

Country Life in America



No. VII in a Series

“LOS POBLANOS RANCH”

The Estate of

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Gallatin Simms

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

JOHN GAW MEEM, *Architect*

LOS POBLANOS RANCH, the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Gallatin Simms, lies in the Rio Grande valley five miles from the center of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Rich level fields—four hundred and seventy-five acres of them—are bordered on the west by the Rio Grande whose banks are sheltered by giant cottonwoods. To the east across other outlying property are the Sandia Mountains, a glory of rose and purple at sunset. Los Poblanos was originally a grant from the Spanish Crown extending from the tops of the Sandias to the river. Recently a large acreage extending from the mountain tops down to the edge of the mesa overlooking the valley has been brought back under Los Poblanos' name.

The residence on the ranch was originally an adobe farm house,



In the greenhouses many kinds of chrysanthemums are being developed in a variety of new shades

Photographs and story by LAURA GILPIN



The Spanish tile fountain is on the central axis of the patio in the ranch residence. The rooms are richly furnished with fine Spanish antiques, and fabrics in native designs cover the armchairs and the lounges and floor. A corner fireplace in the dining room, shown in picture below, is a charming feature



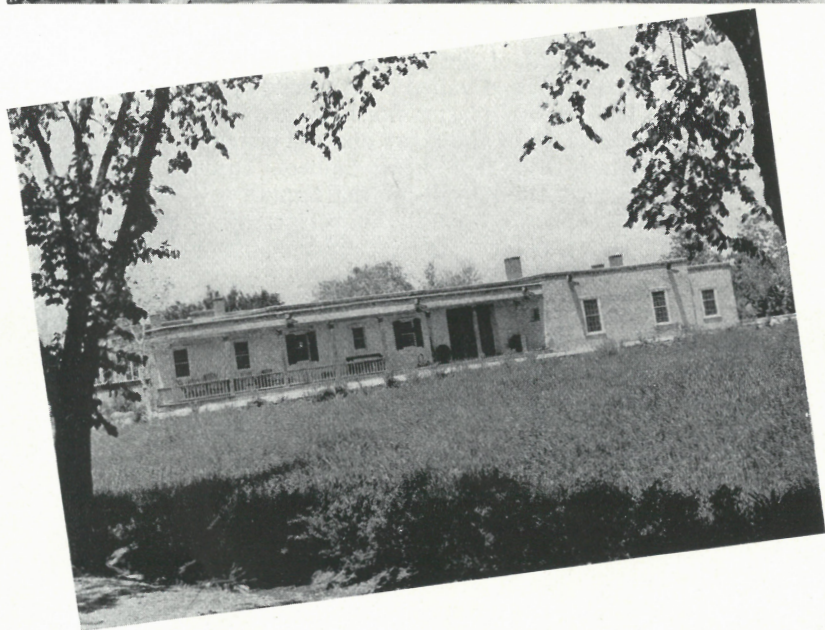
remodeled in 1932 by John Gaw Meem, architect, of Sante Fe. It is now a charming home, based on primitive Spanish Colonial design, and amazingly similar in spirit to much of Modern architecture. An avenue of elms leads to the house and the wide hand-hewn entrance doors open into a patio with its bubbling fountain and colorful tiles. Completely surrounding the patio is a wide porch to which all the rooms have access. The thick adobe walls, their surfaces fashioned by skillful hand modeling, provide deep window and door reveals.

The primitive decorative treatment of the cornice akin to Modern architectural treatment, is repeated and varied on the buildings, porotics and garden walls. The smooth plaster finish on the interior walls is relieved by the glazed tiles of the floors and the elaborately decorated ceilings with their massive hand-hewn timbers. Throughout the whole house much has been made of the texture of the materials employed and the charming decorations are stamped with the character of New Mexico craftsmen, Indian and Spanish alike.





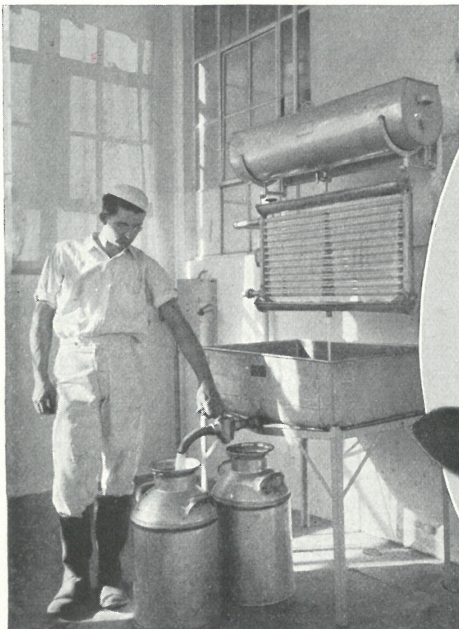
The large hay barn for the Los Poblanos dairy herds surrounded by Mrs. Simm's prize Holsteins. Below: A cowboy with two of the prize-winning cows. One of them is a Holstein Friesian and the other a Guernsey



Spread among orchards and alfalfa fields, the residence is a skillful combination of adobe and Colonial styles. The walled garden has a gate of wrought iron; cobbled paving and potted plants add color to the attractive retreat

LOS POBLANOS is far more than a beautiful and hospitable home. It is also an experimental farm, and one that is an inspiration to all the farmers in this rich fertile valley which has already been farmed for three hundred years, and perhaps even longer, for the ancient Indians doubtless cultivated corn here long before the white man came. Both Mr. and Mrs. Simms have a far-reaching civic vision in the work they are conducting along several specific lines. In the span of a few years Mr. Simms has transformed his grade dairy herd into a certified, purebred herd of Guernseys. This herd is headed by Convents Triumph 204905 and the herd also includes two productive half sisters, one of them Convents Primrose 2nd. 323664, former world's record holder in butter fat production and New Jersey State champion, and the other Convents A. Fantasy. There is also the well-bred junior herd sire Poblano's Fern's Prince 232398 sired by High Point Prince Maxim whose dam was the famous Quail Roost Fern 389787, the producer in her time of 519.0 pounds of butter fat in the Guernsey Class F test. Mrs. Simms has a herd of Holstein Friesians. In 1932 she brought seventy head of them, representing the finest of the breeding stock from her Rock River Farms in Illinois, where she had been raising Holsteins for twenty-one years and where she built up one of the foremost herds in the United States. With the combined herds of Guernseys and Holsteins Los Poblanos now has quite a large dairy and supplies the city of Albuquerque with a very considerable portion of its milk and cream. Everything about the dairy is completely up-to-date and there is, of course, the most modern equipment. Milking machines are not used, however, as they have proved detrimental to the animals, particularly when the cows are used for breeders. At the present time a large quantity of milk is being imported into New Mexico from Colorado and Los Poblanos is taking the lead in building up the dairy industry in the Rio Grande Valley. They are improving the grade herds of the state by making it possible for the dairy farmers





In a building separated from the cow barn is the milk cooler and the other modern apparatus necessary in an up-to-date dairy



Left: Some of the herd of Holsteins brought to Los Poblanos from Illinois

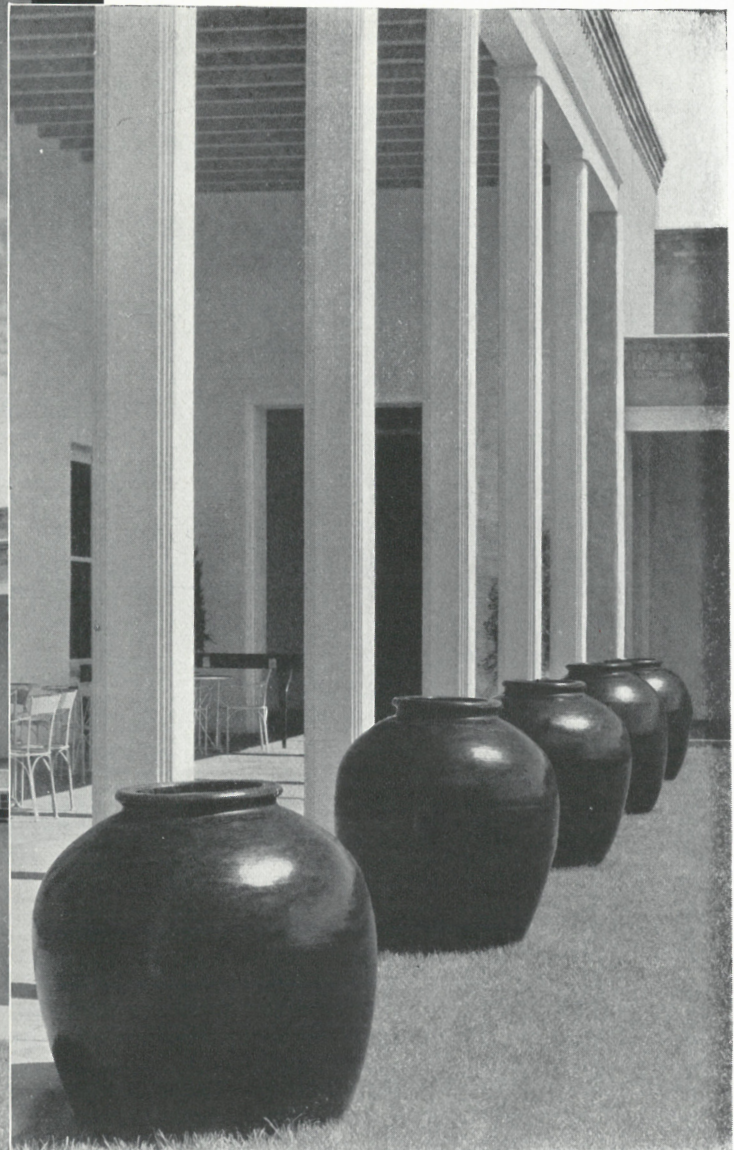
Below: Milking time at Los Poblanos where individual records are kept

to buy purebred bulls at Los Poblanos at the most moderate prices. Los Poblanos has also been experimenting in the fields raising sugar beet seed—a step of the greatest importance, for half of the seed now used in the United States is imported from Europe. This experiment has been so successful that it may lead to the establishment of a sugar beet factory in the vicinity of Albuquerque. The ranch also produces alfalfa, oats, corn, barley, and sugar beets. On the recently acquired addition to the property on the slopes of the Sandia mountains, purebred rams will be raised with the intention of helping the sheep herders of the state improve their flocks.



The cows in the sunlit, immaculate milking barn of Los Poblanos Ranch



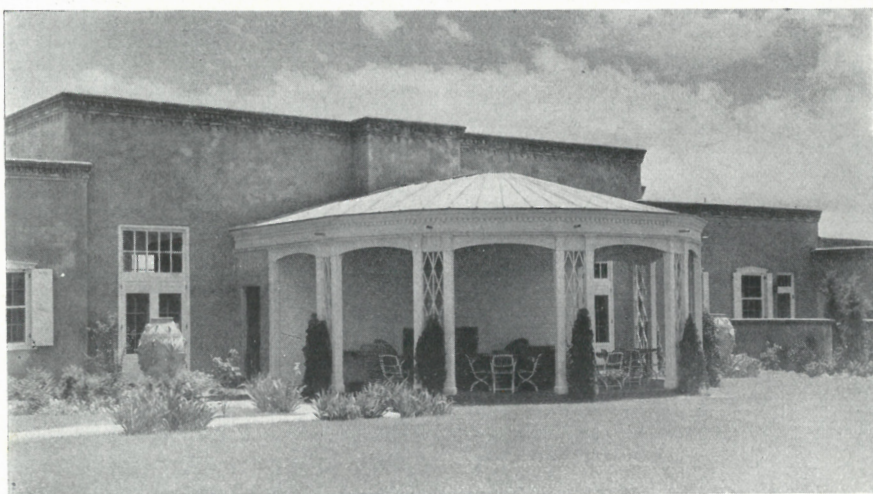


Porticos surrounding the swimming pool of La Quinta successfully combine formal and native architectural styles. Squat, dark urns are effective against the light walls

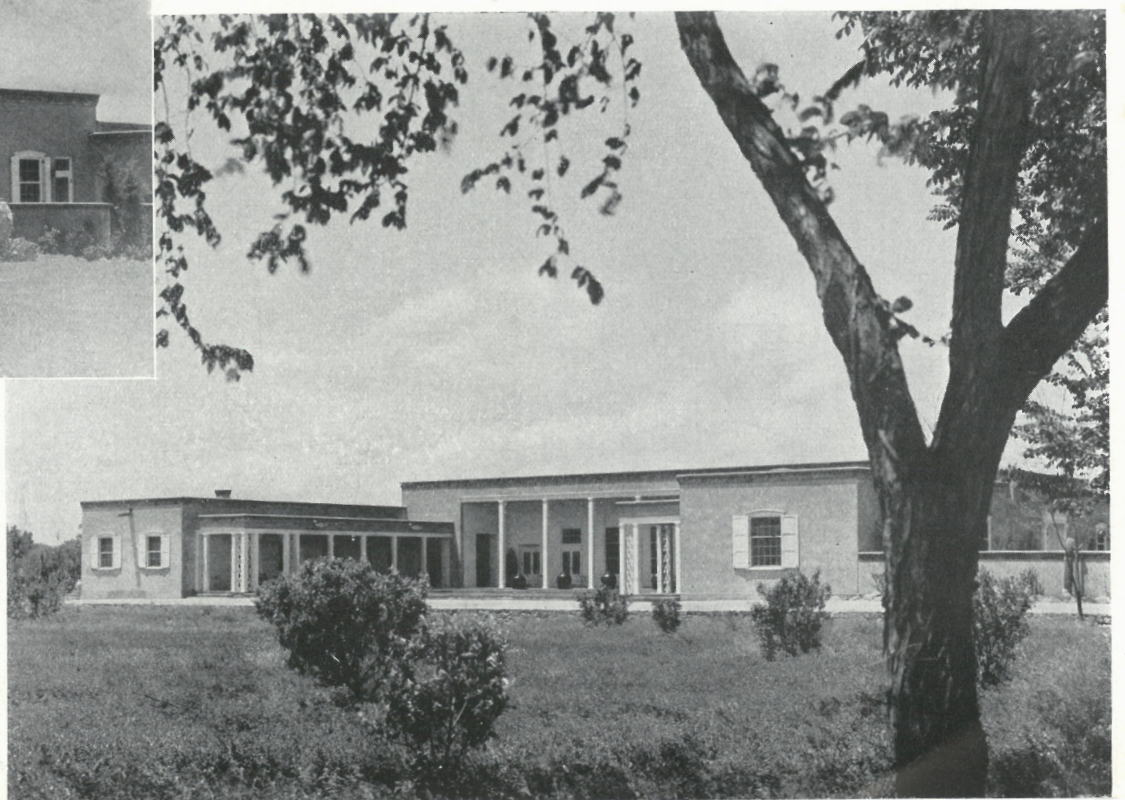
The Simms Recreation House

is generously shared as a
Community Center for Albuquerque

Across from the ranch house, separated by a luxuriant garden, lies La Quinta, a building designed for civil and social purposes as well as recreation—and eventually to house an art collection, the work primarily of Western artists and craftsmen. Somewhat larger than the residence, La Quinta is also more formal in character. Designed in a symmetrical plan around the swimming pool, the patio opens to the east, a wide portico surrounding its three sides and the Spanish tiled pool set in the middle of a velvety lawn. Generally Spanish Colonial in appearance to harmonize with the residence, La Quinta has an even greater Modern feeling with its clean exterior plan and the attenuated pillars of the portico. The north wing contains the library, open to the community, and English Colonial in character, with its paneled fireplace and English furniture. Across the tiled hall is the art gallery



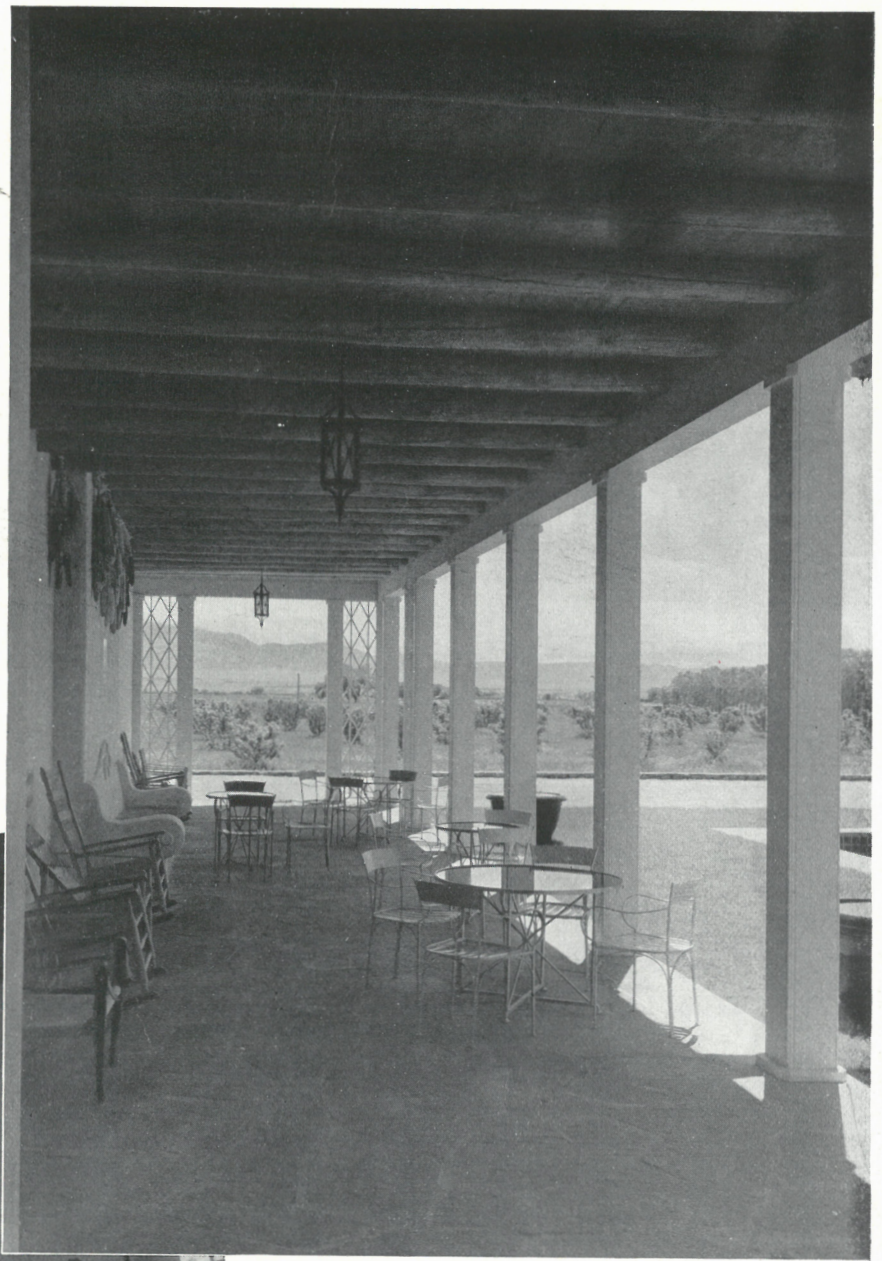
The semi-circular porch at the rear of the lounge faces the luxuriant gardens between the residence and La Quinta. The east facade is symmetrically planned around a wide court and the swimming pool



where, in addition to the permanent collection, frequent exhibitions are held. Here too are fine specimens of New Mexican craftsmanship—hand-carved doors, tiles with native designs, and decorative hand-made tin chandeliers and sconces, that unique craft given us by the Spanish settlers of New Mexico. The west side of La Quinta contains a large lounge, Spanish in feeling, with a brilliant tile dado around the room, and an interesting recessed fireplace. Here are held civic meetings—agricultural and social—lectures and concerts. The south wing contains a suite of guest rooms and a kitchen.

The practical interests of these energetic owners of Los Poblanos are not their only interests. Mrs. Simms is an enthusiastic gardener and is busy with many experiments among the gardening problems she has found in New Mexico. At present she has centered her interests in roses and chrysanthemums, and many varieties of roses bloom luxuriantly during the summer, while her greenhouses in October were a glory of decorative chrysanthemums in many unusual shades and colors. As an active member of the Garden Club, Mrs. Simms shares her knowledge with her club members, and her gardens are a laboratory for the countless new problems in the growing conditions of plants in the New Mexico climate.

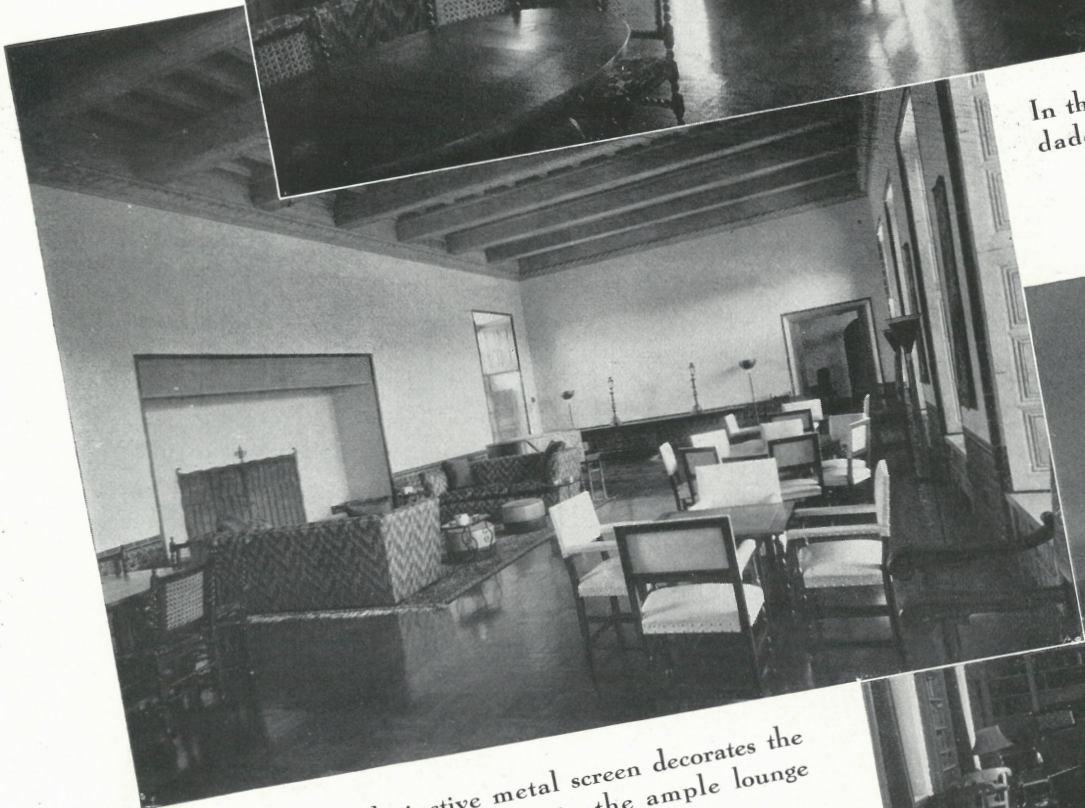
The People's Ranch—for that is the translation of Los Poblanos—is aptly named. Here in the glamorous Southwest, the land of Indians, of the Conquistadores, of Cliff Dwellings, and of landscapes of enchanting beauty, the civic minded and industrious owners of this ranch are building for the future, not only for themselves, but for the people of their entire community—"Los Poblanos."



The Sandia mountains in the east are seen from the side portico



In the lounge one sees a brilliant tile dado and richly panelled shutters



A distinctive metal screen decorates the recessed fireplace in the ample lounge



A north wing of La Quinta includes an exceptionally fine and complete library