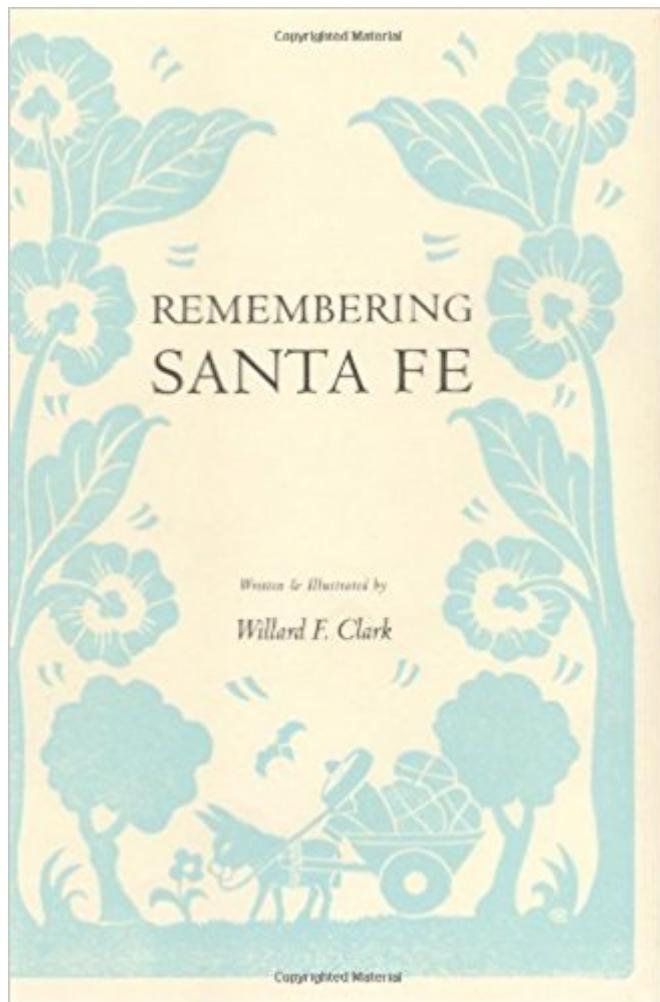


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# Remembering Santa Fe



## Synopsis

Willard F. Clark was a printmaker and artist who greatly shaped the way the rest of the world views old-time Santa Fe, New Mexico. Born in 1910 in Boston, he grew up in Argentina, and studied art during the summers in New York City at Grand Central Station Art School and the Hawthorn Art Academy. In 1928, on his way to California, he stopped in Santa Fe, New Mexico and fell in love with the majestic landscape of the American Southwest. There he started a small print shop and taught himself the craft of printing, cutting his own woodblocks, setting type, and binding small books. Willard Clark developed a graphic style that came to represent early Twentieth-century Santa Fe to many around the world. This collectible reprint of *Recuerdos de Santa Fe, 1928-1943* includes 48 beautiful and original etchings, along with reminiscences from author Willard Clark that capture the old-time feel of Santa Fe, New Mexico. First produced as a limited edition book with 100 signed copies, this edition includes an introduction by the artist's grandson Kevin Ryan.

Remembering Santa Fe makes a perfect gift for those who love Southwest art, an ideal memento of a Santa Fe vacation, or a charming souvenir for anyone interested in the art and artists of the West.

## Book Information

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Willard F. Clark was a printmaker and artist who greatly shaped the way the rest of the world views old-time Santa Fe, New Mexico. Born in 1910 in Boston, he grew up in Argentina and studied art during the summers in New York City at Grand Central Station Art School and the Hawthorn Art Academy. In 1928, on his way to California, he stopped in Santa Fe, New Mexico and fell in love with the majestic landscape of the American Southwest. There he started a small print shop and taught himself the craft of printing, cutting his own wood-blocks, setting type, and binding small books. Willard Clark developed a graphic style that came to represent early-twentieth-century Santa Fe to many around the world.

Willard F. Clark was such a big part of La Fonda on the Plaza in Santa Fe NM history. We recently visited, staying at the hotel discovering the work of this man. Wanting to know more I found it in this cherished book. He was a printmaker and artist who interpreted early Santa Fe through his work. The writing is his own words in a sort of diary form. His early prints of scenes in this most unusual, special city. Delightful art.

For people who enjoy Northern New Mexico today - especially Santa Fe and who want to understand better the creative forces that lead it to become a world renown art colony, this little book offers some brief glimpses into the past. I enjoyed reading Willard Clark's memories of Santa Fe in the 1930's; however perhaps because Clark wrote this many years later toward the end of his life there weren't as many details or as much elaboration as I would have liked. Having lived in Northern New Mexico and visited Santa Fe often, it was interesting to read about some of the

historic places that remain today even though some have been altered by the pressures of time, growth and modernity.

A gift for my sister-in-law. Clark was her great grandfather.

Wonderful find.

I love my purchase but it arrived damaged. A book must be wrapped in bubble wrap (especially corners) when it is sent through the mail. The book is really a good beginning to understanding the feeling of the Southwest. The woodcut examples are really great.

Santa Fe is known for art. Wherever you go downtown or on Canyon Road you see ersatz Georgia O'Keefes, epigonic Frederic Remingtons (plus a few originals), larger-than-life Native American statuary a la Allan Houser (again with a few originals), and tons of Southwestern schlock. The Santa Fe art genre that I most value is the woodblock prints -- Gustave Baumann, Gene Kloss, Kate Krasin, Ira Moskowitz. And Willard Clark. Clark (b. 1910, d. 1992) stopped in Santa Fe in 1928 on his way to California. He fell in love with the area and never left. For his first fifteen years in Santa Fe he made his living as a printmaker and a printer. He then moved to Los Alamos and worked as a machinist for the Manhattan Project. Upon his retirement from that job he returned to Santa Fe. Near the end of his life he began work on a book about his memories of Santa Fe. It took him two years to make the forty-six wood engravings. After Clark suffered a stroke, his grandson finished the printing of the 100 copies of "Recuerdos de Santa Fe, 1928-1943". REMEMBERING SANTA FE is a reprint of that limited edition book. The prints are charming, although they are reproduced here in gray- rather than black-based tones and appear somewhat washed out. My favorite is that of a funeral procession in Truchas, a donkey-drawn wagon carrying the casket (top still open) with a line of black-clad mourners strung out behind it, wending its way down the mountain from the chapel to the cemetery. But I like even better the brief commentary Clark wrote to accompany each print. Here are a few excerpts:<sup>\*</sup> Re the plaza in the middle of Santa Fe, which for most of the twentieth century was the center of a community: "Now the old stores and shops are art galleries, boutiques--you never see anyone you know. The tourists have taken over and the plaza no longer belongs to the people of the village." Clark wrote that more than a quarter century ago; his rueful dismay at seeing it today can easily be imagined.<sup>\*</sup> Re Clark's first rented house in Santa Fe: "Outside plumbing was not unusual at this time. It was not all bad, could be a social experience, though the winter

discourages reading. Had a bath tub in the kitchen with a folding screen around it. Hot water had to be done on top of the wood and coal Black Beauty kitchen stove, this luxury being reserved for Saturday. The heat was the usual little corner fireplaces; snuggling and blankets were popular. This memory also was not all that bad."\* Re Saturday night during Prohibition: "The shop is closed, the moon is full, the dogs are howling, a good old friend drops by with a little home brew for relaxing. \*\*

\* It was bad but it didn't take long before we were really relaxed! At the time, it seemed the thing to do, get the guitar and join the dogs. This, like the home brew, was very bad, but when you are relaxed you do not notice."Around one million tourists now visit Santa Fe every year. If any are curious about what Santa Fe was like before WWII, REMEMBERING SANTA FE would be a good, enjoyable, and relatively inexpensive place to start.

The woodcuts are wonderful, but it's the easy-going memories of Willard Clark that make this book so worthwhile. Remembering Santa Fe is about a time before electronics ruled our lives, before clock and car and superhighway of one kind or another crowded out the figurative and literal open spaces in our lives. But Clark's firsthand graphic and verbal depictions of a bygone era are never sentimental; he obviously loved the life he led in pre-WWII Santa Fe, and we can see why. It was a sweet, authentic life, lived close to nature, close to the people around him, and with art. Generations passing along the secrets of their arts and crafts; fishing in a nearby stream; preparing simple but flavorful food; playing guitar with a friend in the moonlight; working in a field; going visiting; building adobes; all are part of the Santa Fe life that Clark's so lovingly and convincingly recorded. It makes me want to find a time machine and join him there.

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