A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST ——— The Watrous House

I am certain that we would all agree that in our present world of rapid change it would be advantageous for us to pause occasionally to re-examine our own ideas and contributions as well as those of our contemporary scene in general. The past, through its ideas and material remains, offers us one of the best means of accomplishing this goal. "A Glimpse into the Past" will seek to present significant examples of New Mexico's architectural past. The regional as well as non-regional characteristics of these older buildings should enable us to approach our own architecture with a new understanding and humility.

The first of these historic buildings is the well-known Watrous house located on the Mora River near the small northern New Mexico community of Watrous. The adobe house was constructed around 1841, by Samuel Watrous, but the present structure is a result of many additions and modifications. In its detailing and general plan, this house is a classic example of the Territorial Style of Architecture. Characteristic of early houses in the Southwest is the basically "U" shaped plan of the structure which is gained by a "Zaguán" which in this house serves to completely separate the west and east wings from each other. What stamps this building as territorial is the fascinating manner in which a rather sophisticated Greek Revival detailing of the windows, doors, and fireplaces has been played off against the underlying folk tradition of the structure itself.

Credit: Drawings and photographs of this house were made available for publication through the kindness of John Gaw Meem and the American Historical Building Survey of the National Park Service. The drawings were made in 1940, by Raymond Lovelady, under the direction of Mr. Meem and Leicester Hyde.