

# De Vargas Street House “The Oldest House”

De Vargas Street House located at 215 E. De Vargas Street on the eastern side of Old Santa Fe Trail in Santa Fe, New Mexico within the Barrio De Analco Historic District, is one of the oldest buildings in America.

The Oldest House rests on part of the foundation of an ancient Indian Pueblo dating from around 1200 CE. This pueblo was once inhabited by a tribe from the Tano speaking tribes of the northern part of the territory. Sometime around 1435 CE, this tribe abandoned their village, moving on to other sites farther south in search of water, better fields or hunting grounds. In 1598, Don Juan de Onate led a party of Spanish settlers into the area in search of a suitable place to establish a permanent settlement. Accompanying Onate were Tlaxcalan Indian warrior auxiliaries. The small band seems to have gravitated to their own ward, or barrio, soon known as El Barrio de Analco at the same time La Villa Real de Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asisi was founded in 1608..

The Tlaxcalans found the river site met their every need. The river provided ample water for irrigation of cornfields to the south of the San Miguel Church and an abundance of sweet tasting stream trout to grace their tables.

During the Great Pueblo Rebellion, the Indians of the Barrio de Analco suffered greatly. Their homes were sacked and burned with a heavy loss of life. The survivors retreated across the river and joined the Spaniards in a spirited but successful defense of the Villa. The Spanish withdrew from the Villa with the Tlaxcalans. Only a few of the first Tlaxcalans are believed to have returned to Santa Fe after the reconquest by Don Diego de Vargas in 1692-1693.

Between 1709-1710 the “Oldest House” became temporary residence to Spanish Territorial Governor Chacon Medina Salazar, Marquez de Penuela, while repairs were being made to the San Miguel Church.

By the late 1800s, genizaros or acculturated plains Indians such as the Apaches and Navajos, as well as the families of Spanish soldiers were living in the Barrio. Up until the 1920s the Oldest House was continually occupied by people representing all the cultures of Santa Fe.

## Barrio De Analco Historic District

The National Historic Landmark Barrio De Analco Historic District in Santa Fe, New Mexico is one of the oldest residential neighborhoods of European origin in the United States. Originally settled in 1620 by the Spanish, Barrio (or District) de Analco suffered major destruction during the 1680 Great Pueblo Revolt. The Spanish rebuilt Analco beginning in 1692 during their recolonization of New Mexico. The buildings of Analco are in the Spanish Pueblo and Territorial styles that reflect the merger of Spanish, Indian and eventually American building techniques. In the seven adobe brick buildings that make up the Barrio de Analco Historic District visitors can see how working-class Spanish colonists, Tlaxcalan Indians and other American Indians lived in Santa Fe during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

The Spanish first settled Santa Fe during the winter of 1609-1610 as they sought to “civilize” the North American continent and to expand their New World empire. Mirroring other Spanish colonial settlements of the era, the colony in Santa Fe was a defensible fort and village set around a central plaza. Also featured in this itinerary, the Santa Fe Plaza became the commercial, social and political center of the community. Fearing attacks from the local Pueblo Indians, many high-ranking Spanish officials and citizens built their homes around the plaza because it was a central defensible area.

As Santa Fe prospered, the original settlement expanded to include growing neighborhoods on the opposite side of the Santa Fe River from the plaza. By 1620, the newly constructed Chapel of San Miguel was in place and a suburb, the Barrio de Analco, began to grow. The Tlaxcalan Indian word, “Analco,” means “the other side of the river,” which distinguished this barrio from the neighborhood on the plaza side of the Santa Fe River where government officials and other prominent citizens resided and attended mass. The Chapel of San Miguel provided laborers, artisans and Tlaxcalan Indian servants with a place to worship in the growing suburb.