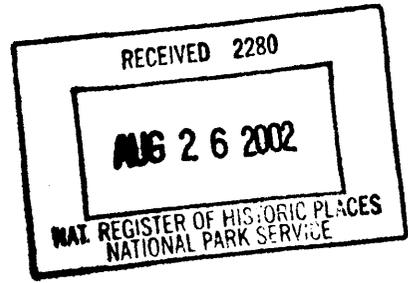


(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Tansill House

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 1612 North Guadalupe Street
CITY OR TOWN: Carlsbad

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A

STATE: New Mexico CODE: NM COUNTY: Eddy CODE: 015 ZIP CODE: 88220

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination
 request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
 x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally
 statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jan U Biella
Signature of certifying official

8/22/02
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
10/10/02

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	5	1 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	4 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	5	5 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: DOMESTIC: single dwelling

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: vernacular

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION BRICK; STONE
WALLS WOOD; STONE
ROOF SYNTHETICS
OTHER

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-11).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1898-1906

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1889; 1901; 1906

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Robert Weems Tansill; Mary E. Tansill

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: William H. Ellice and Ernest H. Every, builders

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-12 through 8-18).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-19 through 9-20).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 1.749 acres

UTM REFERENCES

Zone	Easting	Northing
1 13	572257	3590305

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-21)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-21)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Historic Preservation Division Staff

ORGANIZATION: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

STREET & NUMBER: 228 East Palace Avenue, Room 320

TELEPHONE: 505-827-6320

CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe

STATE: NM **ZIP CODE:** 87501

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS see attached USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle, Carlsbad East, New Mexico

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-22 through Photo 23)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Rob J. and Mary V. Kamermans

STREET & NUMBER: 1612 N. Guadalupe

TELEPHONE: 505-887-2188

CITY OR TOWN: Carlsbad

STATE: NM **ZIP CODE:** 88220

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

The Robert Weems and Mary E. Tansill House is a one-and-one-half story, wood-frame, cross-gabled house, with a large porch dominating its west and south elevations. Constructed in ca. 1898¹, the house was occupied by Robert Weems and Mary E. Tansill in 1901. Tansill modified the dwelling by enclosing the southeast corner and east porch to create a solarium. Attached to the north side of the residence is a small, side-gabled summer kitchen that now functions as a guesthouse. The nominated property includes four additional outbuildings, all of wood-frame construction and dating from the Tansill period. Despite the introduction of new plantings and a small number of stone masonry elements, the house retains a high degree of its historic and architectural integrity reflecting the Tansill's ownership of the property.

Site

The Tansill House, at 1612 North Guadalupe, is situated on a rectangular, tree-shaded lot, at a deep setback from the street. The house faces south onto an irrigation ditch outlined with mature pecan trees and is surrounded by lawn and stone perimeter gardens. The property occupies approximately 1.75 acres of Lot 4, Block 8, of the La Huerta Subdivision, once a separate community located north of Carlsbad, now incorporated within the city's limits. The landscape of the surrounding area is composed of level terrain populated with large homes dating between the 1910s and 1950s.

A curving gravel drive, outlined with a low stone masonry wall, gives access to the property. A separate stone wall outlines the property's edge along Guadalupe Street. Composed of random coursed stone, the wall is topped with broken bits of rock and divided into two sections by entry pillars. Between the wall and the house is an open grassy area dotted with singular and grouped plantings of cottonwood, mulberry, white cedar, red cedar, and catalpa trees. The attractive proportions of the house and its tree-shaded setting, lends the property the appearance and feel of a small estate.

Exterior

The Tansill House is a one-and-one-half story, wood-frame dwelling, on a cross-axial plan with moderately pitched intersecting gables at each elevation. Erected over a brick foundation, the house is sheathed in coursed wood shingles painted white on its first story and gable ends and covered with a modern, composition shingle roof. The dwelling has over 4,100 square feet of living space, including five bedrooms, two 3/4 baths, and a

¹ Based on the value of the transactions in the chain of sales detailed below, it is most likely that the house was constructed between 1898 and 1901. An undocumented reference attributes the construction of the Tansill house to William H. Ellice in 1888 or 1889. It is doubtful, however, that the home would have been erected at such an early date in the history of Carlsbad, and in fact it appears that title to the lands on which the house was to be erected was still in the possession of John A. Eddy on 10 July 1891 when his patent (Patent Book A, page 75) for 629 acres in the area was recorded. Eddy sold lots 2, 4 and 6 in block 8 of the La Huerta subdivision to William H. Ellice on 17 July 1893 for \$1726. Ellice, in turn, sold the same lots to Ernest H. Every as trustee for John Gilbert Compton on 21 August 1893 for \$863. The three lots are conveyed back to Ellice by Every (again as trustee for Compton) on 2 June 1898 for \$863. Finally, Ellice and his wife, Marjory, sold two of the three lots (numbers 4 and 6) to Robert W. Tansill on 1 July 1901 for \$1,500.

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

parlor, library and formal dining room. The house is approached by a brick walkway leading to a set of stone masonry steps leading to the front porch. With its shingle coursing and exposed rafter ends, the vernacular house displays a modest influence of the Craftsman style.

Principal Façade

The south elevation is the principal façade and main entry to the dwelling. This elevation is symmetrically divided into two sections on the first floor, with the west section composed of an open porch and east section of a glassed-in solarium that continues partially along the east elevation (see Photo 1). The house is entered through the original wood panel and half-glass door. To either side of the entry are modern fixed glass lights. West of the entry is the open porch that continues around the west elevation. The porch is formed by a continuation of the hipped roof and supported by square posts. The windows along this section consist of one-over-one, double-hung units. To the east of the entry is the exterior door leading to the solarium. A continuous band of four-light, wood-frame, casement windows illuminate the solarium. Below the windows is wood wainscoting displaying a pattern of recessed rectangular panels. Above the entry is one of the four intersecting gables of the house. Pitched at a lower elevation than the corresponding east-west gables, the south gable contains a group of three, diamond pattern casement windows (see Photo 2).

East Elevation

The solarium dominates the east elevation of the house and is of the same appearance as the house's façade (see Photo 3). The solarium terminates near the northeast corner of the house, where it joins a solid section of shingle-sheathed wall pierced with a one-over-one, double-hung window. The gable above is illuminated by three, 16-light, wood, casement windows, with the north window sheltered by a metal awning. Above the windows the gable is ornamented with a "sunburst" pattern of radiating vertical board (see Photo 4).

West Elevation

Facing Guadalupe Street, the west elevation continues the wrap-around porch of the façade, with the porch posts in single form except at the corners where they grouped as two (see Photo 5). The west elevation along the first floor displays a symmetrical placement of two, one-over-one, double-hung windows providing light into a library and bedroom. The west gable is similar in treatment to its companion to the east with a series of three, 16-light, wood-frame windows, and the decorative sunburst pattern.

North Elevation

The north elevation has a small, side-gabled addition grafted to its exterior (see Photos 6 & 7). The addition, formerly a summer kitchen and now a guesthouse, is composed of a rectangular plan, side-gabled volume sheathed in shingles and erected over a brick foundation. The north face of the guesthouse has a centered entry

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

accessed by a wood panel and six-light door. To either side of the entry are single, two-over-two, double-hung windows. The east gable end, looking in the bedroom, contains a single, two-over-two, double-hung window, while the west gable end, has a fixed, four-light window over the bath and a one-over-one, double-hung window situated where the addition joins the hipped roof of the original house. The northeast corner of the main house reveals a symmetrical placement of three, one-over-one, double-hung windows providing light into the kitchen. The gable above is similar in ornamentation to the south elevation, with the exception that the center window opening contains an air conditioner unit. Attached to the northeast corner of the house is a wood trellis of unknown date of construction.

Interior

First floor

The interior of the house reveals a typical floor plan of the period that has been modified only slightly for contemporary use. All the walls are finished with plaster and narrow oak wood floors cover each room of the first floor. Moving counter clockwise from the south, the front door opens to a rectangular plan living room. A brick fireplace painted white with a brown tile outer hearth is situated along the west wall. A large opening in the east wall gives passage to the formal dining room. This room contains a long dining table and brick fireplace crowned with a carved wood mantelshelf and surrounds. Decorative wood wainscoting and bead pattern crown molding enhance the room. A wood and glass door located at the southeast corner opens to the solarium. Adjacent to the door are original one-over-one, double-hung windows ornamented with molded trim. Appointed with stuffed chairs, a table and bookshelves, the Solarium provides a casual gathering place for the family. A four-panel wood door located at the north end of the solarium leads to the kitchen, a square plan room featuring a mixture of modern and historic fixtures and appliances. Historic elements include tongue-and-groove wainscoting and a wood and glass dish cabinet finished with crown molding. West of the living room are two rooms nearly identical in size that function as a library and bedroom, respectively. The library displays a corner fireplace ornamented with a wood mantel and surrounds.

Attic

To the north of the living room fireplace is a door giving passage to a single flight of stairs to the attic living quarters. The balustrade along the staircase opening is made of delicate turned balusters and square newel posts with capitals. The attic space contains a landing and four rooms of similar size and one bathroom. Each room is accessed through a wood "cross-and-bible" panel door ornamented with carved surrounds and oval disk corner blocks. The ceiling of each room slopes according to the pitch of the gable; floors are finished with pine board.

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

Contributing Ancillary Buildings and Structures

Across the grounds of the Robert Weems and Mary E. Tansill House are scattered a number of ancillary buildings that contribute to the history and context of the property (see Figure 7-1). The contributing resources were constructed during the period of significance and have retained their historical integrity.

Privy

Northeast of the house and set against the fence of the current property line is a wood privy. The former three-seat privy is made of lapped horizontal board topped with a side-gabled roof covered with cedar shakes (see Photo 8). Oriented to the south, a crude "cross-and-bible" type wood door gives access to the interior. Although constructed during Tansill's ownership, the privy was moved to this site after they sold the residence.

Large shed

Southeast of the privy is a gable-front shed and flat roof side-drive (see Photo 9). Both are joined and made of lapped horizontal board and roofed with rolled asphalt. The front-gable shed is set on a stone foundation and accessed by a plank door. Both spaces date from the Tansill period and are currently used for storage.

Small shed

Farther southeast is a separate small shed made of lapped horizontal board and erected over a stone foundation (see Photo 12). Revealing a front-gabled plan, the shed was most likely built during the Tansill's ownership and now used for storage.

Pump house

A small pump house is located near the "panhandle" area of the southeast corner of the property. The side-gabled structure is composed of wood and is plastered across its walls with concrete. The pump house faces south and is accessed by a four-panel wood door.

Trees

A number of mature specimen trees date to the Tansill's ownership of the house and contribute to the history and setting of the property. Although not included as contributing resources to the nominated property, the historic vegetation includes a 100-year-old mulberry and trumpet vine in front of the entry to the house; a 80-year-old white cedar near southwest corner of the property; a 90-year-old mulberry near the center of the east property line; a 70-year-old Siberian elm at northeast corner of the panhandle; a 70-year-old Siberian elm in

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

front of the pump house; a mature planting of pecan trees along the ditch berm on the south side of the property; and a 100-year-old red cedar and cottonwood near the southwest corner of the house.

Noncontributing Resources

There are number of resources, while historic, that do not fall within the period of significance to the Tansill's ownership of the house. Most of the noncontributing resources are constructed of masonry and thought to have been built during the Merchants' ownership of the property during the 1940s. The masonry resources reveal a similar type of design and construction that was prevalent during this period. Though noncontributing, the masonry resources do not detract from the historic significance of the house or the contributing secondary buildings.

Garage

Located northeast of the house and at the end of the gravel entry drive is a c.1940s garage. The two-car, rectangular plan structure is composed of random rubble masonry capped with a stone cornice across its west elevation (see Photo 10). The garage doors are of a modern, roll-up type. To the north is a carport made of wood and of recent construction.

Cistern

A large cistern structure is located southwest of the sheds. Constructed during the 1940s, the cistern reveals a massed form of three masonry walls, each of a rectangular plan and composed of irregular coursed rubble topped with a concrete cap (see Photo 11). Between the upper and middle walls is an open area that is used for perennial plantings.

Garden, Border, and Entry Walls

A series of low masonry walls composed of random coursed rubble and constructed during the 1940s, are situated throughout the grounds of the house. These walls serve as planters and borders along the driveway and the west property line. Although the walls possess integrity of design and materials, they do not fall within the period of significance.

Perimeter Wall

The current owner constructed a tall perimeter wall along the panhandle section of the property. Composed of random coursed rubble stone, the wall harmonizes in design and materials with the other stone masonry features.

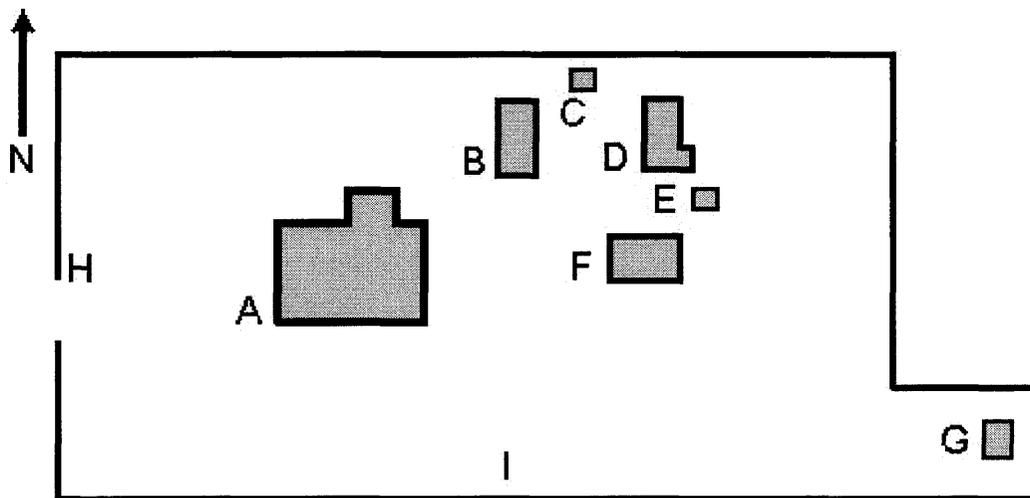
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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

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Figure 7-1 Sketch Map of Tansill Property (not drawn to scale).



Legend:

Contributing Resources

- A: Main house and summer kitchen
- C: Privy
- D: Large shed
- E: Small shed
- G: Pump house

Noncontributing Resources

- B: Garage
- F: Cistern
- H: Entry wall *
- I: Perimeter wall

* Because of their small scale and extensive placement within the yard, the 1940s masonry garden and border walls are not depicted on the map. These walls are of the same date of construction and connect physically to the more visible entry wall and, therefore, are treated as one noncontributing structure.

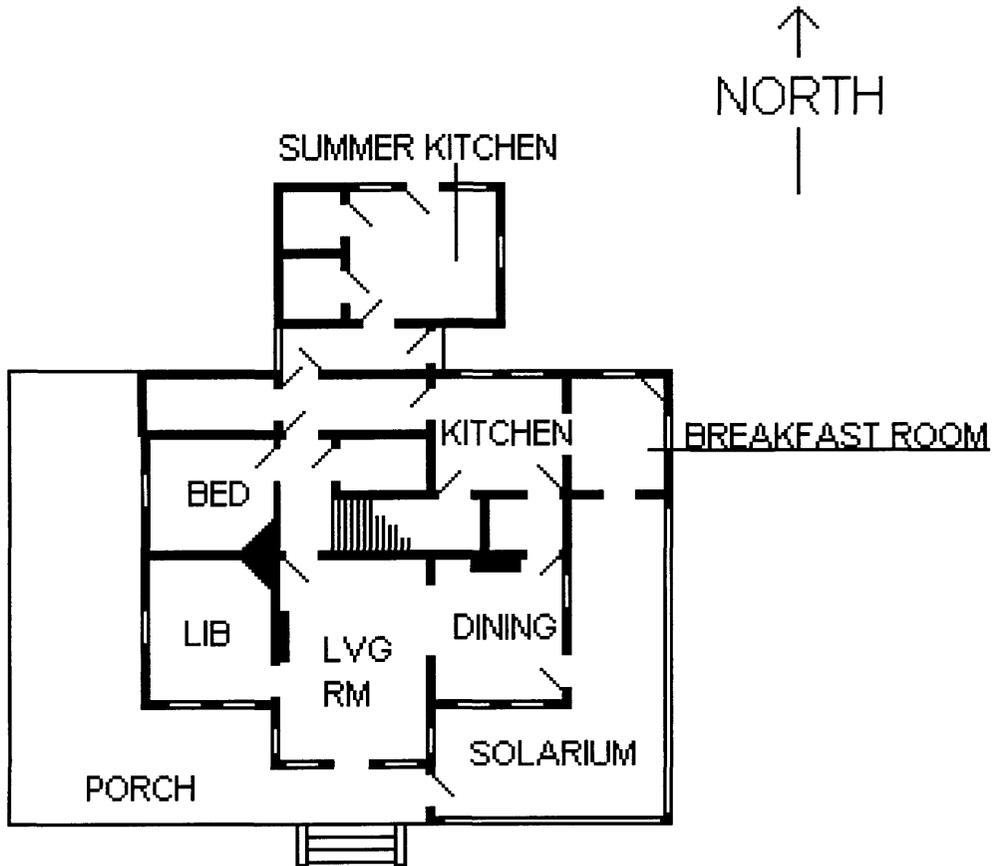
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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

Figure 7-2 First Floor Plan of Tansill House (not drawn to scale).



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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 12Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

The property at 1612 Guadalupe Street in the La Huerta suburb of Carlsbad, New Mexico is historically significant as the home of Robert Weems Tansill and his wife Mary Elizabeth Motter Tansill. The Tansills were pioneers in the development of the lower Pecos River Valley, assisted in the planning of the town of Eddy (now known as Carlsbad), and were instrumental in initiating, financing and promoting the corporate irrigation companies that produced the extensive system of dams, reservoirs and canals that today comprise the Carlsbad Irrigation District.² The house in La Huerta, which is the property in New Mexico most directly associated with Robert and Mary Tansill and the last of their residences in the country to have survived, is nominated under Criterion B as the property that best preserves evidence of their pioneering efforts to transform the lower Pecos River Valley into a southwestern agricultural Mecca and to promote the curative aspects of the regions climate to health seekers nationwide. The Guadalupe Street property retains its integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, design, feeling and association and as such is representative of the suburban residential development that occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In this regard, the property is also nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion A for its association with Exploration/Settlement in New Mexico.

Robert Weems Tansill was born in Prince William County, Virginia in 1844. Tansill was the grandson of Parson Mason Locke Weems, author of the first biography of George Washington and fabricator of the tale concerning the inability of the father of the country to tell a lie, and the son of Col. Robert Tansill, a prominent participant in the Mexican War, member of Admiral Perry's envoy to Japan and Confederate veteran. Young Tansill, however, was geographically severed from his strong family ties to the South at the outset of the Civil War, when his maternal grandparents removed him to Illinois. There he grew to maturity and met and married Mary Elizabeth Motter, a native of the town of Clayton, Illinois (see Figure 8-1). It was in Illinois that he established his lifelong reputation as an entrepreneurial maverick by transforming a railroad commissary business (where he was credited with being the first person to supply meals aboard a train³) into a booming mail order cigar manufacturing business with factories in Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

Tansill was a millionaire several times over by 1886 as a result of his innovative use of marketing, distribution and profit-sharing methods, as well as the national popularity of his 5-cent Tansill's Punch cigars. The Tansills constructed a lavish Chicago mansion at 332 Dearborn Avenue that was lauded as "one of the most handsomely appointed homes in the city."⁴ It was at this time, however, that Tansill's health began to decline. By 1888 a confirmed diagnosis of tuberculosis and his doctor's strong advice to relocate to a drier climate, convinced him to retire from the day-to-day management of the cigar business and investigate opportunities in the emerging communities of the Rocky Mountains. While staying in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Tansill was convinced to consider a move to the Pecos River Valley of southeastern New Mexico. There, he was told, his

² The Carlsbad Irrigation District was recognized as a National Historic Landmark on 19 July 1964.

³ Asbury Park, NJ, newspaper. 22 July 1894.

⁴ Pecks [Milwaukee] Sun, 17 December 1887.

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
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entrepreneurial acumen, which continued to drive him despite his poor health, might find a worthwhile outlet in the form of irrigation-based agricultural development.

Traveling by rail to the end of the line in Toyah, Texas, and from there by means of a, "train of twelve wagons loaded with people, provisions and camp equipage," Tansill arrived at Charles B. Eddy's Halaguena ranch, which occupied the future site of Eddy (later Carlsbad), New Mexico, in 1888.⁵ Whether by chance or by design, Tansill's encounter with C.B. Eddy and his business partner, Pat Garrett, was the catalyst that produced one of the most ambitious irrigation engineering ventures in the interior of the American West. Eddy's and Garrett's incipient attempts to channel water from the Pecos River to the untilled but highly fertile flat plains that surrounded it convinced Tansill that irrigation could transform seemingly valueless land into highly productive agricultural acreage; a principal that was already being put into practice in southern California.

Tansill, Eddy and Garrett formed the Pecos Irrigation & Investment Company with the, "goal of constructing large, complex irrigation systems at several locations along the lower Pecos Valley."⁶ Tansill then returned to Chicago to mothball his Dearborn Avenue home, collect his wife and youngest son, two-year old Henry Motter Tansill, and embark on an expedition to raise venture capital. Returning to Colorado Springs, Tansill sold \$40,000 of stock in the new company to fellow millionaire James John Hagerman, owner of important silver mining interests in Pitkin County, Colorado, as well as railroads and iron mining ventures in the Midwest. With Hagerman now holding controlling shares, the Tansill, Eddy and Garrett venture was renamed the Pecos Irrigation & Improvement Company (PI&I).

By 1891 the size of the corporate investment in the Pecos Valley project had grown to more than \$1.5 million. Concurrently, Robert and Mary Tansill assisted in planning the grid of lots and naming the principal streets in the town that was springing up on the west bank of the Pecos. Mary Tansill is also credited for coining the name of Eddy for the town in lieu of the proposed Halaguena, which both Tansills believed to be too Spanish sounding to attract Anglo settlement of the area.⁷ (Mrs. Tansill's talent for both nomenclature and marketing would be put to the test again in 1899 when she encouraged associating the purported curative effects of a local mineral spring with the famous Karlsbad spa in Eastern Europe. True to the bias the Tansills had previously exhibited in naming Eddy, Karlsbad was Anglicized as Carlsbad.)

Spurred by his convictions and his initial success in attracting capital to the valley, Tansill demonstrated by his own improved physical condition that the region had one of the healthiest climates in the country and embarked on a personal campaign to boost settlement of the region. In 1891 the Tansills toured the western United States from Arizona to Alaska. The written record that resulted from his numerous interviews with reporters for newspapers in Denver, Phoenix, Albuquerque, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Tacoma gives evidence of a highly organized and strategic effort to promote investment and immigration to

⁵ Eddy Argus, 4 June 1891.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Eddy Argus, 4 November 1895.

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

southwestern New Mexico. Tansill also leveraged the power of his vast cigar marketing apparatus to the advantage of the Pecos Valley projects by regularly contributing stories about the promise of health and agricultural wealth in the region to *Tansill's Punch*, his innovative, free-distribution comic magazine and cigar-marketing tool.

While Tansill's promotional campaign was being planned and executed, he and his associates also launched a number of important ancillary corporate projects in and around the Pecos Valley. Chief among these was the building of the Pecos Valley Railroad, locally known as the Peavine, which connected Eddy with Pecos, Texas, and provided the essential link that would allow the agricultural products made possible by irrigation to be transported to national markets. (In 1899 Tansill and his partners completed a major northern spur to the line with a terminal in Amarillo, Texas). Of equal importance were construction of Avalon Dam and the initial network of canals and laterals that made the first local deliveries of water possible in 1890. This was followed by the construction of McMillan Dam in 1893, which was planned to vastly increase the water storage capacity of the corporate irrigation system. Both dams were among the longest and highest dams to be constructed in the United States in the late 19th century. They are also considered to be two of the first rockfill dams with earthfill facing in the country.⁸ Tansill's own personally financed development projects at this time included construction of the \$30,000 Masonic Block in Eddy and development of a 760-acre model farm located nine miles southeast of Eddy.⁹ Known as Tansill Farm, this property was ultimately sold to Col. J. B. Overmeyer of Chicago for \$100,000 in 1895.¹⁰

In 1893 a series of misfortunes began to plague the Pecos Irrigation & Improvement Company. The financial crash of that year greatly constricted available financing and a flash flood on the Pecos destroyed both the Avalon Dam and the unfinished McMillan Dam. Following the flood in 1893, J.J. Hagerman personally financed the reconstruction of both the Avalon and McMillan dams, however, his interest in the lower Pecos Valley was beginning to wane. In 1895, knowing from his personal statements that Tansill was "a Pecos Valley man" who could "live no where else long," Hagerman traded the suburb east of Eddy known as Hagerman Heights to Tansill in exchange for a block of commercial property in Colorado Springs. Hagerman then refocused his energy and investments to irrigation projects north of Eddy near Roswell. Also in 1895 Charles Eddy parted company with Tansill and the other directors of the PI&I and relocated to El Paso, Texas. (Pat Garrett had sold his interest in the irrigation scheme several years earlier.)

At the same time Pecos Valley farmers began to express their frustration over the pace of development that had been retarded by natural disasters and the movement of capital away from the Eddy area, and the difficulties they encountered in identifying and bringing to market appropriate local crops. Their formation of an advocacy group, named the Pecos Water Users' Association, heralded the eventual federal intervention in the valley's irrigation operations that would be undertaken by the newly formed United States Reclamation

⁸ Carlsbad Irrigation District, NR revised nomination. 28 February 1996: Sec 8:5.

⁹ Roswell Register, 28 January 1892.

¹⁰ Eddy Argus, 26 April 1895

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Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House
Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

Service.¹¹ In 1886 the Tansill's eldest, Robert Weems Tansill, Jr., who was also a Pecos Valley pioneer and manager of his father's cigar business, died in Eddy at the age of 26.¹²

Despite these setbacks, the Tansills remained committed to the irrigation scheme and to Eddy, which was rechristened Carlsbad on 23 May 1898. When Hagerman's shift in investment focus forced the bankruptcy of the PI&I that year, Tansill was appointed receiver of the corporation. In 1901 the company reemerged through his efforts as the Pecos Irrigation Company with Francis G. Tracey at its head. Tansill remained optimistic that the division of the irrigation system into northern (Roswell) and southern (Carlsbad) areas of responsibility would result in economies that would guarantee the financial success of both.¹³ Acting on this optimism, on 1 July 1901, the Tansills purchased 25 acres in the La Huerta suburb north of Carlsbad that included a house built on a speculative basis by two Englishmen, William H. Ellice and Ernest H. Every, who were acting as trustees for John Gilbert Compton of Derbyshire, England.¹⁴

La Huerta, which translates as the orchard or the garden in Spanish, was planned as a 1,500-acre suburban residential district with homes for prosperous residents on five-acre irrigated lots (see Figure 8-2). With streets that were 100 feet wide and water ditches on both sides to irrigate shade trees, local residences predicted the suburb would, "soon rival the famous Riverside in California."¹⁵ The Tansills remodeled the relatively new house upon its acquisition and created a solarium by enclosing portions of the spacious porch that surrounded the building. The house in La Huerta symbolizes the commitment the family had made to the Pecos Valley and their initial faith in its future. In 1892 the Tansills had planned to build an elaborate summer home in Colorado Springs with the intention of making it their permanent summer residence, but they abandoned those plans when Mary determined her heart could not tolerate the high altitude.

Tansill, however, would not live to see the success that the reorganization of the PI&I promised. He succumbed, not to tuberculosis, which the Pecos climate helped him hold at bay for more than 13 years, but rather to heart failure that felled him in the library of the La Huerta house on the morning of 29 December 1902. Following his death, Mary Tansill continued to support the newly reorganized corporation. She repeatedly provided necessary financing to replace flood damaged elements of the valley's system of dams and canals and keep it operative. Her efforts continued for the next four years by which time she was convinced, like the farmers of the area, that federal management was necessary to provide both the financial and engineering expertise the massive project required to succeed.

Traveling to Washington, D.C., in 1905, Mary Tansill spent three months and a large amount of her personal fortune in lobbying the government to allow the new United States Reclamation Service to purchase

¹¹ Carlsbad Irrigation District, NR revised nomination. 28 February 1996: Sec 8:3.

¹² Pecos Valley Argus, undated.

¹³ First National Bank of Eddy, NR nomination. 1 March 1971: Sec 8:3.

¹⁴ Warranty deed, 1 July 1901. Eddy County Deed Book 5 page 285.

¹⁵ Rocky Mountain News, 5 June 1892.

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the dams, canals and laterals of the Pecos Irrigation Company. She returned to Carlsbad, with a contract from the government's Reclamation Fund for \$186,000, thereby preserving for the county the benefits that irrigation had long promised.¹⁶ Possibly exhausted by these efforts, Mary Tansill sold the house and acreage in La Huerta in 1906 to John Green Ussery, a local rancher. She returned to the Wilmette suburb north of Chicago where she died on 29 December 1939, thirty-eight years to the day after her husband. Although no longer residing in Carlsbad, the Tansill's son Henry, who took the name Robert Weems Tansill II after his brother's death in 1896, remained active in the management of the Pecos Irrigation Company. His children continued an association with the company until it was sold to the Delta Drilling Company in 1981.

Today, the Robert Weems and Mary E. Tansill house in La Huerta remains a tangible symbol to the tremendous personal efforts both individuals made to transform the desert of the lower Pecos River Valley into an important agricultural section of the state. While portions of the original 25 acres purchased by Tansill in 1901 have been sold off, and several small garden structures, a two-car garage with car port and a pump house have been added to the remaining 1.75 acres, the Tansill house still largely retains the form and appearance that resulted from the alternations they carried out. The La Huerta neighborhood of Carlsbad has itself also retained the character of the prosperous garden suburb planned in the final years of the 19th century. The Tansill House meets Criterion B as the property most closely associated with the important role Robert Weems and Mary E. Tansill played in developing Carlsbad and the lower Pecos River Valley. It also represents an important phase in the development of southeastern New Mexico between 1888 and 1906, when the vision, investments and unprecedented engineering endeavors of a few private entrepreneurs paved the way for the young U.S. Reclamation Service to ultimately complete one of the West's most sophisticated and complex late 19th century irrigation projects. Therefore, the property also meets Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with key events in the history of New Mexico.

¹⁶ Southeastern New Mexico Historic Society. *Eddy County New Mexico to 1981*. Lubbock, TX: Craftsman Printers, Inc. 1982: 172-175.

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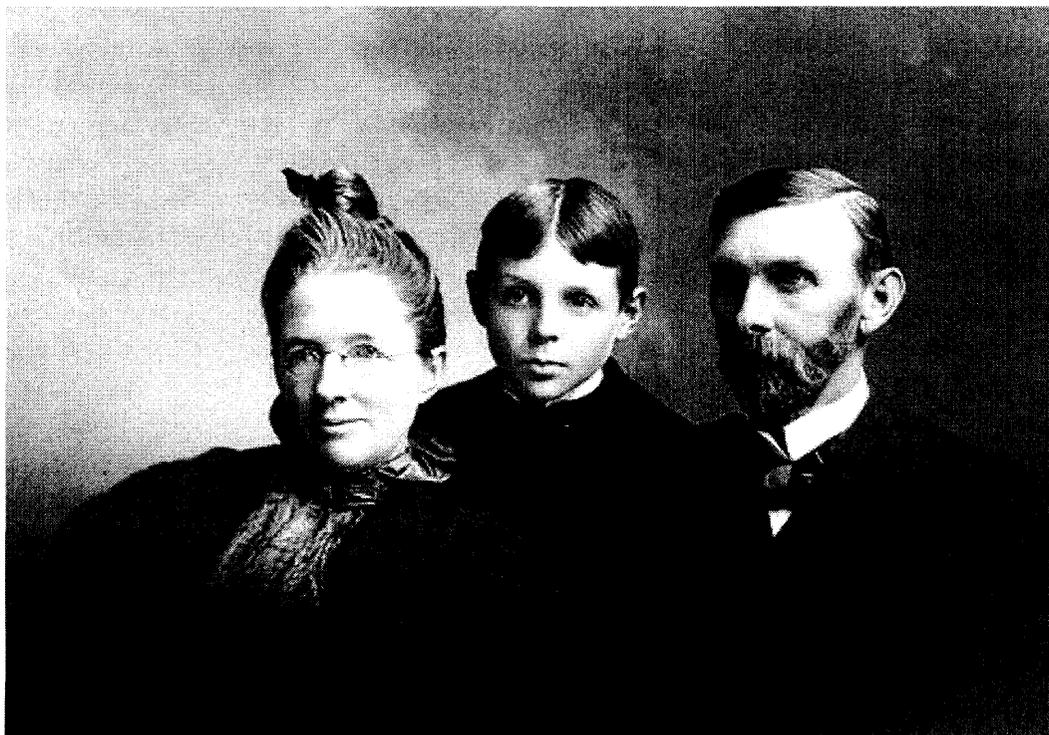
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Figure 8-1

Robert, Mary E. and Robert Jr. Weems, ca. 1889 (courtesy Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado).



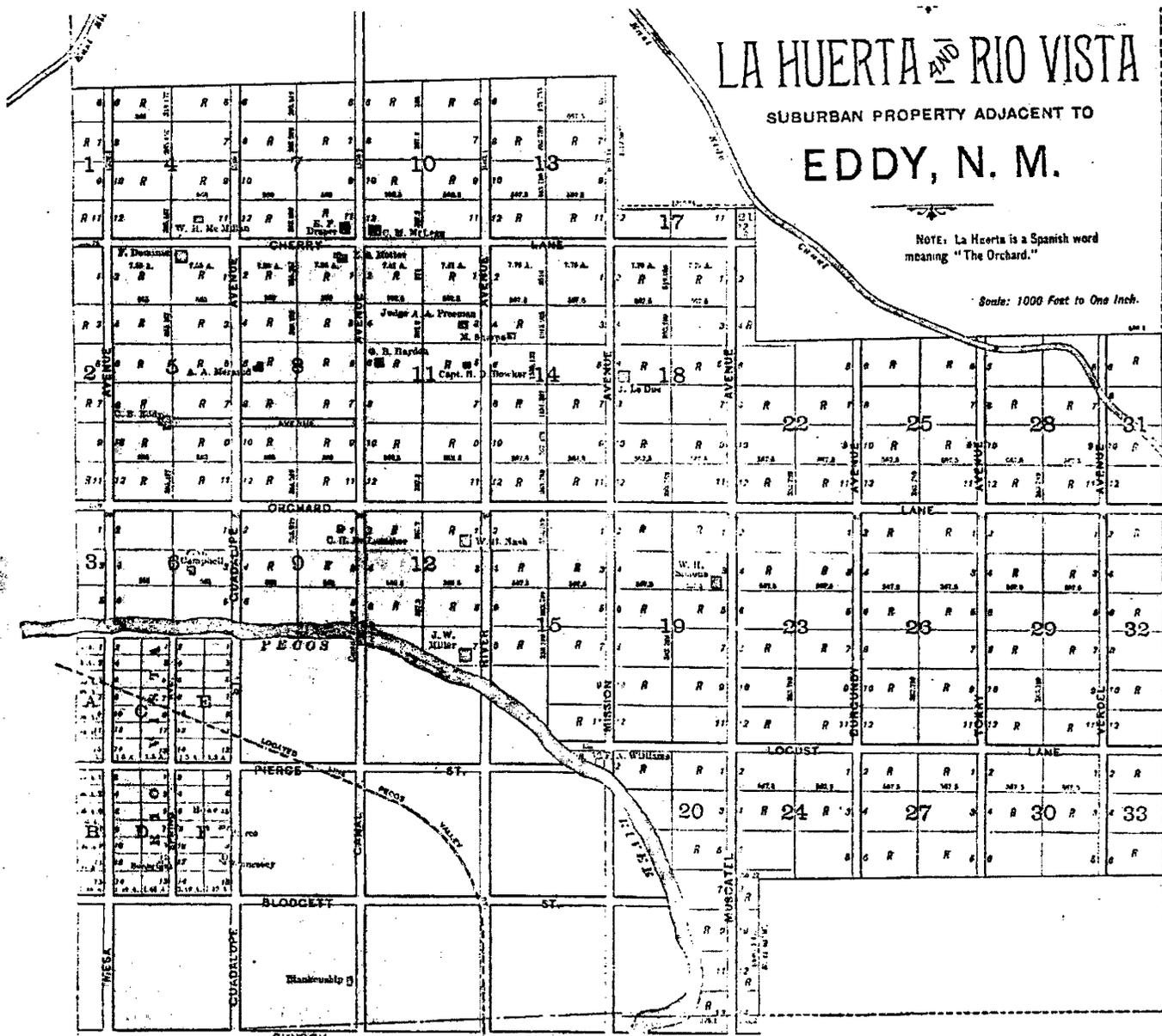
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Figure 8-2 La Huerta and Rio Vista Subdivisions



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Deed Transfer 21 August 1893 – William H. Ellice to E. H. Every, lots 2, 4 and 6 Blk 8. La Huerta Subdivision, Eddy. Deed book 2, page 548. Eddy County Courthouse, Carlsbad, NM.

Deed Transfer 2 June 1898 – Ernest H. Every to William H. Ellice, lots 2, 4 and 6 Blk 8. La Huerta Subdivision, Eddy. Deed book 5, page 222. Eddy County Courthouse, Carlsbad, NM.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes 1.749 acres of land located on Lot 4, Block 8, La Huerta, Eddy County, New Mexico, beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 4; thence south along the west line of said lot to a distance of 197'; thence east a distance of 437'; hence north a distance of 42'; thence west a distance of 64'; thence north a distance of 155'; to the north line of said lot; thence west along the north line of said lot a distance of 373' to the point of beginning of the tract of land herein described.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary of the nominated property includes a portion of the original lot that Tansill acquired in 1901 and that has been historically associated with the house and contributing resources during the period of significance.

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PHOTO LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Tansill, Robert Weems and Mary E., House

1612 N. Guadalupe

Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico

Photographer: James Hare

April 21, 2002

Negatives located at Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe

Photo 1 of 12

South/main façade

Camera facing north

Photo 2 of 12

South gable end

Camera facing north

Photo 3 of 12

East elevation/solarium

Camera facing west

Photo 4 of 12

West gable end,

Camera facing east

Photo 5 of 12

West elevation

Camera facing northeast

Photo 6 of 12

North elevation

Camera facing southeast

Photo 7 of 12

Summer kitchen/guest house addition

Camera facing southeast

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Photo 8 of 12
Privy, facing north
Camera facing north

Photo 9 of 12
Large shed
Camera facing east

Photo 10 of 12
Two-car garage
Camera facing northeast

Photo 11 of 12
Cistern
Camera facing northeast

Photo 12 of 12
Small shed
Camera facing east