

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Los Poblanos Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

General boundaries: N.—Rio Grande Place; W.—Griegos Lateral and
Riverside Drain; S.—Griegos Lateral Wasteway and Griegos Lateral;
E—Rio Grande Boulevard

street & number

not for publication

city, town Village of Los Ranchos vicinity of Albuquerque congressional district 001

state New Mexico 87107 code 35 county Bernalillo code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet.

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bernalillo County Courthouse

street & number 501 Central Avenue N.W.

city, town Albuquerque state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January, 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Landmarks Survey, Redevelopment Planning, P.O. Box 1293

city, town Albuquerque state New Mexico 87103

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Los Poblanos Historic District is located in one of the few remaining stretches of uninterrupted farmland and riverside cottonwood bosque in the Rio Grande Valley north of Albuquerque. Its architectural resources, which date from ca. 1850 to 1965, are of four types: (1) The oldest structures, on the Jacobson Ranch, include a mid-nineteenth century terron house, and an early 20th century terron barn, frame and adobe house, and two-story brick mill. All these structures, except the barn, have been altered by sympathetic additions, and retain their vernacular character with sufficient integrity to contribute to the district. (2) The district's most outstanding resources are three homes designed for the Simms family by noted Santa Fe architect John Gaw Meem in the mid-1930's. Los Poblanos, home of Albert and Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms; La Quinta, an entertainment center and sports house designed for them; and the home of Albert's brother, John Simms, are all exceptional and essentially unaltered examples of Meem's Territorial Revival style during the period of his best work. (3) The Los Poblanos ranch includes a number of contributing farm buildings and outbuildings, as well as a unique formal garden in the Italianate mode. (4) The district includes one non-contributing structure, a house built in the 1960's. This group of North Valley homes and farms possesses integrity both of design and landscape, and has been a seminal influence on design of homes in the area.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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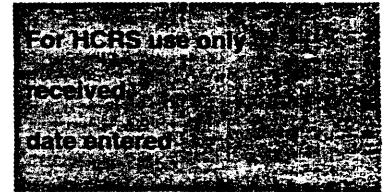
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The setting for the Los Poblamos Historic District is a stretch of Rio Grande valley land in the village of Los Ranchos, just beyond the north boundary of the City of Albuquerque. Historically and presently, the district and the land to the east and west have been used for farming, with long open fields running west to east. Bounded partly by the Griegos Lateral, an irrigation ditch or acequia, the area has a network of smaller ditches feeding individual fields. Because all the houses are set back far from Rio Grande Boulevard and because of the open fields east of the Boulevard, the view from the district to the Sandia Mountains on the east is uninterrepted. To the west is the Rio Grande, bordered by a bosque of cottonwoods and reeds. The river water, running through acequias, is essential to the lushness of the district's fields and gardens. The area is one of very few remaining in the north Rio Grande valley which retains a traditional farming landscape. Current agricultural uses are very evident in the sheep herds of Los Poblamos, the La Quinta tree farm, the Jacobson Ranch cattle, the fields planted with hay and alfalfa.

The oldest buildings in the district are part of the Jacobson ranch property. When Jacobson bought the land in 1902, it was "an old farm neglected as to improvements and almost so as to cultivation. . .the improvements consisted of an old machine shed and an old adobe house that is not less than a hundred years old." (Coan, 170) The L-shaped adobe house (which is built of terrones or sod blocks) is an excellent example of mid-nineteenth century New Mexican building: a flat roof of earth over boards with a pitched roof on the southeast portion of the building which was added by the Jacobsons, a windowless north facade, doors set flush to the exterior or in deep panelled wood reveals. The south and east sides have been plastered, but the north side remains unplastered, giving a good view of the details of its construction. Windows are 2/2 and 4/4 wood sash. The roofed portion has been rehabilitated to serve as an apartment; the remainder of this old house is used for storage.

The newest building on the Jacobson ranch, a 1962 Territorial Revival style house, joins the terron structure at its northeast corner. A long rectangular building laid out on a north-south axis, this new structure also connects, on the south end, to Jacobson's 1902 home. Great care was taken to join the three structures without obscuring the separate and quite distinct architectural qualities of each. The result is an attractive, rambling structure that is clearly the product of three different times, and must, as a whole, be considered contributing in the district.

The 1902 house began as a two-room adobe cottage, to which Jacobson added two frame rooms. Originally the house was surfaced in brick, with segmental arches above its windows; when the 1962

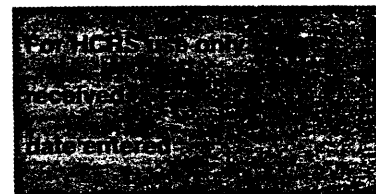
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addition was made, the exterior of this house was stuccoed, and Territorial Revival style windows with pedimented lintels replaced the earlier segmental arches. The hipped roof, with its hipped dormer facing east and gabled dormer to the north, and the simple interior plan remain intact. This house is now the bedroom wing for the complex.

The 1962 house which joins the two older buildings is a good example of Territorial Revival style, in keeping with the Meem buildings which surround it. Flat-roofed with a variety of roof heights, it has paired 2/2 wood sash windows under Territorial Revival pedimented lintels. A portal extends along the north end of the front (east) facade; at the rear, the L-shaped terron building partially encloses a handsome patio.

The least altered building on the Jacobson ranch is the Dairy barn, built about 1920. A combination of New Mexican and eastern forms, it has side walls of terrones laid up in an unusual herringbone pattern, center walls of rough planks, and a corrugated metal gambrel roof topped by a gabled louvered lantern. More altered, but of considerable local interest, is the old Jacobson feed and flour mill, the only known mill structure remaining in the Albuquerque area. A narrow, two-story gabled brick structure, the mill was water-driven and served many of the local farmers. About 1950, Cecil Pragnell, one of the landscape gardeners to work at Los Poblanos, bought and remodelled the mill to serve as his home; at the time he was serving as County Agent. The principal changes were the addition of a sun porch to the south, a balcony to the east, a garage and room above on the rear, and stuccoing. While these changes are relatively substantial, the form of the old mill remains visible, and the rarity of buildings of its type makes it a definite contributor to the district.

The Jacobson Ranch buildings are set somewhat closer to Rio Grande Boulevard than are the district's other houses, with the main field located west of the barn, toward the Griegos Lateral. The field is bordered by spreading mature cottonwood trees, which also form a major part of the landscaping at the east end of the property. This property contains about 10 acres, the land reserved by Jacobson when he sold his other local holdings to Albert Simms in 1934.

The earliest of the three John Gaw Meem houses in the district is Los Poblanos, on Albert Simms' ranch to the north of the Jacobson Ranch. The Los Poblanos Ranch, purchased by Albert Simms in 1928, contained an adobe building in the shape of a shallow U which served as home for the foreman until Albert and Ruth Simms decided to make their home on the ranch after their marriage. This building became

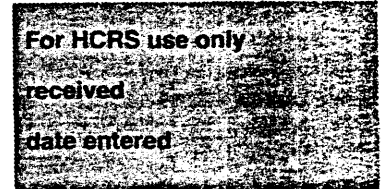
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the nucleus of the new Los Poblamos house, and was probably completely remodelled to fit the overall Meem design.

Ruth Simms had met John Gaw Meem in 1931 because of his design work for the Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs, of which she was a trustee. By November, 1931, he had done an as-is drawing of the existing building, and specifications for the new building were complete by March 1932. It was built that year. Meem used the traditional New Mexican plan of a hollow square surrounding an interior placita as the basis of his design; the existing building was incorporated as the rear, or west end, of the new structure.

The building Meem designed is constructed of hollow tile laid irregularly and stuccoed to give the effect of adobe. Meem's instructions in the specifications are clear: "one of the characteristics of this building is the occasional irregular wall surfaces and this effect is to be obtained primarily by the Brick Contractor. Exaggerated deviations from normal are not desired and the effects are to be obtained by laying up the work without plumb, level, or square." The effect he achieved is consonant with the Territorial style on which the building is based: walls straight, rather than battered, sharp corners, but enough irregularity to convey the organic quality typical of adobe building. His instructions, typically, call for use of the traditional methods to achieve traditional results. The walls are topped by a five-course, dentillated brick coping; the flat roofs are given some variation with the differing heights of portals, main roof, and the higher roof of the original house to the rear. Meem characteristically varied the regular plan of Los Poblamos with an irregular exterior facade which emphasizes the shapes of individual rooms and suggests the modular quality typical of adobe building. The large 12/12 double-hung wood sash windows are framed by molded, pedimented windows in the Territorial Revival style.

Portals, or open porches, are essential to the design. The approach to the entry is by a long portal on the south end of the front facade, and the entire interior placita is surrounded by portals. The portal roofs are constructed of round wood vigas (beams), with wood planks laid above and perpendicular to them; as is the case in most Territorial buildings, the vigas do not protrude beyond the outer wall. The roof is supported by square wood columns with capitals: for these Meem specified hand-hewing to "be done with an adze to represent as closely as possible the strokes and patterns that would show on a log actually hewn to the shape required."

The entry door is a double zaguan door in panelled wood; traditionally the zaguan was wide enough to admit a horse and cart, and the Los Poblamos door would meet those specifications. A

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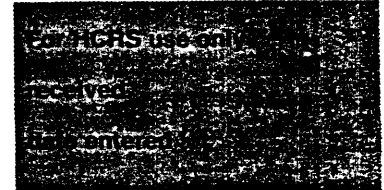
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smaller wicket is set into the zaguan, another traditional touch. Both the portal and entry vestibule are paved with pink San Cristobal flagstone. A handsome carved and beaded beam marks the end of the vestibule and the entrance into the patio. From the entry, one looks directly along the long axis of the placita to the door opposite, with its 15 small lights flanked by side lights, a pattern repeated in the entrance to the living/dining area and the door leading from the study into the formal gardens to the west.

The placita is the focal point of the house, an outdoor living space through which one passes to enter any of the major rooms (there is, traditionally, no interior corridor). The centerpiece is a tiled fountain in the shape of a six-pointed star. The hand-painted tiles, purchased in Spain by Ruth and Albert Simms, show scenes of bullfights and country life. The fountain is surrounded by a square of checkerboard tile: the rest of the patio is paved in brick bordered by a basketweave pattern of brick interspersed with small carved tiles. Two small trees and a number of potted shrubs and flowers add shade and greenery.

An extra wide space underneath the north interior portal serves as an outdoor living room and marks the entrance into the public living and dining room space. With an adobe fireplace and tables, this space heated by the winter sun shows Meem's early awareness of the importance of sun angles in siting New Mexican houses.

The main public rooms are the living and dining room at the northeast corner of the house. Relatively modest in size, they were soon supplemented by the grander entertainment center at La Quinta. They are entered through a vestibule with a traditional New Mexican ceiling of herringbone patterned latias (small branches) laid above the vigas. Meem specified "split half sections of native quaking aspen poles. . . from standing dead timber or fallen timber which has not touched ground." The living room has at its south end a very simple arched fireplace centered between a book case and a shallow niche with a window looking out on the entry portal. A particularly pleasant feature of the living room is the alcove at the north end, with its own fireplace, marked off by a partial wall and a lowered ceiling with vigas set perpendicular to those of the remainder of the room. Brick floors add to the sense of very elegant simplicity which these company rooms convey.

Behind the dining room in the north wing lie the kitchen quarters, paved in quarry tile, and retaining their original cabinetry and industrial stove. The kitchen originally adjoined a flagstone-paved open portal, set into the main body of the house, which has been enclosed by glazing, probably at a date soon after the construction. The west wing incorporates the original house on

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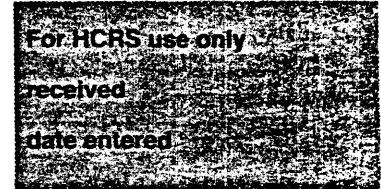
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the site, and has a study at its center, a room which is also the main entrance to the formal west garden. Servants' quarters and bedrooms are to either side. The two family bedrooms in this wing and the three in the south wing have New Mexican corner fireplaces, and are served by three bathrooms. A portal on the south wing exterior was partially enclosed to serve as a greenhouse in the 1960's. On the south end of the east wing are the owners' dressing rooms, bathroom and sleeping porch (now used as the master bedroom), which balances the mass of the living room. Interior floors in the bedroom wings are hardwood; Dutch doors lead from the bedrooms into the portal.

Bainbridge Bunting summarizes the architectural quality of this elegant, comfortable house by noting that the "detail employed. . . is a combination of Colonial and Territorial elements with splendid zaguan gates equipped with a wicket serving as the main entrance, while pedimented lintels, double-hung windows, and a brick coping crowning the parapets recalled the Territorial legacy."

To the west and northwest of the house are two outbuildings designed by Meem in 1932 (the garage complex) and 1937 (the housekeeper's quarters). Both use the stylistic vocabulary of the main house at a smaller scale: the brick coping, Territorial pediments above the windows, open portals. The garage building faces east, and includes a high-ceilinged room (probably an early addition) which houses a 12-foot tall room-sized wood cooler for fruits and vegetables. Adjoining the garage on the south are a series of rooms facing south into the west garden: the ironing room, silver room, clothes room, and the chauffeur's quarters. The housekeeper's quarters contain a small apartment and storage rooms.

The formal west garden between the house and the Griegos Lateral is one of the outstanding pleasures of Los Poblanos. Designed in 1933 by Rose Greeley, a landscape architect, the garden features raised planting beds (which may at one time have included what must have been the only parterre in New Mexico) bordering walkways that cross at the garden's center. At the east end, a walkway leads over an adobe-style bridge above a semi-circular pond: from the pond a narrow water channel runs down the center of a path that leads to a square fountain watered by a cast iron cupid holding a shell above his head. The formality of the garden is offset by the pebble designs executed by New Mexico folk artist "Pop" Shaffer, with helpers named Herrera and Martinez; all the workers signed their work in pebbles. A particular delight is the circular patio at the south end of the garden with pebble animals set in concrete shields all along the edge.

The cutting garden, set between the house and the greenhouse,

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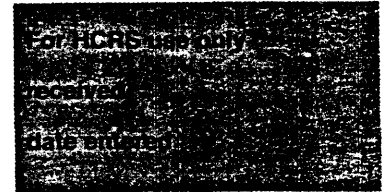
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was also formally laid out in a design by Rose Greeley which may never have been executed. The grape arbor indicated in her plans exists, but currently this garden has a fairly simple layout.

According to Ruth Simms' daughter, Katrina McCormick Barnes, Rose Greeley was an acquaintance of Mrs. Simms from Washington, and had designed a garden for her Georgetown house. Cecil Pragnell, an English gardener who later became County Agent and lived in the Jacobson mill, has also been credited as one of the landscapers of Los Poblanos. Since there were as many as 40 gardeners at work in Los Poblanos from time to time, there is no doubt room for several landscape architects to have had a hand in the work.

The Los Poblanos landscapes are planned to blend into the agricultural uses of the ranch. The elaborate gardens in the patio and west of the house, formally designed by imported landscape architects, are secluded from general view. As one moves from the house toward the farm buildings, an intermediate landscape is created by lawns shaded by mature cottonwoods and by the cutting and vegetable gardens. Beyond these, the farm outbuildings are set in a clearly agricultural and New Mexican landscape.

The only change in the landscaping of Los Poblanos since the Albert Simms' day is a lagoon directly east of the main house with an island in the middle which was added in the 1960's by Albert Simms' nephew, Albert II. The fenced lagoon has been used by the Rio Grande Zoo in their breeding program for endangered wildfowl species.

With the exception of the two Meem-designed outbuildings and the barn, the associated farm structures cannot be clearly dated, but it is highly probable that most date from the 1930's when Los Poblanos flourished as a agricultural center. All can be seen in a 1945 survey map. Most are simple, vernacular structures. They are of particular interest as they reveal the work and living patterns of this elaborate and wealthy farm, and are contributing to the district because they are essential in the presentation and interpretation of Los Poblanos as a farm community.

The greenhouse had a greater historic connection with the gardens and house than with the farm. Sited just north of the cutting gardens, it is topped by a glazed gambrel roof and opens into a stuccoed potting shed on its east end. South of the potting shed is a small gabled building that served as the wine-pressing house; to the north is a very small gabled building which is the entrance for stairs leading down to the underground wine cellar (the handwritten labels above the racks remain). East of this group of buildings is a complex which was the original home of Creamland Dairies. Two long, gabled buildings set parallel to each other are joined by an

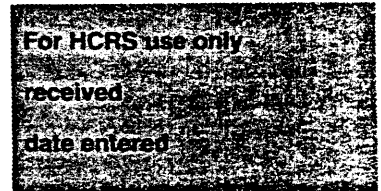
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enclosed walkway. Each has a monitor roof above the main gables. Two silos to the south of the dairy complex stored feed for cattle; the south end of the east building was the dairy sales room where local residents could buy their milk and cream. A lively mural on the east wall shows scenes of cowboys and milkmaids variously harrassed by the cattle they tend.

Further north is the striking barn, an open-sided, gambrel-roofed structure sheathed in corrugated metal. The east end of the barn is signed with the AR brand (for Albert and Ruth) which marked many Los Poblanos furnishings, and with "LOS POBLANOS RANCH, 1934." Northeast of the barn, at the edge of the district, is the ranch foreman's cottage, a gabled New Mexico Vernacular house with its roof flared to the south over a sunporch which appears to be an addition from the 1950's. The work bell which signalled the daily schedule sits in a gabled housing on the east end of the roof; on the interior is a large safe, weighing scales for trucks, and the blackboards used to keep farm accounts. In front of the house are the old gas pumps used to fuel farm machinery, showing the historic price of 35 cents per gallon. Two small farm buildings--their use is unidentified--shown on the 1945 survey map have since been torn down. A sheep shed and dog kennels complete the list of outbuildings.

The current farming of Los Poblanos is at a much smaller scale than that of the Simms' era: when Albert Simms ran the ranch it was the headquarters for a vast property, most of which has since been sold. Many of the outbuildings are now used only for storage, but they have been well-maintained by the present owners. The farm is now used for grazing a small herd of sheep and goats; the owners also raise a variety of fowl and keep up extensive flower and vegetable gardens.

John Gaw Meem's first memorandum for his file on the subject of the building that was eventually to be called La Quinta is dated April 29, 1934, only two years after he had finished the specifications for Los Poblanos. It begins, "Mrs. Simms intends to erect a social or sports building." The building envisioned by Ruth Simms and created by Meem is an entertainment center on a grand scale, in the Territorial Revival manner of Los Poblanos but with great elaboration of the detailing. Bainbridge Bunting says of La Quinta, "As befits so luxurious a building, the style of architecture is Territorial, which provided an opportunity for Classical pediments for principal doorways, window frames with intricate architrave moldings, and a monumental U-shaped portal facing the pool. . . This is the most elaborate building for domestic purposes that Meem designed, and its feeling of formality and luxury is more like Lake Forest than New Mexico."

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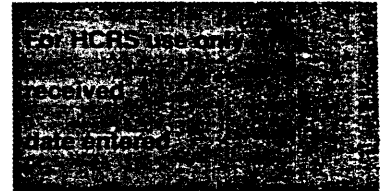
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As was his practice, Meem paid careful attention to the siting in his preliminary notes: "After considerable discussion of possible sites, it was decided that the building should be placed approximately in the northwest corner of the alfalfa field south of the present residence. This location has several advantages, one of them is that it will enable the new building to tie in to the residential group in a much more informal manner than if it were placed entirely separately, or centrally located on any of the other sites. It will also enable it to tie in with the present garden landscaping of the main residence. In general, the building is to be placed with its main facade facing east." Meem details the basic requirements for a large pool, a ballroom (also called the sports room) which would seat at least 200 people for concerts, an art gallery and a library, as well as guest bedroom suites.

Constructed in 1935, La Quinta is built in a U-shape facing east with the swimming pool filling the U. The courtyard is surrounded by a monumental portal along all sides of the building. Flat-roofed with a brick coping like that of Los Poblanos, La Quinta has a higher roof massing over the ballroom directly west of the pool. The east and north facades are symmetrically composed, with a slightly projecting north entry (for people walking from Los Poblanos) between the identically shaped library and gallery. The main feature of the west facade is the large semicircular, roofed, open terrace with its own fireplace which connects the ballroom to the gardens. To the south the gardens are partially enclosed by a projecting bedroom wing, one part of which is disconnected from the main massing of the house and can be entered only from outside. Here, as is the case with Los Poblanos, an overall impression of symmetrical regularity is pleasingly varied by a variety of setbacks and by the suprisingly rambling quality of the bedroom wing.

La Quinta's pool, decorated with hand-made tiles and surrounded by lawn, is the focal point of La Quinta as the patio is for Los Poblanos. The wide surrounding portals face east, making the area pleasant for sitting in the summer. The portals are topped by round log vigas on the side galleries, and by milled beams in the center. Square, beaded wood columns support the roof; square tiles floor the portal.

On the interior the three major public rooms, ballroom, library, and gallery, all designed on a 1:2 module (ballroom--27 x 54'; gallery and library--24 x 48'), are grouped at the center and north wing of the house. The centered ballroom, or game room, is entered by two double doors from the portal. It is symmetrically divided in bays by large 12/12 wood sash windows flanked by interior panelled wood shutters which swing back against the sides of the deep reveals. Under the windows and on either side of the fireplace are

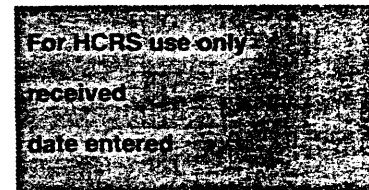
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radiators covered with carved wood screens (a feature of all the Meem houses in the district). The focal point of the ballroom is the fireplace inglenook at the west end. The generously oversized fireplace is covered by a wrought iron screen and set back about two feet into an inglenook with bancos of pictorial Spanish tile. A carved wooden beam, for which Taos artist Gustave Baumann used a combination of stylized Indian motifs and pictorial panels, tops the inglenook. The magnificent ballroom ceiling, with carved Pueblo Indian inspired designs in the exposed beams, was created by Hallet and Howard like the millwork throughout. The room is floored with parquet blocks with a tile edging and tile wainscoting.

North of the ballroom a vestibule entered from the northwest corner of the portal serves as a distribution point to the cloak room, powder room, ballroom, and art gallery which has its own vestibule. With north windows only, a cork floor, fabric walls, and a special lighting system over which Meem and Ruth Simms spent much time, the gallery is magnificently suited to the display of art, and to Ruth Simms' role as patron of local artists. The library to the east is a particularly beautiful room, its handsome proportions marked by the large window bays. The walls are lined from floor to ceiling with hand rubbed wooden bookcases; on the center of the south wall is a handsome fireplace. Between the art gallery and library, the north entrance room features hand-carved doors and beams.

The south wing has a different, far less formal atmosphere, with murals showing international cafe scenes decorating the refreshment service area. Paul Lantz of Santa Fe painted these murals as well as the playful shower room murals that show a southwestern Venus rising from a brightly colored background. East of the shower rooms is a bedroom suite with its own living room (each room has a corner fireplace). To the west is a complete apartment with its own kitchen and living room, probably planned as a bachelor apartment for Ruth Simms' son Medill McCormick. At the southwest corner two additional bedrooms make a connection between the house and the long garage.

The details of La Quinta are remarkable for their fineness and for the care with which Meem oversaw their execution. San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers, appears everywhere in the house, in the large mural by Peter Hurd at the south end of the main portal, in Walter Gilbert's wrought iron fixtures for the major doors which show him at work plowing, in the tile designed by Meem for the north entrance, and in the central carving of the ballroom inglenook. The tiles for the portal floors and the huge pots originally set along the edge of the portal were ordered from the famous La Luz pottery of New Mexico. Murals of Los Poblanos farm life were painted above the windows on the east side of the portal by Santa Fe artist Harry Miller. The

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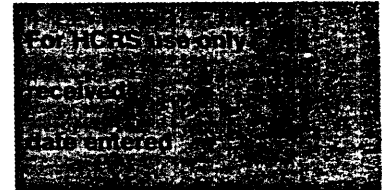
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finial statue that originally topped the roof of the west terrace (it is now in storage) was designed by Jo Davidson. Meem's own feeling about La Quinta is probably best expressed in one of several letters he wrote Ruth Simms referring to illnesses (he was plagued by severe headaches): "It is such a beautiful and joyous project that I hated to tackle it when feeling slightly under the weather. I want the design to reflect my own good spirits." (July 20, 1934)

La Quinta and Los Poblanos are now divided in ownership, with Dr. Armin Rembe and his wife Penny owning Los Poblanos, while Rembe's sister Vicky and her husband Robert Walker make their home at La Quinta. Some minor modifications have been made over the years to the southwest bedroom wing of the house; otherwise, its original character and integrity have been superbly preserved. The Walkers have made two major positive changes, moving the entrance drive further east of the pool and building a wall, which matches the original walls precisely, to screen the pool from this road. The new wall is a great improvement over the chain-link fence which once stood before the pool. A formal garden with a fountain is being constructed to the east of the pool; a garden had originally been planned for this area, but was never executed. This garden echoes in a modern mode the layout of the west garden behind Los Poblanos. The garden west of La Quinta is planted in the naturalist style with lawn sweeping back to groves of trees. The fields which border Rio Grande Boulevard were originally used for grazing; now they support a tree nursery, which has the secondary effect of screening La Quinta completely from the boulevard.

Both Los Poblanos and La Quinta are entered by a long drive marked by adobe-style walls with a large cast iron gate. The drive is enclosed by an avenue of elms and cottonwoods from which the visitor emerges suddenly into the open lands of the farm. All the historic homes of the district are entered through tree-lined avenues, but this is the finest. It is a fitting and dramatic entrance to these two exceptionally fine and exceptionally luxurious Meem buildings which, for all their luxury, are perfectly blended into their southwestern landscape and are exemplars of the southwestern building tradition.

The third Meem designed house in the District is the John Simms House, set among fields and cottonwood groves at the southern end of the district. John Simms had acquired the property in 1931, while he was still living in town; his purchase was probably one result of his brother's interest in the area. An October, 1934 letter to John Gaw Meem from Ruth Simms suggests that the John Simms' had hesitated to build while much of the adjoining land was owned by Jacobson, who could have blocked their views. When Albert Simms acquired the bulk

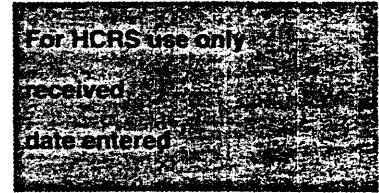
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of Jacobson's property in 1934, the John Simms' were ready to consider building. A series of letters between Ruth Simms and Meem outlines the problem John and Anne faced: they liked Meem's work, and wanted him to design their house, but John Simms was much less wealthy than Albert and Ruth. "I think John is afraid that you are too expensive for them," Ruth Simms wrote, "and he may be put at his ease after you see him and he realizes that you will take as much interest in doing a lovely house for his price as well as doing a nice piece of work for us." Meem replied, "I do hope I will be able to make them feel that I will consider it a privilege to be able to help them with their plans. As a matter of fact, I would like to give them full architectural services. . .and to do this I will gladly adjust my rate to their budget."

Meem reached an agreement with John and Anne Simms that he would design their house, but that the work would be done by day laborers supervised by John Simms--an unusual concession for this meticulous architect. His file on the John Simms house contains several memoranda on his early conversations with John and Anne, many of which were concerned with the choice of site in relation to the fields and cottonwood groves of the property. His quick sketch of the site outlined a setting just south of the Griegos Lateral among a grove of cottonwoods west of two existing buildings on the land, one of which became the guest house for the new building (the other, presumably, was demolished). An October 17 memo notes, "Mrs Simms and I met on her property and after carefully going over all possible sites, decided temporarily on one that seemed to meet most of the requirements. It is located southwest of the large grove of trees, approximately where the old barns and haystacks are located. The main axis of the house should be parallel to the main irrigation ditch, extending from the site to the main highway. The house would face northeast."

An earlier conversation had elicited Anne Simms' thoughts about the style of her new house: she had proposed an H-shaped rambling adobe with thick walls, soft lines, and very few vigas. The Spanish- Pueblo revival style was far different from the Territorial influence that shaped Los Poblanos and La Quinta, and not to Meem's taste at this period and in this location. A later note on the memo has a triumphant tone: "Talked her out of this."

The Territorial Revival house Meem designed is splendidly placed to take advantage of the beauty of the surrounding lands. From the house, one looks over the open fields to an uninterrupted view of the Sandia Mountains on the east. The entry portal and private porch take advantage of this fine view and are shielded from the summer afternoon sun. The beautiful old cottonwoods frame the house without interfering with its vista. The Griegos Lateral and the

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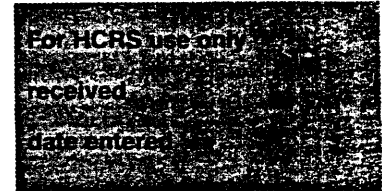
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small acequia running from it along the property's north boundary enclose and frame the site. To the west, the walled garden looks out on the cottonwood groves and fields that extend to the river-side drain; beyond that is the lush greenery of the river bosque. The southern boundary of the property, formed by the Griegos Lateral Wasteway, is now screened by a line of trees, planted as a visual screen when the Dietz estate to the south was subdivided.

The house is a handsome example of Meem's style at a less elaborate scale than that of the two buildings designed for Albert and Ruth Simms. As is the case with Meem's finest work, the house is especially notable for the beauty of its proportions and the intelligence of its plan. The main block of the house, on the northeast, is rectangular, containing the living room and three of the five bedrooms, including the master bedroom which opens, as does the living room, onto a screened private porch at the northeast corner. From this main area project two wings, the dining and kitchen wing to the south and a wing to the west containing two bedrooms. The wings enclose two sides of a garden which is walled on the west and south.

Like Los Poblanos and La Quinta, the John Simms House is constructed of hollow tile with the straight walls and sharp corners that characterize Territorial buildings. The parapet above the flat roof is topped by a dentillated brick coping, and a variety of roof heights is achieved by setting the porch and portal lower than the main body of the house. Windows are double-hung wood sash with lights ranging from 6/6 to 15/15 framed by Territorial pedimented wood lintels. The living room window is particularly handsome, with a large center window flanked by two sidelights, with a dentillated pediment over the center window creating a Palladian effect.

The house is entered through an open portal on the east with square chamfered wood posts supporting the horizontal beam and roof. Round vigas are exposed in the portal ceiling. The northeast private porch has a similar design, but is screened; its shorter length gives the front facade an interesting asymmetry. A third portal extends along the south side of the house beside the rear garden: it was planned by Meem as an open portal, but Anne Simms asked for it to be enclosed with wood casement windows.

The interior also shows Meem's fine sense of proportion, with the rooms flowing from the unusual, asymmetrical plan which effectively separates the house into three distinct areas--for eating, for living room and master bedroom, and for children's rooms. As is the case in all of his houses in the Los Poblanos district, Meem paid particular attention to the entry vestibule where the shape of the carved wood entry door with carved side

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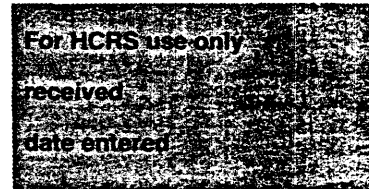
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panels is precisely echoed by the glass door with sidelights which leads to the south portal. With wood floors, hand-plastered walls, and panelled wood interior doors, the house has an austerity and simplicity that highlights the interest of the plan. The John Simms house is essentially unaltered.

Immediately to the northeast is the small guest house which is a remodelling of an earlier building. Meem added Territorial window frames and a brick coping to make it echo the style of the main building. It contributes to the district by its small-scale statement of the Territorial theme. A small hay shed to the west of the house appears to be fairly recent and should be considered a non-contributing structure.

The district also includes one non-contributing house, a gabled ranch-style house built in the 1970's for the McNary family on land which was originally part of the Jacobson ranch. Set between the Jacobson Ranch and the John Simms House, the McNary house is visible from the road, but not particularly evident from the adjoining properties. It is congruent with the district in scale and use, but has a markedly different architectural style.

The Los Poblanos Historic District contains what is unquestionably the finest grouping of homes in the Albuquerque area, wonderfully sited among fields and groves of trees. A district of great architectural distinction, particularly for the work of John Gaw Meem, Los Poblanos is also visually valuable for its collection of farm-related buildings on the Jacobson and Los Poblanos Ranches and for its retention of agricultural patterns older than any of the existing structures.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1850-1935 **Builder/Architect** 3 major buildings by John Gaw Meem

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Important for its architecture, its place in local agricultural and political history, and for the landscapes and art associated with particular properties, the Los Poblanos Historic District is a distinguished and highly distinctive rural neighborhood. This district's three 1930's houses by John Gaw Meem are among the best works of "the dominant architectural talent at work in the Southwest during the first half of the present century." (Bainbridge Bunting, John Gaw Meem) All three show the effect of Meem's insistence on handcraftsmanship, his meticulous detailing, and his fine sense of proportion. La Quinta, the Simms' entertainment center, incorporates significant works of local art. The landscapes of the district, which include valley fields and cottonwood bosque (associated with the John Simms House), are largely rural and traditionally New Mexican, with the notable exception of Los Poblanos' formal gardens, a polished and unusual combination of English Renaissance plan with folk detailing. The district has political significance as home to the influential Simms family--John Sr., a New Mexico Supreme Court Justice; John Jr., New Mexico Governor from 1954 to 1958; Albert G. Simms, U.S. Congressman from 1929-1931, and Albert's second wife, Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms, Congresswoman from Illinois for the same term. The Simms' homes, particularly La Quinta, served as a political and cultural center in Albuquerque for decades. The district also is important in the history of Rio Grande valley agriculture; Jacob Jacobson ran one of the area's early dairies, and his ranch contains the only known mill building in the vicinity of Albuquerque; the land continues in use as a farm and ranch, as do Los Poblanos, where Albert Simms began a dairy that has evolved into a major local business and the John Simms House. The continued agricultural use of these lands has been one of the major factors in the preservation of the district's unique landscape.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Bernalillo County Records.

Bainbridge Bunting, John Gaw Meem (Manuscript of forthcoming University of New Mexico Press book), 1980.

Charles F. Coan, "Jacob P. Jacobson," A History of New Mexico, Vol. II, 1925.

10. Geographical Data *acreage not verified*

Acreeage of nominated property 70 acres

Quadrangle name Los Griegos, New Mexico

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
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state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Dewitt, Coordinator

organization Historic Landmarks Survey date 10-14-81

street & number Redevelopment Planning, P.O. Box 1293 telephone (505) 766-4720

city or town Albuquerque state New Mexico 87103

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Thomas W Merlan

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4-14-82

For NCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

William A. Abraham date 5-27-82

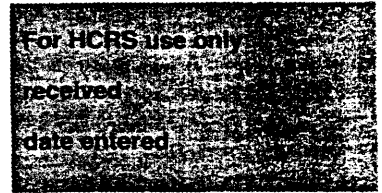
Manager of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The Los Poblanos Historic District has a long history as an agricultural area, and even a probable prehistoric agricultural use (potsherds have been found on district properties, but the significance of any possible archeological sites has not been formally evaluated). In the historic record, the Los Poblanos area shows up first as a small community called San Antonio de los Poblanos in an 1802 census, when it had a population of 23. Los Poblanos has early connections with the wealthy and politically influential Armijo family, and it is possible (though as yet unproven) that the Los Poblanos ranch was once the hacienda of Vicente Armijo, San Antonio de los Poblanos. The name of the ranch and of the district comes from this early village and refers to people from Puebla, Mexico, who were among the early settlers of the area.

The property which is the nucleus of Albert Simms' Los Poblanos Ranch was owned in the later 19th century by Juan Cristobal Armijo, who may have constructed the early building incorporated into the present Los Poblanos house. The records do not show clearly whether Juan Cristobal acquired the property by inheritance (Vicente Armijo was his grandfather) or by purchase, but after his death in 1884 the land was divided among his many descendants. The property was sold by the various heirs in 1912 to Neill B. Field, a major Albuquerque developer. After passing to two subsequent owners, the 110 acre tract was sold to Albert G. Simms by Wylie Williams in 1928.

The Jacobson property, much of which later became the property of Simms, was assembled in 1880 by Franz Huning, one of the central figures in the development of Albuquerque. Huning acquired the property from the Zamora, Garcia, Lucero, and Torres families; further research should reveal which family is to be associated with the old terron farmhouse on the ranch. Huning sold the land to Charles Etheridge almost as soon as he had assembled all four parcels, so this appears to have been one of his many speculative real estate ventures. In 1902, Jacobson acquired the property intact from Angela Gianini.

The third tract of land that makes up the Los Poblanos district, that on which the John Simms House was built, was purchased from Altagracia Lopez de Martinez by H.B. and Mary Thomas in 1912; Mary Thomas, in turn, sold it to the John Simms' in 1931. Thus, unusually for this area of the north valley, all three original tracts which are included in the district had passed from Spanish into Anglo hands by the early years of the 20th century. The agricultural richness of the area, and the large size of the tracts involved, rare in an area where land was often divided among heirs in narrow strips, probably led to this investment.

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Though only the oldest building on the Jacobson property remains from the 19th century farming of this area, the pattern of acequias which forms part of the district's boundary probably dates back at least to the 18th century. The Griegos Lateral is among the ditches that show up on the earliest maps of the north valley and the individual ditches it feeds may be of comparable age. The acequia network accounts for the richness of the district's landscapes, making a plenitude of water available in the dry Albuquerque climate; the network is also one of the chief beauties of the district with water running spring to fall through the tree and reed-bordered ditches.

The landscapes formed by the pattern of fields and acequias are typical of those areas of the North Valley which remain rural, but the west garden of Los Poblanos is a formal work of landscape architecture unique in the area and probably in the state. Though designed in 1933, it has exceptional significance in its extremely successful blending of a formal Italianate layout with playful examples of local folk art. To this landscape, designed by Rose Greeley, should be added the landscaping of the interior patio at Los Poblanos, with its elaborate brick and tile paving and star-shaped fountain, and of the fine tree-lined entry drive.

The earliest architecture of the area, on the Jacobson ranch, makes an important contribution to the character of the Los Poblanos District in its preservation of a Colonial terron farmhouse and of a complex of early 20th century farm buildings constructed for Jacob P. Jacobson, a long-time resident of the district and operator of a dairy cooperative. The most significant structure is the terron farmhouse, one of the very small handful of existing mid-nineteenth century buildings in the Albuquerque area, and one which has seen little alteration, though it is now physically linked to a much more recent structure. The gambrel-roofed terron barn and the brick-faced adobe house built by Jacobson in 1902 are interesting combinations of Anglo form with New Mexican materials. The two-story brick mill is unique in the area.

Jacob Peter Jacobson, known as "Pete" to his friends, was a serious and dedicated dairy farmer who brought new agricultural techniques to his north valley lands. Raised in Copenhagen, where he combined school with service as a choir boy, he was trained as a machinist. In 1890, at 21, he immigrated to the United States, working in lumber camps and machine shops on the Pacific coast. In 1899, he came to New Mexico, and like many other settlers, worked for the Santa Fe Railway. Three years later Jacobson purchased his north valley property and turned from machinery to farming. According to Coan, "he started dairying with two Jersey cows. His wife was an expert butter maker, and for fourteen years they made a

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specialty of butter production, and the quality of their product was such that it was sold before it was made."

Jacobson began his cooperative dairy in 1921 with stockholders from the community, and Coan's 1925 biographical vignette indicates that it was then a success. Coan also notes that "as a farmer, Mr. Jacobson has pursued the efficient principle of returning to his soil all or more than is taken from it, and the result is that he has one of the most productive farms in this section of the Rio Grande Valley. . . . One feature of the ranch is the mill for the grinding of feed and also flour, and it does a considerable custom business for the entire community. Mr. Jacobson has been one of the active movers for the drainage of the low lands along the Rio Grande River, and while the plans for this movement have been made their carrying out awaits a more auspicious time." These much needed drainage improvements were finally begun in the 1930's, and the Riverside Drain which forms part of the west boundary of the district is one of the results.

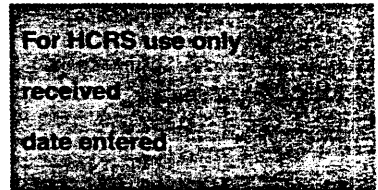
With no children of his own to succeed him on the ranch (his wife had three from a previous marriage), Jacobson was ready to retire from active farming in the mid-1930's. At that same time, Albert Simms, who was expanding his already large north valley land holdings, made Jacobson an offer, as Ruth Simms reports in an October, 1934 letter to John Gaw Meem: "Pete Jacobson. . . will not consider at this time selling the acres which include his house and those dreadful barns but in the future he will let us have it. In the meantime, we have offered him a price for all the rest of his land and we are quite certain he will accept it by the end of the week." Jacobson did sell Simms land, but he was never willing to let Albert and Ruth have his ten home acres, happily for the preservation of the "dreadful barns" and other buildings. After 1945, when he is shown as owner on a survey map of the area, Jacobson did sell--but to the Barberschmitts rather than to Albert Simms (the precise date of sale has not yet been found). Around 1950, Cecil Pragnell, the English gardener who had worked on the Los Poblamos landscapes before becoming County Agent, bought the Jacobson mill and renovated it as a house. In 1960 the present owners, Albert and Mary Anella, bought the Barberschmitt property, and two years later acquired the mill from Pragnell, reuniting Pete Jacobson's 10 acres. Happily, they have kept its farming history alive, maintaining the barn and corrals, as well as the houses, so that the pattern of Jacobson's mill and dairy is still clear.

Jacobson's modest house was clearly the home of a hard-working farmer, and until the late 1920's (and in most places much later), the North Valley was Albuquerque's prime agricultural land. Albert Simms' purchase of the Armijo lands marks the beginning of a new

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trend in the area which continues to the present, the purchase of "country estates" by the wealthy. Simms, of course, did operate Los Poblamos as a very serious ranch, but his wealth allowed his operation to take place on a scale entirely different from that of Jacobson's ranch.

Before the ranch purchase, there is little in Albert Simms' biography to indicate an interest in farming. Albert and his younger brother John were born in Arkansas; Albert attended the University of Arkansas while John received an LL.B. from Vanderbilt. John practiced law in Texarkana until 1913, when he moved to New Mexico for his health (he was then 28). Soon thereafter, Albert, who had been working as an accountant, joined his brother in Albuquerque, and was admitted to the New Mexico bar in 1915. Both brothers bought houses in what is now the Fourth Ward Historic District near downtown Albuquerque. John continued to practice law, and served as a New Mexico Supreme Court Justice in 1929-1930. A Democrat, John Simms was a very influential figure in his party, and he is highly rated as a politician by local historians, in spite of the fact that he never ran for office. John served as his brother's lawyer, and helped put together some of Albert's most important projects, especially his acquisition of the immense Elena Gallegos land grant north of Albuquerque. According to family members, the brothers admired and respected each other, and Albert often followed his younger brother's advice.

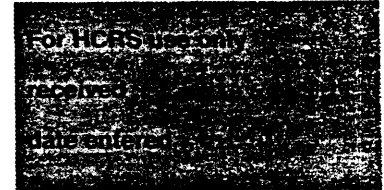
Albert Simms practiced law until 1919, when he was named as President of the Citizens National Bank in Albuquerque; he continued to hold major positions on financial institution boards for the remainder of his life. Albert began his political career in 1920, when he was elected Chairman of the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners; in 1925, he went as a Republican delegate to the State Legislature. In 1929, Albert became New Mexico's at-large Congressman in the 71st Congress, in a time politically inauspicious for Republicans, but personally momentous for Albert Simms, as it was there that he met his second wife, the wealthy and powerful Congresswoman from Illinois, Ruth Hanna McCormick.

Ruth McCormick had grown up political. The daughter of Senator Mark Hanna, she became a close friend of Alice Roosevelt Longworth, and was a lifelong ardent Republican. John Tebbel says that "Mark Hanna had bequeathed to her something of his own political genius, and she had already made her first political speech seven years before her marriage. From that point she went on to merit the accolade one observer gave her: 'The only woman in America with a political technique.'" In 1903, at 23, she married Joseph Medill McCormick, of the wealthy Chicago McCormick and Medill families. Medill, as he was called, was then editor of the Chicago Tribune,

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and later became a U.S. Senator from Illinois. She was Republican national committeewoman from Illinois (1924-28), a post she would later hold from New Mexico. After McCormick's death in 1925, she emerged even more fully as a political power. Elected Congresswoman in 1928, she campaigned for Medill McCormick's Senate seat in 1929, but lost the election. Politics was not her only field: one of the owners of the Chicago Tribune as a member of the Medill Trust, she was also publisher of the Rockford, Illinois Register-Republican and Morning Star. From her McCormick marriage she had two daughters and a son, Medill McCormick. Her special political interests included labor legislation, women's trade unions, education, and civic improvements.

Albert Simms was also a widower when they met in Congress, and in March, 1932, they were married--and John Gaw Meem drew up his specifications for the Los Poblanos ranch house. Meem's association with Ruth Simms, which was to produce such fine results, was just beginning.

The son of missionary parents, Meem grew up in Brazil and was educated as a civil engineer at Virginia Military Institute, a training which proved valuable in his later architectural work. Stricken by tuberculosis, he moved to Santa Fe to recover his health at the Sunmount Sanatorium, one of many illustrious New Mexicans to show the healthy properties of mountain air through a long career. After his recovery, a time when he had become interested in architecture, Meem trained with Fisher and Fisher and at the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design in Denver. In 1924, he formed a Santa Fe architectural partnership with Cassius McCormick (no relation of the Chicago McCormicks) and began a career that was to focus on the revitalization of southwestern architectural traditions.

By the time Meem came to Santa Fe, the first stirrings of the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style were underway, with the 1911 remodelling of the Palace of the Governors from its Territorial appearance to an imagined 17th century style and the building of Rapp and Rapp's Museum of Fine Arts in 1916, as well as the construction of several Pueblo Revival buildings at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque from 1906-1910. Meem's early work showed his interest in this style, and was supplemented and expanded by his work on the rehabilitation of historic New Mexico churches as a member of the Society for Preservation and Restoration of New Mexico Mission Churches. Bainbridge Bunting dates the period of Meem's early work from 1924 to 1928, while he was in partnership with McCormick. The middle years, 1929-1941 were the times when "the office was small and the most distinctive work was done" (Bunting), and the period in which Meem developed his personal and distinctive version of the Territorial style.

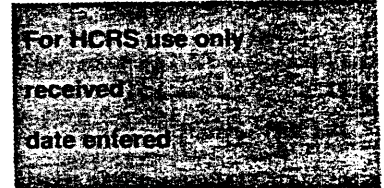
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A combination of New Mexican building traditions with eastern materials and influences, the Territorial style was at its height from 1850 through 1880. Larger houses in the territory continued to be constructed of adobe or terron, but the mud bricks were laid up more carefully in straight rather than battered walls with right angles rather than rounded corners. Large windows, carried by pack trains across the prairies, replaced the small openings of the Colonial house. Windows and doors acquired a pedimented trim to approximate the Greek Revival style, already out of date in the east. Brick copings--designed to keep adobe parapets from eroding--became decorative elements in their own right.

According to Bunting, "one might be able to say that it was Meem who first turned back for inspiration to that nineteenth-century New Mexican fashion" beginning with the 1925 Ashley Pond house, and it is the Territorial Revival style, fully developed, which he uses in his three houses for the Simms. He met Ruth Simms, and other patrons of this period, during a time which was unfortunate for many architects: "In the dark day of the 1930's, the Meem office was an exceptional place. At a time when most offices were idle and talented architects without work, John Meem was singularly fortunate in obtaining commissions so that his practice actually flourished." In this time, Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms was Meem's most generous patron. "A somewhat imperious lady used to preferential treatment, she did not hesitate to call on Meem for advice on the most trivial details, but she provided him with a chance to design some of his most important buildings."

Two letters from the Meem archives give a sense of the relationship between patrons and architect. In 1935, Ruth Simms wrote, "Dear John: I am furious with you for having spent the night in Albuquerque without saying anything to me about it, as your room at the house was empty. However, I am glad that you have left for a clinic specializing in headaches, and I shall be particularly interested to know what you think of it. . . ." A couple of months later, Meem wrote Albert Simms a classic architect-client letter: "I will also try to get the type of shower head you have in mind. I would like to call your attention to the fact, however, that the ones we have specified are not 'expensive and obsolete' fixtures. In reality they are the most modern and up-to-date ones one can get in spite of the unhappy experience you apparently have had with some of them." These and other letters in the files show a relationship of real friendship as well as delighted collaboration between Ruth Simms and Meem, while Albert Simms remains more distant. Ruth Simms' imperiousness was well met by Meem's meticulousness, and it is clear that they both had a splendid time designing La Quinta, working out the perfect tile and best fabric for the art gallery walls.

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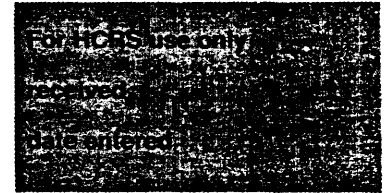
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Los Poblanos and La Quinta were only the first fruits of their relationship; Meem went on to build the campus she donated the Sandia School, a total of eight buildings, and because of her patronage was given the commission to design the Albuquerque Little Theater. A downtown Albuquerque office building he designed for her was cancelled before construction.

In his work for Ruth Simms and in his other designs from this period, Meem combined his interest in the revival of the Territorial style with his engineering background, feeling that "there is no reason why a structure which is thoroughly functional in terms of engineering and economic viability and in the use of modern technology cannot be cast in forms that recall symbolically the rich heritage of New Mexico. It is possible for a building to be both functional and evocative" (Bunting summary of 1966 article by Meem). Meem's work amply meets both tests, and his handsome, subtle buildings are some of the most functional and best-loved in New Mexico. Bunting says of Meem, "His is a rare blend of characteristics: the sensitivity and perceptiveness of an artist, the practicality and discipline of the engineer,

the decisiveness and acumen of a man of affairs. . . Surmounting all these positive traits were Meem's honesty, integrity, and generosity." His example is undoubtedly responsible for the continuing popularity of Territorial Revival buildings in New Mexico, but few of these more recent structures will stand comparison with Meem's master works.

A desire to spread Meem's influence and to bring a new architectural standard to Albuquerque may have played a part in Ruth Simms' wish to have him design the John Simms house. She wrote Meem in the letter asking him to help John and Anne, "It will not be long before we will have people coming in here buying up land for places like ours and these places will set a standard for those to come." She was, in many ways, correct: Pueblo and Territorial Revival have come to be the predominant style of major new houses in Albuquerque's North Valley, and these revivals are particularly pleasing in their blend both with the landscaping and with the existing historic buildings of the area. The Simms' example may well have been a formative one.

The relationship between Meem and the John Simms' was briefer and more formal than his long association with Ruth Simms; in both cases, the woman took the major role in working with the architect, but the John Simms House files show little evidence of friendship developing from the project.

Both Simms houses served as political centers--Albert's for

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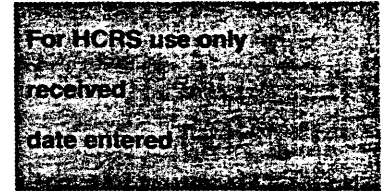
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Republicans, John's for Democrats, but La Quinta was certainly the foremost center for political and cultural events in the area for many years. Ruth Simms' generosity equalled her wealth, and party fund-raising events, concerts, and art shows were frequent at La Quinta. The entertainment center had been planned partly for a place where her son, Medill McCormick, might entertain his friends; sadly he was killed in a climbing accident in the Sandia Mountains only three years after it was built. The tradition of La Quinta's hospitality continued nevertheless. Many Albuquerqueans remember with particular pleasure the years in which the June Music Festival, which now plays at a University concert hall, was held in the ballroom, and the works of local artists were shown to the public in the art gallery.

Some of the art was an integral part of La Quinta: the large mural by Peter Hurd, Gustave Baumann's wood carvings in the inglenook, Peter Lantz' murals in the shower rooms and refreshment center, and--not least--the tiles, wrought-iron door hardware, and iron lanterns designed by Meem make La Quinta significant for the art it contains, as well as for Ruth Simms' role as patron of the arts.

Ruth Simms intended to will her beautiful entertainment center to the City of Albuquerque for use as a center for music and the visual arts, according to Katrina McCormick Barnes. Since, however, she died intestate, La Quinta passed into Albert Simms' hands and continued to be the property of the Simms family until the mid 1970's. When it came on the market, the City investigated the possibility of purchasing the building as the home for the Albuquerque Museum, but decided against acquiring La Quinta because of its cost and distance from the City center.

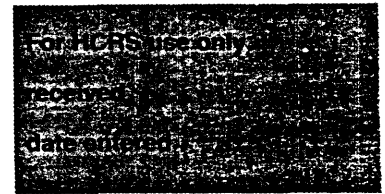
Ruth and Albert Simms also took a particular interest in local education, he founding the Albuquerque Academy, which still benefits from his gift of many of the lands of the Elena Gallegos land grant. She founded the Sandia School for Girls and the Manzano Day School in Albuquerque, as well as acting as trustee for the Fountain Valley Boys School in Colorado.

With all this, both Albert and Ruth were deeply involved in the ranching life of Los Poblanos and of the great Trinchera cattle and sheep ranch in southern Colorado, originally purchased by Ruth Simms for her son Medill. Members of the American Livestock Association, they developed pure-bred Holstein cattle. In their north valley home, they fit easily into a long New Mexican tradition and became the patrons of the community. Talking to long-time residents of the nearby neighborhoods, one gets the clear impression that everybody worked at Los Poblanos at one time or another. One of the great events of the year was the annual barbecue, to which all the Los

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Poblanos workers invited all their relatives, and probably most of their friends. An agricultural establishment as large as Los Poblanos was the major economic force in the north valley community. While such patronage might well have been offensive, the Simms appear to have been extremely popular with their Hispano workers, as well as with their politically and culturally inclined friends. Hispanos were not the only workers at La Quinta; during the Second World War some 40 German prisoners of war were sent there to work the fields. Their names can still be seen on the lockers they used.

Ruth Simms died December 31, 1944, following a fall from her horse: her pallbearers, appropriately, included an artist, Gustave Baumann, financier Clifford Dindle, and neighbor Robert Dietz III. Albert Simms continued the traditions of Los Poblanos hospitality until his death in 1964, willing the property to his brother John's sons, John Jr. and Albert Simms II. At this time, much of the land of the Los Poblanos ranch was sold, and in many cases has since been developed. Dr. Albert Simms and his wife Barbara made their home at Los Poblanos, and preserved the farm buildings as well as the houses. Finding the running of the complex property somewhat burdensome, they sold it to the Rembes and Walkers in 1978.

While Los Poblanos Ranch is clearly the most opulent and influential of the properties that make up the Los Poblanos Historic District, the district functions beautifully as a whole, tied together by its agricultural setting, by its architecture, and by the long associations among the various properties. The district is connected as well by the commitment to preservation both of buildings and of the landscape shown by all the owners. Important for the art of La Quinta, the landscape architecture of Los Poblanos, and the political connections of the Simms family, the district is most significant in its architecture and in its contribution of agriculture, both historically and in its present-day preservation of a heritage of fine farms and beautiful buildings.

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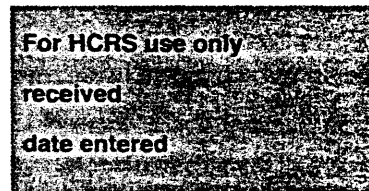
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Beginning at the intersection of the west right of way line of Rio Grande Boulevard N.W. with the south right of way line of Rio Grande Place N.W.;

Thence west along the south right of way line of Rio Grande Place N.W. to its intersection with the west right of way line of the Griegos Lateral, an irrigation ditch;

Thence south and east along the west right of way line of the Griegos Lateral to its intersection with the north property line of Tract 4 on the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Map #31;

Thence west along the north boundary line of Tract 4 to its intersection with the east right of way line of the Albuquerque Riverside Drain;

Thence south along the east right of way line of the Riverside Drain to its intersection with the north right of way line of the Griegos Lateral Wasteway;

Thence east along the north right of way line of the Griegos Lateral Wasteway to its intersection with the west right of way line of the Griegos Lateral;

Thence southeast along the west right of way line of the Griegos Lateral to its intersection with the west right of way line of Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.;

Thence north along the west right of way line of Rio Grande Boulevard N.W. to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries include properties which have major associations with the Simms family and with the Jacobson Ranch. The Simms properties once extended both east and west of the proposed boundaries. Currently, however, Rio Grande Boulevard makes a major division on the east, and the lands to the east, while still predominantly rural, contain some recent housing. On the west of the Griegos Lateral, which forms the west boundary in the northern part of the district, the original Los Poblanos stables, root cellars, and irrigation pump remain, but the addition of modern housing makes this area appear visually distinct. The southern boundaries include the whole of the John Simms property and the field lying between the John Simms property and Rio Grande Boulevard. The field is now owned by the Simms family, but was not part of the original John Simms property. It forms a visual buffer between the John Simms House and Rio Grande Boulevard. The proposed boundaries follow the historic visual boundaries of the district, which are reinforced by landscaping and current ownership patterns.

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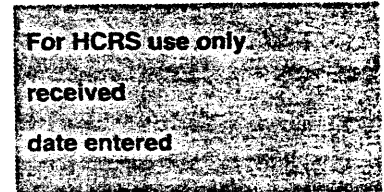
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Property owners:

Dr. and Mrs. Armin Rembe (Los Poblanos)
4803 Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Walker (La Quinta)
4803 Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. Anella (Jacobson Ranch)
4617 Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Mr. and Mrs. Graham McNary, Jr. (McNary House)
4607 Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

* Estate of Mrs. John F. Simms, Sr. (John Simms House)
4317 Rio Grande Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

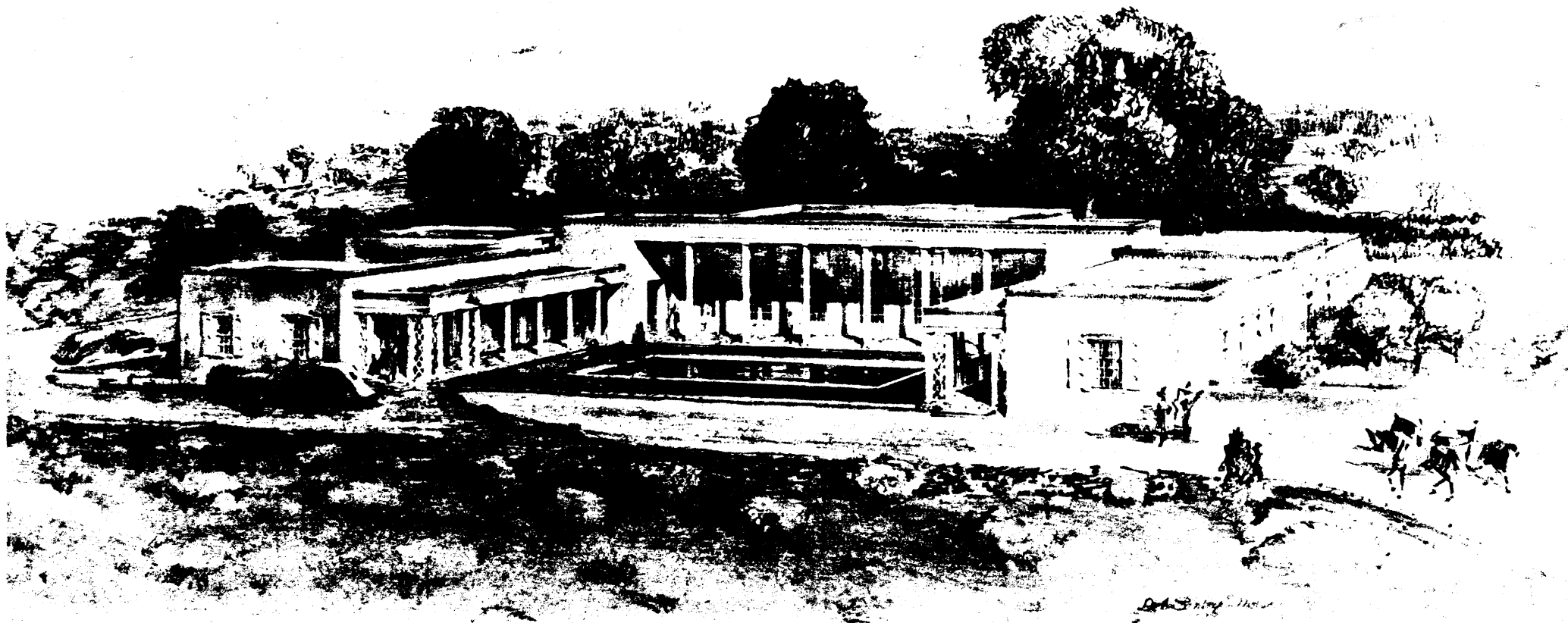
* Mrs. Anne Simms Clark (field E. of John Simms House)
15 Calle Conquista
Tucson, Arizona 85716

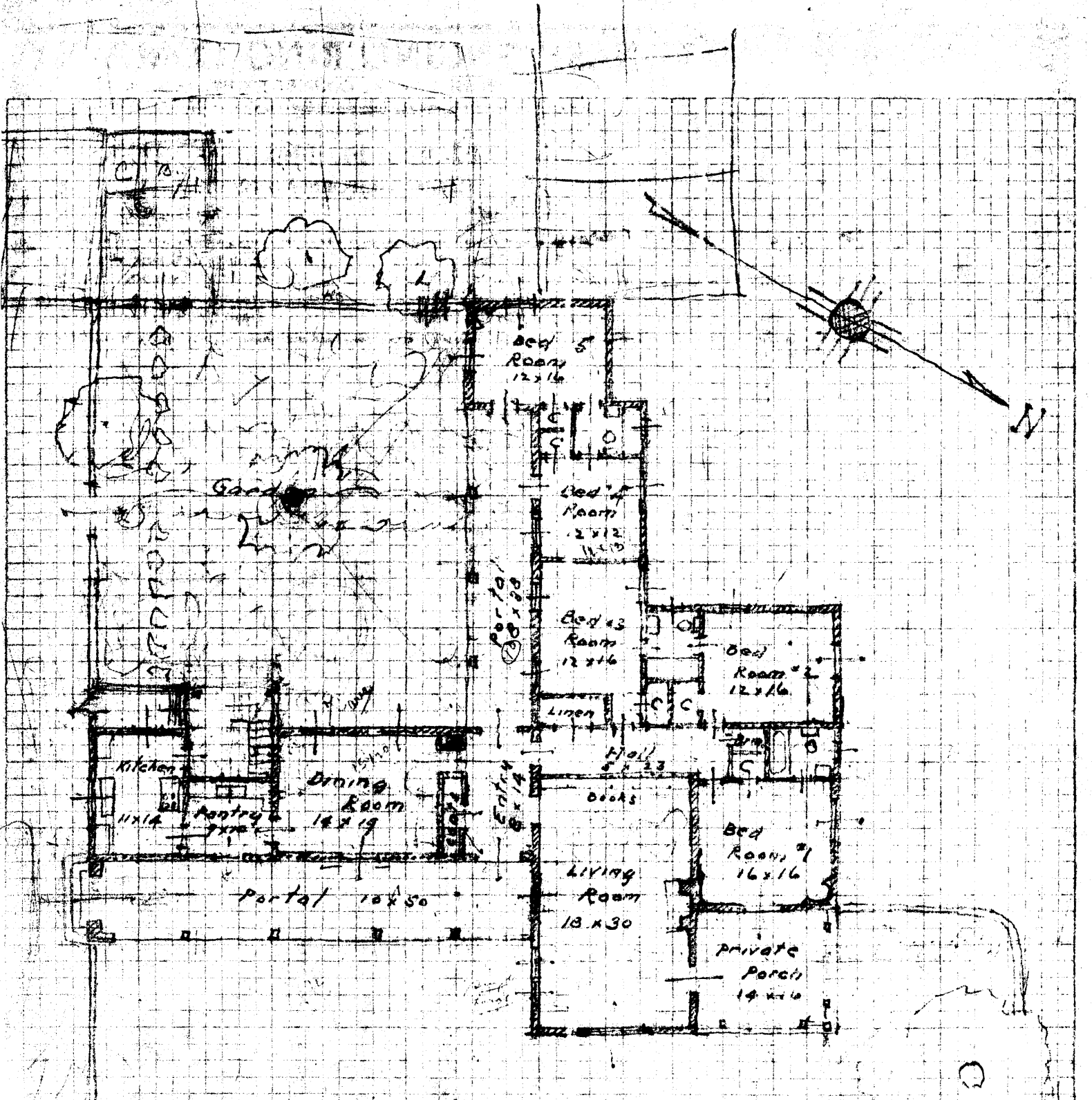
Commissioner Orlando Vigil (rights-of-way)
Chairman, Bernalillo County Commission
620 Lomas Boulevard N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

* Executrix of John F. Simms House is Mrs. Anne Simms Clark

LA QUINTA, LOS POBLANOS HISTORIC DISTRICT

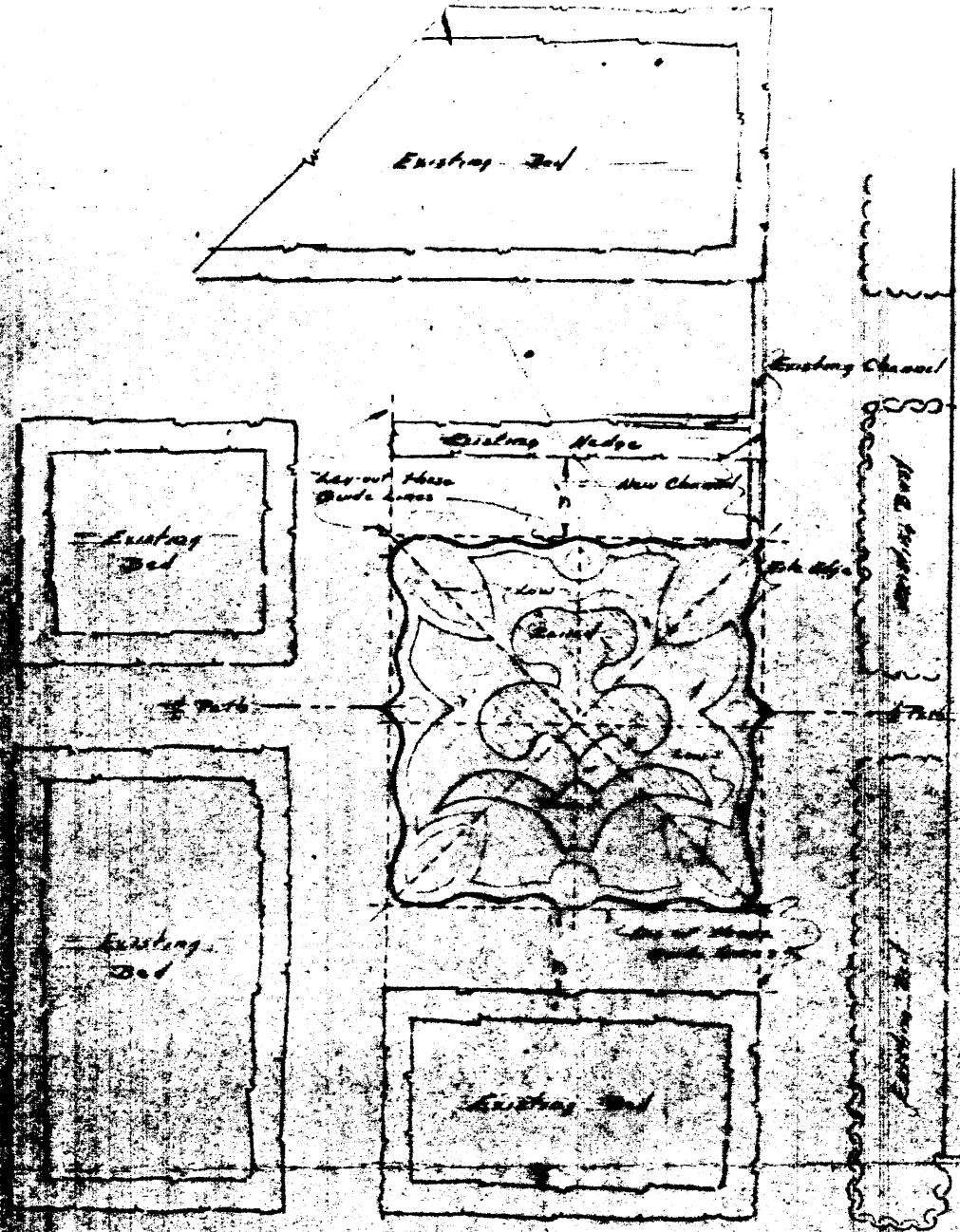
Rendering from John Gaw Meem archives,
University of New Mexico



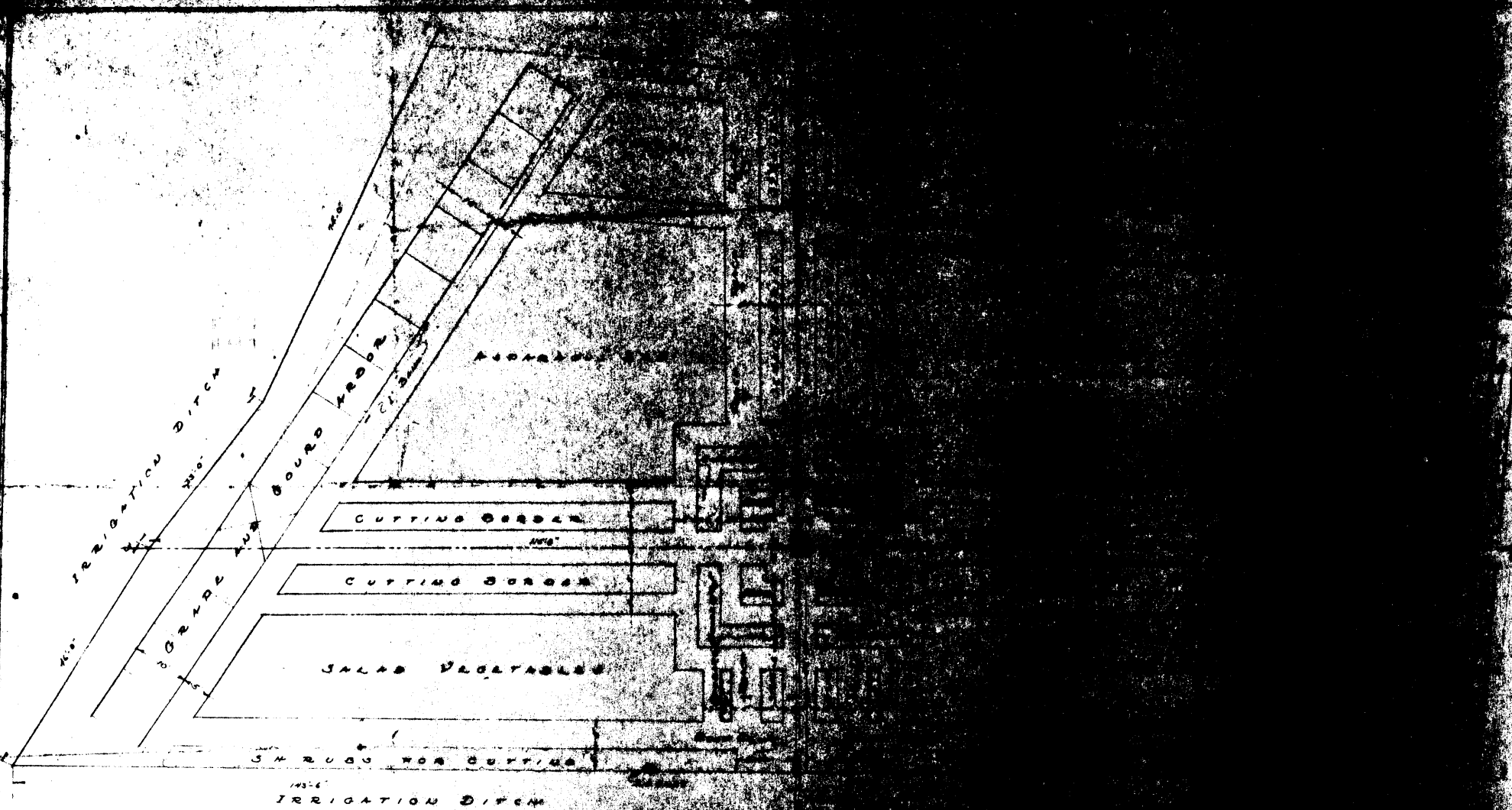


SKETCH OF FLOOR PLAN
 HOUSE FOR MR. & MRS. JOHN SIMMS.

John Gaw Meem
 Architect



PLAN OF NEW BED IN WEST GARDEN
 LOS POBLANOS RANCH, ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.
 FEBRUARY 16, 1934. ROSE GREENY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



STAKING PLAN FOR
 LOS DOBLAMOS RANCHO - A
 BOUL ORELY - LAURENCE ARCHITECT

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