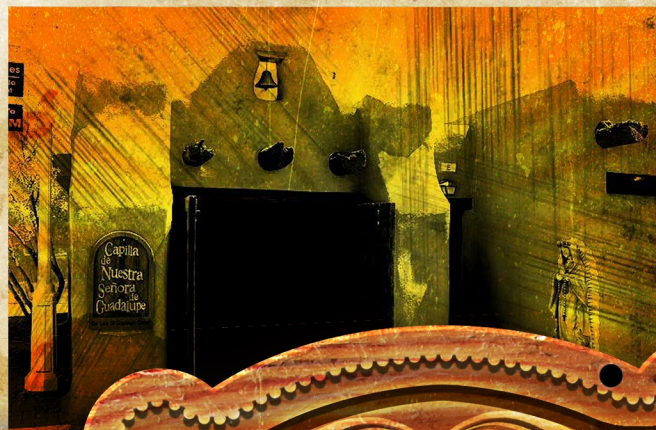




REPORT

LA CAPILLA DE NUESTRA
SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE CHAPEL

INVESTIGATION



*Albuquerque
New Mexico*

NM015

**SOUTHWEST
GHOST HUNTERS
ASSOCIATION**



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Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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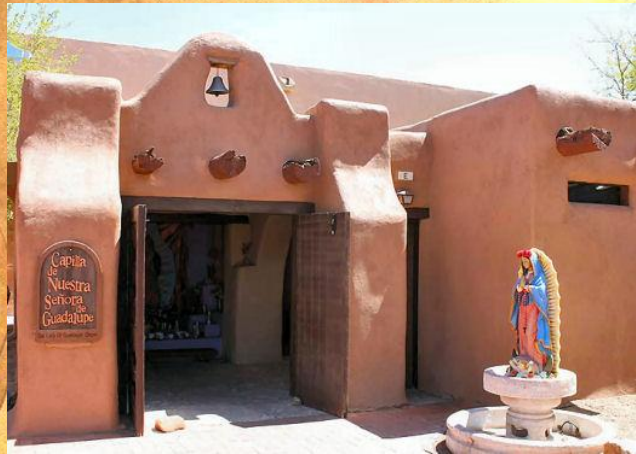
Part 1: Location Information

La Capilla de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Chapel

Old Town Albuquerque, NM

Part 2: Location History:

Sister Giotto was the person responsible for designing and building La Capilla de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, which was erected in 1975. It was part of a larger project, an art school which she had established in 1969. The Sagrada Arts School eventually consisted of studios, apartments, the chapel, and even a restaurant called Joseph's Table.



Sister Giotto was born in 1927 and raised in Chicago where she attended high school at Chicago's famous Art Institute. When she was 17, after listening to the boys coming home from WWII and praying for them daily, she had a conversion experience. She then entered a

Dominican convent and studied in Florence, Italy eventually receiving her M.F.A. from Wisconsin. After returning to her alma mater in Florence, she held the position of Dean of the Art Department at Villa Schifanoia for 8 years.

In 1965, the Vatican urged that schools of sacred arts should be set up wherever possible and soon afterwards Sister Giotto got permission to set up such a school. She chose to come to New Mexico because "it had its own indigenous religious art...no other place has this."

She found a piece of land north of Old Town Plaza that was owned by one of the investors in the Sheraton Old Town, Mr. Wolfson. She fixed up the property after getting a 30 year lease from Mr. Wolfson. He charged her rent of \$1/year.

Eventually she bought the property.

Part of the school incorporated the remains of an old fort: five rooms at the front of the 2-story apartments were a civil war era barracks. They became studios. Sister Giotto's brother-in-law, George Sandoval, had a furniture building and woodworking shop where the High Noon now stands. She slept in his shop for a while, and then moved to the convent next to San Felipe church.

Finally, construction on the chapel was started. Volunteers did all of the work, many of them from Mexico. As construction on the chapel slowly continued, two unique incidents occurred in her favor. First, Mr. and Mrs. Kaiser from Tucson presented her a portfolio of Ansel Adams' work. She sold it to the Smithsonian for \$20,000. This gave her the money to finish the chapel.

Then, a man involved in the construction trade, Mike, was sitting in the bus station in Milwaukee, wondering what to do for the next year or two. He overheard 2 people talking about Sister Giotto's chapel, came to Albuquerque, and ended up finishing the chapel as well as the gift shop in front of it.



Just inside the chapel, on the left, is a beautiful calendar window. According to Sister

Giotto, she wanted to show that contemporary art belongs in a traditional setting. It shows the Feasts of the Virgin and the phases of the moon." The window consists of 3 plexiglass panels. The middle panel can be adjusted for any year, so that in effect it is a perpetual calendar. The benches and inscribed tablets that adorn the main room of the chapel were done in Italy when she was living there by Meinrad Craighead. The Sister carved one of them herself, but the rest were done by Craighead. They were originally carved for a chapel in Italy, but for some reason could not be used there, so they were packed around a lithography press in a crate and shipped to Albuquerque.

Sister Giotto would ring the chapel bells every morning at 6:00 for prayers. Afterwards they would share fresh bread that the Sister had baked in the restaurant.

Although Sister Giotto had got a special dispensation to build the chapel, it was never actually consecrated by the Catholic Church. This explains why the capilla is maintained solely by volunteers.

Part 3: Witnesses

This section identifies the witnesses to the reported activity.

Name	Sex	Connection with reported incident	Interviewed
Julie	Female	Witness	08/13/1999

*Witnesses given aliases are noted by a **

Julie's Account

I once visited the small chapel in old town late one evening to say a prayer for my brother, who was ill. As I walked into the candle lit entrance, I heard a woman softly crying. Her voice was coming from somewhere near the altar which at that time was shrouded in darkness. I strained my eyes and could barely make out the figure of a woman wearing a mourning dress. I then turned my attention to my own business. I kneeled at the shrine for our Lady of Guadalupe and said my prayer. However when I opened my eyes and stood up, I noticed that the woman was gone. The only way out was directly behind me and I am certain that I heard no one pass.

Part 4: Reported Phenomena (General)

This mysterious figure has often been seen seated on the far right bench of the chapel, weeping profusely for some unknown tragic loss. The ghost is dressed in a long black dress, her face concealed by a dark veil. She is often mistaken for a real person, and sometimes ignored, until she mysteriously vanishes.

Part 5: Historical Analysis

In some respects the ghost resembles La Llorona of Hispanic folklore but only in the sense that both ghosts are known to weep. Over the years there have been several speculations on whom or what the ghost is. One popular notion is that the ghost is crying for the victims of TWA flight 260 that crashed into the Sandia Mountains on February 19th, 1955. All 13 passengers and 3 crew members onboard were killed in the crash. According to this variant, the ghost appears on the anniversary of the crash.

Another theory is that the ghost only appears in times of tragedy. If there is a fatal crash on the interstate or some other catastrophe, her apparition appears and mourns the loss.

Part 6: Investigation/Hypotheses

The few other reported "sightings" are typical of psychosomatic response episodes that are common in poorly lit areas. Additionally, all of evidence that the woman in black is a ghost is loosely based solely on the fact that she mysteriously vanishes.

The chapel has a south doorway which is often left open in the warmer months. A person seated on the west bench could easily exit the building without attracting the attention of someone kneeling at the shrine near the entrance. It should also be noted that while at the shrine, one does not have a clear view of the chapel's main room. After the sightings at the chapel were thoroughly explained, the location was added onto the ghost tour of Old Town. Not because it was a "haunted" location but because they needed to add 15 minutes onto the length of the tour.

It is also important to note the interviews with C. Polston and B. McCombs (the original owners of New Mexico Ghost Tours) concerning the pre-2003 Ghost walk of Old Town. On the tour it was implicitly stated that the chapel is not haunted. The first story of the "Lady in Black" was told to them by a former manager of Maria Teresa's Restaurant who had an encounter there while

drinking wine. She was not certain if what she saw was a ghost or not, but thought that they should check out the location anyway. Impressed with the beauty of the chapel and the similarities between the stories of the Chapel ghost and La Llorona of Hispanic folklore, they added the chapel as a stop on the ghost tour. Before entering the chapel, they told the story of the Lady in Black, how it related to La Llorona and New Mexico folklore. The tour guests were then taken into the chapel to show them its unique charm and art. Tour guides hired after 2003 often neglected to state that the chapel was not haunted. Stories were often confused or misquoted which lead to the myth building of this particular legend.

Despite this, there are many people who believe that a ghost appears there and even a few who insisted that it is not a ghost but Albuquerque's patron saint, our Lady of Guadalupe. There are also other ghost tours that still claim the chapel is haunted, basing their information on extremely poor sources.

The airplane crash theory makes no sense. The crash happened in 1955 while the chapel itself was not built until 1975. The "ghost" as also eluded many ghost hunters who have swarmed over the chapel on February 19th for the past several years.

Part 7: Conclusion

The chapel is not haunted. The accessibility of this site makes it the most investigated location in the State. The ghost stories surrounding this location are the result of myth building that occurs from poor sources to outright exaggerations. Many of these are "backed up" by poor photography which is offered as proof of the "haunting".

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