

## **Amelia White Park**

### **The Park**

No one seems certain about when the area became a park but drawings by the Meem, Zehner, Holien & Associates architectural firm, dated 8/18/54, show the central rose garden laid out much as it exists today.

Sisters Amelia Elizabeth and Martha White deeded the property to the Santa Fe Women's Club and Library Association in May 1959. The gift from the sisters was to be the site of the future Woman's Club clubhouse. The association deeded it back to Amelia White in 1961. Five years later, on June 19, 1966, Amelia White deeded the park to the city of Santa Fe. The city council was informed on June 29, 1966 "title to the Korean Conflict Memorial Park on Old Pecos Road had been received..."

The deed that transferred the park to the city included the "express condition" that it be used "only for the purpose of a public park ... and that flowers and vegetation will be cultivated and irrigated." The Korean Conflict Memorial is a tall, pale column at the east end of the park. At one time, a plaque on the base declared the park was a memorial to participants in the Korean Conflict. In keeping with the European design of the park, a fountain at the west end balances the memorial. Lore has it that the fountain was only turned on a few times because wind gusts blew the water away from the fountain.

The park is small, just under three acres. It is classified by the city as a passive park, which means there are no regularly scheduled activities, and special events are by permit only. A passive park is low maintenance, featuring native trees, grasses and wildflowers. The central rose garden was a project of the Santa Fe Garden Club between 1975 and 1985 and again between 1992 and 2002.

From 1986 through 1989, Amelia White Park hosted Shakespeare in the Park, a popular, free summer theater program. More than 12,000 people attended the 21 performances in the 1989 season.

The National Park Service granted Santa Fe National Historic Trail certification status to three Santa Fe sites, the Plaza, Fort Marcy (Prince Park) and Amelia White Park, in April 1995. In the certification agreement, the city of Santa Fe "committed to the sensitive management of them for public use and enjoyment."

### **Amelia Elizabeth White [1878 – 1972]**

When "Miss E" died at age 94 she had enjoyed many good things in her long life and had used her considerable resources to benefit many others. She was born in New York City to Horace White, a newspaper mogul, and his second wife, Amelia Jane. Her life began on Manhattan's Upper East Side, led her to Bryn Mawr, to Guatemala and Europe, and then to the battlefields of World War I where she and her sister Martha Root White served as volunteer nurses.

Miss White first came to New Mexico in 1913 to visit a friend in Wagon Mound. In 1921 she and her sister arrived in Santa Fe. Within a short time they had built the

fabulous estate *El Delirio*, now the School of Advanced Research. The sisters rode extensively, establishing a number of bridle paths on their large property, some of which exist today and are owned by the city. The Irish wolfhounds and Afghan hounds they bred at Rathmullan Kennels were known nationally.

During World War II Elizabeth served as regional director of the Dogs for Defense program New Mexico and she was the first Santa Fe President of the NM Kennel Club.

Miss White's philanthropy was wide spread, including a gift of the first animal shelter as a memorial and the Garcia Street Club in 1945.

### **Art and Artifacts**

#### Korean Conflict Memorial

The tall, pale column at the east end of the park once had a plaque explaining its purpose. The plaque was stolen a year after the park was given to the city. It was not replaced until September 2003 when VFW Post 2951, through Commander William Coppola, performed much needed maintenance, installed a new plaque and rededicated the monument to honor the soldiers who served in Korea. The city has no documentation on the original plaque so the VFW had these words inscribed on the replacement plaque:

*"This monument is dedicated to all Veterans who served in the Korean War. With special recognition for those who died in action and those who are still classified as missing in action."*

#### Korean Conflict Memorial – Modern

An additional war memorial was placed in the central rose garden and dedicated on July 27, 2007, 54 years after the Korean Armistice was signed.

The memorial is mounted on a large rock slab with bronze bas-relief faces, anonymous images representing people who served in that war, waged from 1950-1953. Local sculptor Kim Crowley designed the memorial. The memorial bears the words:

*"Remember those Santa Feans who went to fight in the mud, the snow and choking dust of a strange land: Korea 1950-1953"*