

Celebrating Santa Fe Since 1926

The Old Santa Fe Association (OSFA) is one of the nation's oldest community preservation groups, with a 90-year record of advocacy and accomplishment. Since its beginning in 1926, OSFA has helped to preserve the authenticity of architectural heritage and cultural traditions of one of the nation's most historic cities.

In its founding statement, the original 60 members declared:

“We, the undersigned, do hereby organize ourselves into a permanent body to be known as the Old Santa Fe Association, for the purpose of working for the preservation of Old Santa Fe, and of guiding new growth and development and advancement in material welfare, in such a way as to sacrifice as little as possible of the unique charm and distinction of this city, born of age, tradition and environment, and which are Santa Fe's most priceless assets.”

Advocating for Santa Fe

It all began in April 1926, when a group of Santa Fe artists and writers joined with other community leaders to prevent the development of a Chautauqua-like “summer culture colony” on land located near present-day St. John's College. OSFA, along with La Union Protectiva, the Rotary Club, other community groups, and “at least half of the city's population” convinced the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council to deny the land sale. In that victory, OSFA preserved not only that site for local purposes, but also Santa Fe's unique culture and traditions, which, they argued, needed no such Chautauqua-like enrichment.

Also in **1926**, OSFA members worked to make all of the celebrations in the annual Santa Fe Fiesta more open and free to all residents, including the first citywide Burning of Zozobra. The first Historical/Hysterical Parade was initiated by OSFA, with floats and parodies of local issues and events.

In **1946**, an OSFA-led community coalition defeated a plan to build a highway directly through downtown Santa Fe, thus saving not only the historic Plaza, but also the revered *Santuario de Guadalupe* and nearby neighborhoods.

In **1948**, with founding member John Gaw Meem at the helm of the City Planning Commission, OSFA helped draft the city's first Master Plan.

OSFA's leadership made Santa Fe a pioneer in enacting an historic preservation ordinance in **1957**. The city's landmark Historic Districts Ordinance was one of a handful of such laws in the nation at the time.

In **1968**, OSFA and the National Park Service saved the historic *Barrio de Analco* from urban renewal by having it named a National Historic Landmark.

In **2009**, an OSFA-led coalition successfully changed the State Historic Districts and Landmark Act of 1964. The revised law, “the most important state preservation legislation in 45 years,” provides for a collaborative process between the state and cities of New Mexico to protect historic districts, including state capital-outlay projects that may fall in such districts.

Watching Out for Santa Fe

What is different about OSFA? OSFA is a volunteer-led, member-funded nonprofit that works with other historical and preservation groups, as well as neighborhood organizations and civic groups, to advocate for preservation. It does not acquire, manage, or preserve historic buildings, as does its related nonprofit, the Historic Santa Fe Foundation.

OSFA's role is to be the watchdog and champion of the city's code governing historic neighborhoods, city character, and architectural integrity. By city ordinance, OSFA has a dedicated position on the Historic Districts Review Board. Its members continue to serve on this important board.

Over the years, OSFA members have served on, and often chaired, virtually every board, committee and commission of the city and county of Santa Fe; officers and members frequently appear in testimony before City Council.

OSFA accomplishes its work through working in alliance with other community groups, regional officials and governing bodies. Circulating petitions, organizing letters to the editor, e-mail alerts to members, and presenting educational events are other ways that OSFA accomplishes its mission.

Educating Santa Fe

OSFA hosts forums and other events throughout the year highlighting a range of topics of interest to our members, and to the community. From archeological projects to new publications on Santa Fe's history, OSFA reminds our friends and neighbors of the very special nature of our city and its unique culture and traditions.