, a Navajo building as well as residential and service buildings, some 38 buildings in all. After a local building committee, consisting of many of Meem's associates, was formed, the American Institute of Architects national office was engaged to oversee a competition. Five firms selected nationally by the building committee received a \$1,000 fee and then were required to submit a prescribed set of drawings to be judged by a jury (Bunting 1983: 80). Although he chose to overlook a rule of the competition proscribing "ecclesiastical" buildings, perhaps sensing that no other structure in Spanish Colonial architecture provided as large a public space, Meem was declared the winner. Ultimately, only two buildings, the laboratory and the director's residence, were constructed, but the drawings and the two buildings offered ample evidence of Meem's ability to apply regional revivalist details to a large-scale project.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 17 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

With its two-story lounge, especially its heavily buttressed rear elevation, suggestive of a colonial church apse and a recessed *portal* fronting the exhibit rooms and connecting them to the library and offices at the south end of the building, Meem created three separate, seemingly disparate elements. Together, however, they conveyed an organic sense of balance. Each possessed a distinct character indicative of its separate function and differentiated through massing, stepped parapets, subtle setbacks and distinctive fenestration. Consistent with Meem's predilection for modern materials, the building contained double walls consisting of the exterior battered walls and the load-bearing interior walls consisting of hollow tile blocks. As in Meem's residences, the interiors displayed a remarkable range of details ranging from the massive carved beams and *latilla* ceiling and carved balcony and stairway in the lounge to the corner *fogon* with its *paredcito* wall. Similarly, the Director's Residence, now adapted to serve as a museum for the Spanish Colonial Arts Society, illustrated Meem's ability to compose a congenial space. Using a U-plan that separated a garage and service quarters in one wing and the family's private quarters in the other, he arranged the public spaces with the living room and dining room flanking a central hall and with *portales* lining both the front and rear elevations. With a walled garden in the exterior rectangle created by the kitchen and dining room, the appearance is one of asymmetry even as the various components are harmoniously in balance.

Whereas the 38-building plan that Meem submitted in his original drawings for the Laboratory of Anthropology competition resulted in the construction of only two buildings, the agreement that Meem struck with the University of New Mexico's president, James Zimmerman, in September 1933 included no such ambitious plans. Yet, from when Meem was designated university architect in 1933 until 1959 when he retired, he and members of his firm designed some 25 major buildings as well as carried out numerous small projects on the UNM campus. Zimmerman's selection of Meem reflects the high regard with which Meem was held by 1933 when the university found itself poised to embark on an ambitious building program based on the federal funding it anticipated receiving from New Deal programs, especially the Public Works Administration (PWA) and WPA. Inspired by the efforts of an earlier president, William George Tight, to build the then territory's major university using the region's historic architectural styles, Zimmerman sought to continue that tradition by selecting the architect most closely associated with the revival of the style. Although Tight's efforts, which in 1908 predated the revival campaign in Santa Fe, required two decades before the Board of Regents officially sanctioned the style in 1927, by 1933 support for using the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style in public architecture was widespread. Years later, Meem would acknowledge Tight's contribution to the revival, noting that while the Fine Art Museum and restoration of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe placed the revival in the public eye, the movement had "originated right here at the University" (Meem in Wirth 1994: 90).

The projects that his firm undertook over the next quarter century suggest both Meem's growing mastery of adapting the style to the needs of large institutional programs and, in the later buildings, how that mastery gave way to a more expedient design governed by limited budgets and demanding timetables. Illustrative of the former were the first two large designs he undertook on the campus, the Administration Building (now Scholes Hall) and Zimmerman Library. Both were PWA projects, indicative of their large-scale, capital-intensive nature

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 18 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

and of the newly created legislation which permitted institutions such as universities to borrow the non-grant, or loan, portion of the project funding against future receipts, such as student tuition monies. The uncertainties of funding and the limited budget that followed forced Meem to limit the amount of exterior detailing and to devise utilitarian interior spaces. Nevertheless, he managed to render the Administration Building (1935) as a simple yet compelling statement of regionalism on a scale required by a large office building. Its H plan resulted in a balancing of the building that, uncharacteristically for Meem, gave the flanking two-story wings a nearly matching symmetrical appearance. The buttressed towers flanking the three-story, *portal*-lined core and some of the stylistic details at the three entries along the south elevation were inspired by the design of the San Esteban del Rey Church at Acoma. Having participated in the church's restoration a decade earlier, Meem had recently overseen its documentation as part of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of which he was the regional director (Hooker 2000: 74). In its austerity with relatively few windows, the principal elevation offered a convincing example of how even a larger building could sympathetically convey the revivalist style. Given the light requirements of the many offices within the building, however, the other three elevations were amply lined with large groupings of double-hung windows. Here, for the first time, Meem resorted to using pre-cast concrete panels embellished with decorative patterns as spandrels between the first and second story windows (Bunting 1983: 88). This device appeared again in the tower section of the library and would become a standard element in the firm's postwar designs.

As the Administration Building moved toward completion, Meem began drawing plans for the library. Whereas the former building had cost approximately \$250,000, the latter cost nearly \$700,000. Unlike the Administration Building, the library was to be imbued with a full breadth of Spanish-Pueblo Revival style details both without and within. It also reflected a broader range of programmatic needs pertaining to siting, maximizing accessibility with a minimal amount of corridors, efficiency of staffing, and creating a design amenable to later additions. To resolve these needs, Meem devised an asymmetrical plan that located the principal entry at a long *portal* facing a courtyard along the west elevation and a secondary entry at a *portal* along the south elevation. A T-plan along the north elevation accounted for the necessary reading and periodical rooms while the vertical stack section was centered in the core of the building. Multiple horizontal planes stepped from the *portales* to the one-story wings, to the second story core, and then to the nine-story stack rising at the center of the east elevation. While the exterior walls consisted of load-bearing hollow clay tile and brick, all of the walls were battered to accentuate the historic roots of the massing. The public spaces, such as the reading and reserve rooms, were illuminated by single large multi-light metal casement windows, their exteriors topped by large wood lintels with corbels resting on paired wood supports that mirrored the details of the two long *portales*. The interior spaces were equally rich in their detailing. The large concrete beams supporting the reinforced concrete roof were encased with hand-carved wood boards. *Vigas*, specially cut and dried in Washington State, *latillas*, and corbels added further details to the exposed ceilings. Information and delivery counters included carved wood panels. Light fixtures and screens consisted of hand-worked wrought iron while the tin work for the chandeliers and scones were imprinted with 19th century New Mexican folk art details.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 19 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Because Meem's design had anticipated the need for later additions to the library, the two additions that have occurred along the east and southeastern elevations have done little to diminish the grandness of the original appearance of the building along its original west and south elevations. Nor have they blurred the footprint of the north and west periodical and reading rooms. After his retirement, when he visited the enlarged Zimmerman Library, Meem remarked that he regarded the building as the "finest building that he had ever designed in the Spanish-Pueblo style," a sentiment shared by many (Hooker 2000: 83). Some years after completing the building, Meem reflected on the relationship between modern structural requirements and the massing of glass that some institutional buildings required. Asserting that the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style permitted a building to fulfill its modern function while also to proclaim "that it is a part of New Mexico and nowhere else," he echoed an argument that UNM's Zimmerman had made in the 1930s (Meem in Wirth 1994: 88). As a member of the State Planning Board, Zimmerman had advocated use of the revival style for the state's public buildings, including the state capitol. These discussions prompted the board to agree that the style met all of the requirements "in regard to simplicity of design, correct uses of wall space, masses and color, and of general fitness which so-called modernists try to embody in their designs" (Kammer 1994:32).

Other WPA-funded projects followed the completion of Zimmerman Library. None, however, equaled the detail or intricate design that Meem brought to the library project. Following World War II, numerous other UNM projects would follow as the G.I. Bill led to rapidly rising enrollments and requirements for additional space. As other designers in his office assumed more responsibility for individual projects and as UNM sought to curb costs and accelerate project schedules, these designs became more utilitarian and made greater use of prefabricated materials, such as the pre-cast concrete spandrels that Meem first used in the Administration Building. While it is tempting to dismiss this reliance on design formula that introduced a repetitive symmetry into some buildings and the mass-produced materials employed, both of Meem's biographers credit him with successfully retaining the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style in UNM's buildings. Bainbridge Bunting holds that under enormous pressures the fact that he managed to keep "the standard of design...as high as it was is a tribute to Meem and his associates" (Bunting 1983: 104). Acknowledging the same difficulties that he faced, Chris Wilson maintains that "Meem's firm was as successful as any campus architects in the country at sustaining the university's coherence by means of a simple (and relatively inexpensive) vocabulary of stepping flat-roofed, adobe-colored, stuccoed masses" (Wilson 2001: 55). Despite the addition of numerous buildings since Meem's tenure as university architect, by any measure, the UNM campus remains one of the few architecturally distinctive university campuses in the nation. The sense of place that its buildings collectively convey is largely the result of Meem's vision of how the region's building traditions could be applied to needs of a modern institutional complex.

John Gaw Meem's legacy in New Mexico remains largely defined by the definition and refinements that he brought to the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style and his broadening of the definition of historic regionalism to include a revival of the Territorial style. These substantial contributions to the regional idiom, however, do not reflect the breadth of his work during the middle phase of his career. In 1931, the year that he was invited to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 20 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

address the annual convention of the American Institute of Architects, he also began discussion with Alice Bemis Taylor, a Colorado Springs Spanish Colonial art collector, about designing a building where her collection would be accessible to the public. The process involved in designing the center became significant both personally and professionally. Through Taylor he met her niece Faith Bemis, a landscape and architecture graduate, whom he married two years later. As the discussions with Taylor progressed, the complexity of the design process became apparent. With Meem and his client envisioning the Colorado Fine Springs Art Center as having multiple facilities far beyond the scope of the original project, he had the opportunity to achieve reconciliation between the regionalism for which he is known and modernism.

As Meem worked with his client, the program became more complex as the Broadmoor Art Academy offered to donate land for the building, asking for studio space, to be used by students of Colorado College as well, in return. Soon, additional galleries, a 450-seat theater, a concert hall, two libraries, a green room, a fly cage, a director's apartment and various office spaces were added. Since the design required rerouting a street and reconciling the site with the boundaries of a nearby city park, Meem found himself consulting with multiple parties. Not only were there his original client, but an array of interested parties, including local cultural groups, the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado College, and the art academy. As a result of these additional considerations, an initial budget of \$300,000 in 1932 grew to \$525,000 by the completion of the project in 1936 (Bunting 1983: 145-148).

The resulting design, however, reflected Meem's ability to respond to a broad range of clients' needs as well as to reconcile the traditional forms of southwestern architecture with elements of modernism. The interior was detailed with Art Deco elements from Indian motifs, and the exterior conveyed a uniquely southwestern character. Consisting of a balanced though non-symmetrical plan, the building's central massing entailed a series of stepped terraces progressing from the loggia entry to the auditorium to the fly cage. The terraced wings flanking it completed its floor plan. Suggestive of both regional design and the demands of the program, the building also conveyed a strikingly modernistic appearance. This southwestern-inspired modernism is particularly apparent along the western elevation where the terraced loggia, affording a striking vista of Pike's Peak and consisting of a colonnade fronting recessed doors set in a portico with a 15 ft. high ceiling, also suggests a *portal*.

While the Fine Arts Center was under construction, Meem contemplated the relationship between regionalism and modernism in an article he wrote for *American Architect*. Recalling a speech Eliel Saarinen had given at the 1931 AIA conference in which he had noted that "great epochs on architecture" embraced "the fundamental form of the time," Meem asserted that the stepped planes of the Pueblos conveyed such a fundamental form based on its "utmost directness and simplicity." Noting that the Spanish colonial and early American settlers and, implicitly, regional revivalists embraced the form, he argued that its "essential characteristics...flat topped rectangular masses devoid of ornament" produced an aesthetic effect dependent "almost entirely on the relative proportions of the masses" (Wilson 2001: 37). Thus, concluded Meem, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 21 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

continued relevance of this “fundamental form,” representing the “language native to the region” qualified it as a modernist expression as well. In 1940, the Fifth Pan American Congress of Architecture awarded Meem a Silver Medal for his design, one that Bunting terms “his crowning achievement because of the size and complexity of the and the consummate skill and taste with which it was achieved” (Bunting 1983: 145).

Even as Meem continued to design residences and to receive commissions for the large institutional projects that marked the middle phase of his career, his interest in ecclesiastical architecture continued. Dating to Le Forêt (1928), the memorial chapel he designed for Alice Bemis Taylor near Colorado Springs, he designed 32 church structures. About half of these designs employed the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style and three the Territorial Revival style, while ten were Gothic-inspired, a style preferred by the New Mexico Episcopalian diocese of which Meem was a member. With his long interest in restoring and preserving the mission churches of New Mexico and his role as regional director of the HABS program, it is not surprising that Meem drew much of his inspiration for his regionally inspired designs from the details he observed in those historic buildings. Drawing on this mission tradition, he worked closely with the Roman Catholic Church, especially while Rudolph Gerken served as archbishop between 1933 and 1943. This close relationship resulted in Meem’s consulting on numerous church projects regarding stability evaluations and in the preparation of preliminary sketches for several mission churches. Working with Father Argellus Lammert, who shared Meem’s delight in native building traditions, he sketched plans for Santa Maria de Acoma Church at McCarty’s (1932), Saint Margaret at Paraje (1935), Sacred Heart at Mesita (1936), and Saint Anne at Acomita (1939). Following the tradition of colonial New Mexico’s early Franciscan friars, Lammert then acted as the project engineer, supervising his Indian parishioners as they carried out the construction using simple tools and traditional materials to create 20th century buildings whose massing and form reflected three centuries of building practices. Working with the SPRNMMC in what proved to be one its final endeavors, Meem also designed the Santo Tomas Church at Abiquiu, a project in which trainees from a WPA crafts program prepared the building’s ornate woodwork from the nearby El Rito Normal School (Bunting 1983: 125).

In 1939, he received two church commissions in Santa Fe, one for a Presbyterian church and another for a new Roman Catholic parish church. The former, facing the vortex of a downtown triangle, presented a symmetrical south elevation whose heavy flanking buttresses belie its finely rendered interior. The latter stands as one of Meem’s notable achievements. First envisioned as meeting the church’s need in Santa Fe for a new east side parish, the Cristo Rey Church and rectory was also to serve as a memorial to New Mexico’s Coronado Cuarto Centennial celebration. Equally important, it offered the archbishop an opportunity to resolve a longstanding issue of finding an appropriate location to house the 18th century carved stone altar screen, or *reredos*, that had once stood in La Castrense Chapel on the south side of Santa Fe’s plaza. Since Bishop Lamy had sold the chapel in 1860, the *reredos* had been inappropriately placed behind the main alter of La Parroquia, and public pressure to find an appropriate location had become a crusade for the SPRNMMC (Chauvenet 1985: 73-82).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 22 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Located just south of his earlier Manderfield School, the building Meem designed has been described by Chris Wilson as “the last, great adobe mission” (Wilson 1996: 280). With its attached rectory, the building stretches 350 feet. Unlike the Santa Fe Presbyterian Church, it relies on a subtle balance, not symmetry, to achieve its effect. Its front elevation consists of a battered south tower and a somewhat lower north corner flanking a recessed entry capped by a balcony that recalls some of the older missions that Meem had helped to restore and to document. A stepped *portal* extends along the south elevation, giving way to the higher transept and then lower rooms extending west to the stepped two-story rectory. This varied use of planes contributes to the organic whole, much as a similar use of planes and terraces enhanced some of his best residences as well as the Laboratory of Anthropology, Zimmerman Library and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

With over 120 workmen, the project involved the labor intensive building practices associated with the use of traditional building materials. An *acequia* was diverted to manufacture the more than 180,000 adobes used in the building, while 222 logs were cut to form *vigas*, and smaller cedar logs were split to shape the aromatic *latillas* used in the ceiling. At the same time, however, Meem relied upon modern materials to assure the permanence of the building, placing it on a concrete footing, erecting a steel frame so that the adobe walls were not load bearing, and constructing a concrete platform on which to place the delicate *reredos*. When the church was completed and consecrated with a mass in the summer of 1940, it was quickly recognized not only as an appropriate setting for the *reredos* but, as one parishioner put it, a “beautiful sculpture for appreciation and enjoyment” (Chauvenet 1985: 89).

As World War II opened and Meem and other architects found themselves contracting with the federal government to design military-related facilities, Meem could look back at the last 13 years and aptly label them a period of “flowering and creativity.” Not only had he continued to design residences, refining and broadening the regional revival idiom that he had first encountered in its nascent stage two decades earlier when he first arrived in Santa Fe seeking to regain his health. He also had demonstrated through his design of institutional and religious buildings that these revival styles could be adapted successfully to large buildings with modern functions. Both the battered vertical element he installed in the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style to meet the needs of Zimmerman Library and the multiple terraces he gave to the Colorado Fine Arts Center underscored his philosophy that buildings can symbolize a valued past as well as conform to modern needs. In part, the public works programs of the New Deal that aided Meem in advancing his argument for federal funding to construct a public architecture that reminded citizens of the country’s past, presented Meem and other architects with many opportunities to employ regional designs. As a result, the revivalism, to which Meem contributed greatly, became a quasi-official style for public buildings, extending in a distilled if not bowdlerized fashion to this day.

The Later Years (1946-1959)

The first two periods of John Gaw Meem’s career were marked by his study of historic regional building practices and his successful efforts to find ways of incorporating those lessons into a revivalist design aesthetic

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 23 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

applicable to residences as well as ecclesiastical and institutional buildings. In contrast, the final phase of his career reflects his efforts to adapt his embrace of regionalism to a rapidly changing design world in which new building technologies, new materials and changing cost structures posed new challenges to designers. To be sure, Meem continued to be directly involved in a variety of projects emphasizing the details of regional design to which he had committed so much of his career. He also continued to champion what was popularly termed the Santa Fe style as he prepared remodeling plans for several buildings around the Plaza whose original details were replaced with an array of Spanish-Pueblo or Territorial Revival style details. The larger projects the firm undertook, however, such as the seven modernistic commercial buildings designed for the Southern Union Gas Company, increasingly reflected the design influences of Edward O. Holien. With his Beaux-Arts training, he was conversant with the more formalized symmetrical designs consistent with the international and other modernistic styles then in vogue. Even the later projects on the University of New Mexico campus, which required regionally inspired campus buildings, reflected more of Holien's penchant for symmetry and offered few of the enhancing revival details which Meem had given to earlier projects on the campus.

While Meem's name still headed the firm's name, his role shifted as he delegated work to well-qualified employees and oversaw the designs they produced, focusing his own design talents on selected projects as well as nurturing client relations. Both of his biographers acknowledge that Meem's early bouts with influenza and, then, tuberculosis and later recurring migraine headaches may have influenced his decision to be less involved in the demanding design aspects of the firm's work (Bunting 1983: 59; Wilson 2001: 55). Wilson further suggests that the post-war building environment may have left Meem feeling unable "to reconcile it with the regional tradition in a satisfactory way for his clients" and that the change "probably took much of the joy out of design work" (Wilson 2001: 59). This explanation becomes particularly cogent in light of the projects with which Meem was closely associated including the Museum of International Folk Art (1950), St. John's Cathedral in Albuquerque and the Everett Jones residence in Santa Fe (1951), and the Good Shepherd Episcopal Mission in Fort Defiance, Arizona (1954). In contrast to some of the firm's institutional projects, for which researchers will need to examine specific job files to determine Meem's specific role, these projects involved the close work with clients and finely detailed plans that Meem had so loved earlier in his career.

To a great degree, the post-war building era was one marked by mass production in which accelerating design and building schedules and tight budgets, cutting costs through the use of prefabricated materials designed to reduce labor costs, became standard practice within the building process. In part, these practices were a legacy from the wartime era when Meem and other designers were forced to prepare plans quickly in order to meet the demanding schedules that affected military preparedness. This approach contrasted sharply from building practices in the 1930s, when labor was relatively cheap and New Deal programs, seeking to create hours for laborers as a part of its goal of work relief, encouraged the use of labor-intensive details from manufacturing adobe bricks to preparing intricate hand-worked wood ornamentation. In many ways, those labor intensive practices characterizing construction in New Mexico during the 1930s were more akin to what attracted Meem to the area's prehistoric and historic building practices than they were to those of the post-war

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 24 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

era less than 20 years later. By the 1950s, the inclusion of prefabricated concrete spandrels, which Meem initially used in the Administration Building at the University of New Mexico in 1935, became commonplace. As a result, university projects such as Mitchell Hall (1950) and Johnson Gymnasium (1957), although still conveying the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style with their flat, multi-planed roofs and beige stucco coatings, appeared increasingly as large cubic masses, even with a tower placed above the main entry of the former building. Similar results appeared in the firm's hospital projects such as the Lovelace Clinic and Bataan Memorial Hospital (1949) in Albuquerque and St. Vincent's Hospital (1950) in Santa Fe. Lacking the enriching details that had permitted his earlier buildings to employ "symbolic forms to provide an additional emotional or spiritual value," they suggested the increasingly apparent incongruity that existed between modern building practices and those of the past, including the recent past with which Meem was familiar.

On a somewhat smaller scale, the firm's institutional designs in Santa Fe also illustrated the expediency apparent in post-war construction. The Saint Francis Cathedral School (1948) received a tower capped by an open belfry, a balcony and a *portal* along its south façade as well as a stepped entry framed with a wood corbel along its east façade. Its stiff corners and large banks of metal casement windows, however, suggest the constraints that accompanied the use of these revivalist details. Facing a shortage of classroom space in 1945, the Santa Fe Board of Education hired Meem's firm to assess the condition of its various buildings and to offer recommendations for meeting future needs. Following a tour of each building, Meem and his associate, Hugo Zehner, advised the board to develop an "outside planning board" and to coordinate the school system's plans with the city's long range plans (Kammer 2000: 30). Three years later, as Santa Fe's public school population increased dramatically, in part the result of housing shortages at Los Alamos, site of the national laboratory, Meem contracted with the board to develop a standard grade school design that would serve as a blueprint for multiple projects. These projects were evaluated as a part of Multiple Property listing completed in 2001. The Kaune School (1949), the Salazar School (1952), the Gonzales School (1953) and the original wing of the Acequia Madre School (1954) were all constructed from those standardized plans. Symmetrical in their plans, they included a limited array of Territorial Revival style details at the entries as well as classically rendered window bays at the end of each wing signaling the kindergarten rooms. Although budget constraints dictated their modest use of decorative details, the buildings remain significant as examples of how Meem's use of regional revival styles was applied to the needs of modern public buildings in Santa Fe's post-war suburbs, where developers as well continued to embrace the Santa Fe style.

When he retired at the age of 65 in 1959, Meem continued to advocate preserving New Mexico's historic built environment. Having served on Santa Fe's planning commission and as its chairman from 1946 to 1951, he served as president of the Old Santa Fe Association in 1960. During the 1960s, he collaborated with architect Kenneth Clark to design the *portales* along the commercial buildings lining the Santa Fe Plaza. He continued his efforts to preserve historic structures in Santa Fe even as the cachet of the "City Different" grew and pressures for redeveloping downtown properties increased. In 1969, he led a project to preserve and restore the Delgado House, and in 1974 a similar project to restore the Tully Houses, two key Territorial-era buildings

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 25 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

in downtown Santa Fe. Seeking to bring Saint John's College to Santa Fe, in 1964, Faith and John Meem donated 225 acres of their property to the Annapolis school for its new campus in Santa Fe. Later, Meem worked with the designers of his old firm as they prepared plans for the Territorial Revival style buildings that would house the new school. In 1975, Meem agreed to donate his papers and drawings to the University of New Mexico and to provide an endowment to support the collection. As additional regional architects' papers have been added to the collection, it has emerged as one of the outstanding repositories of design in the Southwest, contributing, as Meem himself did, to the study and preservation of the region's historic architecture.

The Legacy of John Gaw Meem

When John Gaw Meem died on August, 4, 1983 at the age of 89, notices of his passing appeared in the nation's leading newspapers. As thousands of other health seekers had done, Meem had come to New Mexico seeking to regain his health, and like many of those thousands had found himself attracted to the Southwest because of the harmony he found in the interplay between its landscape and history and its regional architecture. Unlike many others, however, Meem was able to combine his training, his talent and his vision to find a way to convert his admiration of the sculpted buildings that seemingly grew out of the land into a full range of building types that hearkened to the region's past. Although not the first proponent of a regional building revival, Meem found ways to fit gracefully into the revivalist movement, working to document and preserve notable historic buildings and learning from others the range of stylistic details that served to inspire the revivalist movement. To these he added his engineering sensibilities and brief formal architectural studies, creating the means to value the exquisite details of past building traditions while accommodating the needs of modern residences, as well as institutional and ecclesiastical buildings. The synergy that grew out of his preservationist sensibilities and his design skills resulted in his best works. It also led to the widespread recognition of Meem as not only the leading proponent of the Santa Fe style and initiator of the Territorial Revival style but as New Mexico's most noted architect of the 20th century.

As this context has suggested, however, Meem cannot be categorized simply as a revivalist. In valuing the region's evolving history and the associated changes in its historic building styles, he also expanded the character-defining elements encompassing the past to include the 19th century Territorial period marked by the initial importation of classical-inspired details. Fortuitously, as Meem was expanding the historical idiom, the public works projects of the New Deal resulted in an emphasis on regional revival architecture in many of the state's public buildings, a legacy visible to this day. In other instances, such as the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Meem demonstrated ways in which regionalism might be reconciled with modernism.

While the evaluation of many notable architects rests on their designs alone, the work of John Gaw Meem also rests upon how Meem applied his philosophy of valuing the region's past not only in design but also in historic preservation. Working first with the CPRNMMC to restore the area's historic missions, then as the regional director of HABS, and then as a planner and active preservationist in Santa Fe, he championed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 26 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

preserving the antecedents that had inspired his work. This altruism and commitment to preserving continuity with the past implicitly demonstrates how his work fits into the larger context of the Southwest's built environment. This holistic vision has contributed, in large part, to the profound sense of place that the region conveys to many observers, and how its regionally inspired buildings reflect its landscape and history.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 27 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

F. Associated Property Types

Residences

Description

Appearing primarily in New Mexico and designed between 1925 and 1958, the houses of John Gaw Meem reflect the regional revival designs for which he is best known. Although their materials may vary, most include hollow tile or, less commonly, adobe brick construction. All exhibit character-defining details associated with the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles. Specific exterior details associated with the former style include adobe or adobe-colored wall surfaces, flat, often multi-planed roofs with rounded parapets, battered walls, double-hung wood sash or wood casement windows, sometimes recessed. Accompanying *portales* are often deeply recessed and have wood supports with corbel brackets. Decorative details include exposed wood lintels, projecting *vigas* and *canales*, and buttresses, often located near *portales* and entries. Specific exterior details associated with the latter style include flat roofs with brick coping often ornamented with dentil courses, windows and entries marked with pedimented lintels, and porticos, often deeply recessed, with square columns, often with capital moldings.

Significance

The residences designed by John Gaw Meem represent some of the best examples of the articulation of the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles by the architect most closely associated with the popularization of those regional revival movements. As discussed in the historic context, although Meem was not the initiator of these revivalist movements, he imbued them with both a range of details and a harmonious composition that served to popularize the styles. Distilled elements of both styles remained popular in southwestern domestic construction through the second half of the 20th century. Because so much of Meem's design was inspired by his study of examples of the region's historic building practices, his use of historic details and his ability to combine them with modern materials resulted in the masterful rendering of his residential projects. As such, these houses are significant under Criterion C as works of a master designer.

Registration Requirements

To meet registration requirements, a house must have a high degree of architectural integrity with regard to the original location, design, materials, and workmanship so that it conveys a clear association with Meem as its designer. The exterior of the building must have the original features with a minimum of alterations. Any alterations must be evaluated as to their impact on the integrity of the design. Houses for which Meem designed only additions are not considered eligible unless the addition is substantial to the degree that its footprint comprises the greater portion of the building and the elevations of the addition are considered primary characteristics of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 28 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Public and Institutional Buildings

Description

Appearing primarily in New Mexico and designed between 1926 and 1958, the public and institutional buildings of John Gaw Meem include examples of the regional revival designs for which he is best known as well as buildings in which Meem sought to combine revival and modernistic elements. Although their materials may vary to include hollow tile or concrete construction, their character-defining details generally include elements associated with the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles. Specific exterior details associated with the former style include adobe or adobe-colored wall surfaces, flat, often multi-planed roofs with rounded parapets, battered walls, double-hung wood sash, wood casement, or metal casement windows. Accompanying *portales* are often recessed and have wood supports with corbel brackets. Decorative details include exposed wood lintels, projecting *vigas* and *canales*, and buttresses, often located near *portales* and entries. Specific exterior details associated with the latter style include flat roofs with brick coping often ornamented with dentil courses, windows and entries marked with pedimented lintels, and porticos with square columns, often with capital moldings. In those instances in which Meem sought to add modernistic elements, exterior details may also include poured concrete walls and substantial fenestration.

Significance

The public and institutional buildings designed by John Gaw Meem represent some of the best examples of the adaptation of the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles to non-residential, often large-scale buildings. As examples of the work of the architect most closely associated with the popularization of those regional revival movements, they represent some of the earliest examples of the styles that continue to characterize public architecture in the region today. Those embracing modernistic elements reflect some of the earliest and most successful efforts to reconcile regional revivalist styles with modern design. As discussed in the historic context, although Meem was not the initiator of the Spanish Revival style, he did initiate the addition of the Territorial Revival to the regional idiom. Moreover, he imbued them with both a range of details and a composition that served to popularize the styles and to make them adaptable to large-scale construction. Because so much of Meem's design was inspired by his study of examples of the region's historic building practices, his use of historic details and his ability to combine them with modern materials resulted in the masterful rendering of these public and institutional projects. As such, these buildings are significant under Criterion C as the works of a master designer.

Registration Requirements

To meet registration requirements, a public or institutional building must have a high degree of architectural integrity with regard to the original location, design, materials, and workmanship so that it conveys a clear association with Meem as its designer. As discussed in the historic context, in the case of buildings designed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 29 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

during the third phase of Meem's career, it may be necessary to research the job files to determine the degree of Meem's individual involvement in their design. The exterior of the building must have the original features with a minimum of alterations. Any alterations must be evaluated as to their impact on the integrity of the design. In those instances in which Meem's original design anticipated future additions, those additions, if sympathetically rendered, should not disqualify the building if the principle elevations designed by Meem remain.

Ecclesiastical Buildings

Description

Appearing primarily in New Mexico and designed between 1926 and 1958, the ecclesiastical buildings of John Gaw Meem include examples of the regional revival designs for which he is best known as well as examples of the Gothic Revival style. Materials are varied and include hollow tile, adobe bricks, masonry and brick. Those ecclesiastical buildings constructed in regional revival styles include character-defining details generally associated with the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles. Specific exterior details associated with the former style include masonry, adobe, or adobe-colored wall surfaces, flat, often multi-planed roofs with rounded parapets, battered walls, and fixed or casement windows. Accompanying *portales* are often recessed and have wood supports with corbel brackets. Decorative details include exposed wood lintels, projecting *vigas* and *canales*, and buttresses, often located near or framing *portales* at entries. Some may also include bell towers, balconies with wood balustrades above the entries and a bell-core, or *espadaña*. Specific exterior details associated with the latter style include flat roofs with brick coping often ornamented with dentil courses, windows and entries marked with pedimented lintels, and porticos with square columns, often with capital moldings. Buildings embodying the Gothic Revival Style generally have pitched roofs, brick or finished stone facings, modest buttressing, pointed arches at windows and doors, and stained glass windows.

Significance

The ecclesiastical buildings designed by John Gaw Meem represent some of the best examples of the adaptation of the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival Styles to sectarian architecture. As discussed in the historic context, much of Meem's early exposure to the Southwest's design traditions involved his efforts with the SPRNMMC to preserve the historic mission churches of New Mexico. During this process, and later as regional director of HABS, he studied the details of those buildings and used them as inspiration for his own designs. As a result, the drawings he prepared for many of these ecclesiastical buildings represent the efforts of the architect most familiar with many of the area's historic religious buildings to embody some of their best details in 20th century ecclesiastical architecture. As such, these buildings are significant under Criterion C as the works of a master designer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 30 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Registration Requirements

To meet registration requirements, an ecclesiastical building must have a high degree of architectural integrity with regard to the original location, design, materials, and workmanship so that it conveys a clear association with Meem as its designer. The church must also meet the justifications for eligibility under National Register Criteria Consideration A: Religious Property. The exterior of the building must have the original features with a minimum of alterations. Any alterations must be evaluated as to their impact on the integrity of the design. However, in those instances in which Meem's original design anticipated future additions, those additions, if sympathetically rendered, should not disqualify the building if the principle elevations designed by Meem remain.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section G Page 31 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

G. Geographical Data
New Mexico

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section H Page 32 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Historian David Kammer undertook the multiple property listing of the work of architect John Gaw Meem in 2002 following meetings between Meem's descendants and the staff of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. These meetings were prompted, in part, by two concerns. First, Professor Chris Wilson of the School of Architecture at the University of New Mexico had recently completed a biography of Meem that, with the accompanying photographs of Robert Reck, focused on Meem's residential work, located primarily in the Santa Fe and Albuquerque area. This biography, following by two decades Bainbridge Bunting's initial biography of Meem, reflects the continuing interest in New Mexico's most prominent architect during the second quarter of the 20th century and his legacy of regional revivalism that continues to influence much of the region's design practices to this day. Encouraged by the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division, the family felt that it would be appropriate that a multiple property listing be prepared to accompany the publication of this second biography.

Secondly, while both Albuquerque and Santa Fe are listed as Certified Local Governments (CLG), and while both have several historic districts listed in the National Register as well as ongoing historic building inventories, it has been difficult to include in those surveys all of the buildings that John Gaw Meem designed. As a result, with the great pressure in the Santa Fe real estate market for redevelopment of properties, there is growing concern among preservationists that some Meem-designed buildings are endangered and that measures, including register listing and designation as local landmarks, need to be taken to protect them. The state-owned building that Meem designed for the FERA, the New Mexico Public Welfare Building, required an emergency listing in 2001 to the State Register, for example, to forestall demolition. Similarly, a residence he designed was demolished in order to redevelop the property. The thematic treatment of Meem's work is regarded as a step toward forestalling demolition of additional significant properties.

Several buildings designed by John Gaw Meem are already listed in the National Register either individually or as part of a multiple property submission. They include:

La Fonda Hotel
Santa Fe Presbyterian Church
Maisel's Building
Nordhaus, Robert, House

Laboratory of Anthropology
La Quinta/Los Poblanos
Jonson Gallery and Residence
Santa Fe Library

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section H Page 33 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

In concert with this multiple property listing, the City of Santa Fe Planning Department is completing an historic building inventory in the Monte Sol area that will include some Meem properties. Based on the results of that survey, as well as previous survey work, the following list indicates the properties most likely to be nominated under this multiple property listing. They include:

Scholes Hall	International Folk Art Museum
Cristo Rey Church	Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Santa Maria Church	Church of the Good Shepard
Conkey Residence	Las Acequias
Meem Residence	Gregg Residence
McLane Residence	Everett Jones Residence
John Simms Residence	Tilney Residence
Hollenback Residence	UNM Alumni Chapel
Fuller Lodge	Zimmerman Library
St. Vincent Hospital	

In order to prepare this nomination, Kammer relied on the research that both of Meem's biographers had undertaken. These two works, as well as a master's thesis on Meem's early residences, a study of his work as a preservationist and books treating the Santa Fe Style and Meem's specific use of details pertaining to the regional revivalist movement provided a broad range of materials for preparing the context. So, too, did a compilation of several of Meem's speeches. Edited by his daughter, Nancy Meem Wirth, they offered insight into his appreciation of historic southwestern building practices and the ways in which he sought to adapt those practices to his philosophy and work. Similarly, his research for previous multiple property listings pertaining to the New Deal in New Mexico and Meem's work with the Santa Fe public schools resulted in Kammer's familiarity with the Meem job files located in the John Gaw Meem Archive of Southwestern Architecture at the University of New Mexico.

Based upon the research, particularly the list of projects in Meem's records, and the organization of building discussions offered by his biographers, the three property types emerged as the best way to organize his work. Similarly, the assessments of both his biographers as to Meem's withdrawal from much of the design process by 1950 account for not ascribing later projects completed by designers in the firm specifically to Meem. The eligibility of any of those later buildings under this listing will require further research in specific job files as to Meem's direct involvement in the project design. Finally, while some of the public and institutional as well as ecclesiastical buildings that Meem designed have received additions, these additions should not necessarily preclude the building's eligibility if the original plans anticipated additions and those additions were sensitively rendered.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 34 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

I. Major Bibliographical References

Baca, Elmo. *Santa Fe Design*. Lincolnwood, IL: Publications International, 1990.

Bunting, Bainbridge. *John Gaw Meem Southwestern Architect*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

Chauvenet, Beatrice. *John Gaw Meem: Pioneer in Historic Preservation*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1985.

Hooker, Van Dorn with Melissa Howard and V.B. Price. *Only in New Mexico An Architectural History of the University of New Mexico Campus: The First Century, 1889-1989*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

Iowa, Jerome. *Ageless Adobe: History and Preservation in Southwestern Architecture*. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985.

Kammer, David. "The Historic and Architectural Resources of the New Deal in New Mexico." Multiple property submission prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division; listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 1994.

_____. "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe, New Mexico Public Schools." Multiple property listing prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division; listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 2001.

Markovich, Nicholas C., Wolfgang F.E. Preiser and Fred Strum, eds. *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.

McNary, John. "John Gaw Meem: His Style Development and Residential Architecture Between 1924 and 1940." M. A. Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1977.

Sheppard, Carl D. *Creator of the Santa Fe Style: Isaac Hamilton Rapp*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

Spears, Beverly. *American Adobes*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986.

Taylor, Anne with Lila DeWindt. *Southwestern Ornamentation and Design: The Architecture of John Gaw Meem*. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1989.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 35 Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959

Warren, Nancy Hunter. *New Mexico Style: A Sourcebook of Traditional Architectural Details*. Santa Fe: Museum Of New Mexico Press, 1986.

Wilson, Chris. *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating A Modern Regional Tradition*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

_____. *Facing Southwest: The Life and Houses of John Gaw Meem*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001.

Wirth, Nancy Meem, ed. *Chili Club Papers by John Gaw Meem, 1939-1976*. Santa Fe, n.p. 1994.