

A History of the Pullman House in Seton Village compiled by Gary Enos, January 2023

“Seton Village is a National Historic Landmark District in a rural residential area south of Santa Fe. It encompasses a residential settlement and educational facility established in 1930 by Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946), an educator and conservationist best known as a founder of the Boy Scouts of America. The district includes the remains of Seton's 32-room home and other residential and educational buildings constructed mostly between 1930 and 1945.

Seton Village is located approximately 7 miles south of downtown Santa Fe and west of Interstate 25 on County Road 58. The village has a central plaza, ringed by adobe residences and community buildings. To the east of the plaza stand the remains of Seton's 32-room castle, which burned during restoration in 2005. Distinctive structures in the village include two buildings that were built around railroad cars that Seton brought to the site.” [1]

“When Seton began the construction of the first of his three houses here he chose a broad, level spot on the western slope of a row of hills. It was on this plat that the village sprang up with the founding of the summer center of the Woodcraft League. The office, the print shop, the craft shop, the Zoo Lodge, and the other houses were built along a dirt lane which branched to form an oval plaza at its western end. Upon the completion of his first house on the south-eastern corner of the plaza, Seton began his second house, "Lagunita" (Little Lake), on the south-western end of the plaza. This house, which still stands with a few minor additions, is a long, one-story adobe, with vigas, stone chimneys and a small walled patio.

To the southeast of Lagunita, and then to its north and northeast, on the plaza, are three houses, known as the Pullman-car house, the "adobe house," and the "red barn." The first house is built around a Pullman car, and the third around a boxcar, which has since been removed from the inside. The conversion of railroad cars was accomplished basically by plastering the exteriors of the cars with adobe, and the houses still retain their original rectangular shapes.” [2]

“Several guest houses built in the adobe style were constructed around the plaza. These were given such names as the Zoo Lodge, the Submarine, and the 'Dobie House. The Pullman Car House and the Red Barn were built around old railroad cars. This conversion of railroad cars into houses was achieved by plastering the exteriors of the cars with adobe.” [3]

“Pullman cars are railroad sleeping cars that were built and operated on most U.S. railroads by the Pullman Company (founded by George Pullman).” [4]

“On his 71st birthday on August 14, (1931) Seton noted that the “crew is working on the Train Cabins.” Sometime prior to this he had purchased a Pullman car, and he had it sited and leveled in early September. On December 24th, (1931) the first tenants arrived in the Village as a Miss Warfield moved into the Pullman.” [5]

“In 1971, I bought the Pullman House (Fullerton's) to come to from Denver to write reports. The roof shape dates it as being built before 1865, so it is very old. When Susan and her family found out that I owned it, they had to come often so I bought a caboose in Denver and had it hauled down on a flat bed truck. Later, I built a station. Mr. Seton had acquired the Pullman House from the R.R. when they wanted to run a spur from Lamy into Santa Fe, they brought and dumped off many old cars which were cut up and incorporated into the camp houses which were partly occupied by teachers and things like zoos and print shops.” [6]

“When the railroad asked for a right of way across his land, Seton asked only that they deliver a number of railcars to the village. The Pullman House was one of the original 13 homes in Seton Village. The Pullman Car had mahogany paneling, and was cut in half then re-assembled. The railroad cars were hauled in by teams of horses. The original detached garage was used as a blacksmith shop, and there is still some coal on the ground from this use. From about 1952 to 1956, I lived in the house at 11 Seton Plaza (Lagunita) with my mother, Helen Leighton Cannon, and father, Ralph Smyser Cannon. We mainly lived in the house during the summer due to high heating costs in the cooler months. Ernest Thompson Seton lived in Lagunita before Seton Castle was completed. During these years, I rode horses on the Pullman House property which was at that time owned by Maxwell A. and Frances Fullerton. He is listed in the 1950 census as a carpenter, and later retired from railroad employment. She was a bookkeeper for an architect. A Christmas Card which was saved by my mother shows that Lawrence Eugene Smith lived in the Pullman House prior to this, in 1947 as a tenant to landowner Julia Seton. My mother, Helen Leighton Cannon, bought the Pullman House in 1971 from Rosalie V. Archey and Dr. Dorothy Anne Bromme, two ladies who then built and moved into 15 Camino de las Minas. My mother purchased the Pullman House, detached garage, casita, old shed, and 3.42 acres for \$15,000. She paid \$5,000 down and made ten annual payments to Archey and Bromme at 7% interest for the remainder. The sun room extension of the Pullman Car existed when she purchased the property. Some interior decorative painting in the Pullman Car was done by John Bush in 1976. He later served as president and general manager of the Cumbres & Toltec Operating Company from 2012 to 2020. According to John Bush, the architectural concept was based on the works of Salvador Dali, i.e. there is no explanation for why the end of the cabooses is inside of the station. John Bush also stated that the Pullman Car dated to 1879 and that the station's design was inspired by the architecture of the Genesee, New York station. My mother would sometimes live in one portion of the house and rent out the other portion of the house. Some notable residents of the house included Gerald Peters, a Santa Fe real estate developer, and musician Ramblin' Jack Elliott.” [7]

“The Pullman House is located at 13C Seton Plaza, coordinates 35.5981°N, -105.9341°W. Previously, the address was Route 9, Box 77B. During the time that my grandmother and mother owned the property, the telephone number was 505-982-0516. In the 1970s the phone was on a party line (a circuit used by several local subscribers). My grandmother, Helen Leighton Cannon was a pre-eminent geologist [8] and owned the Pullman House from 1971 to 1996. She moved into the Pullman House permanently in around 1974, after her first retirement from the U.S. Geological Survey. The detached garage was located where the cantina is currently situated. There are writings on the inside wall of the old shed indicating that it existed in 1949 and was used as a casita. The Colorado & Southern Railway cabooses #10581 was added in 1973. She purchased the cabooses in 1973 and had it delivered from Denver for a total cost \$7,868. This caboose was likely one of a series of ten built in 1919 and probably operated mainly in Colorado. As photographed in 1974, this caboose had the markings of the Burlington Route, which had purchased the rail assets which included this caboose in 1970. Therefore, the caboose was in service at least until 1970. The caboose exterior was “Chinese red” until about 1977 (as the interior currently is) at which time it was painted tan and green. My grandmother referred to the casita as the “chicken coop” although it is unknown whether it was used to roost chickens. Electricity was run to the casita in 1972 at a cost of \$77 since my father dug the trench for the wiring. Remodeling of the Pullman Car was done from 1973 to 1979, at a cost of \$20,148. During this time, the Pullman Car kitchen and bedroom cabinets were built by a lady carpenter. The porch was added in 1977 at a cost of \$1,807. The replica train station was designed by Santa Fe architect Robert Strader and was built in 1978 and 1979. This project also constructed the vestibule which connected the Pullman Car, caboose, and station. This project included an active solar system

with an indoor swimming pool and roof-mounted solar panels to heat water. This project cost \$58,897. In summer 1983, my grandmother and I brought the railroad luggage cart from the Denver area. In 1989, the Pullman Car bedroom was expanded for use as my grandmother's watercolor painting studio. Construction was by Paul Rieger for a cost of \$10,501. I designed this expansion while studying architecture at Texas Tech. My mother, Susan Cannon Torres, portfolio manager at New Mexico State Investment Council, inherited the property from her mother, Helen Leighton Cannon in 1996 and resided in it until 2022. At the time that my mother inherited the property, it was appraised at \$250,000. She sold the property on July 7, 2022 for \$585,000. My mother referred to the property as "Rancho Relaxo." Projects completed by Manuel Torres after 1999 included:

- demolition of the detached garage,
- expansion of the casita,
- removal of the swimming pool in the station,
- expansion of the bedroom in the station,
- remodeling of the bathroom in the station,
- construction of walls and fencing,
- construction of the cantina, and
- construction of the new shed." [9]

"Ownership of the Pullman House is as follows:

- Ernest Thompson Seton: September 1931 to October 1946,
- Julia Moss Buttrees Seton: October 1946 to May 16, 1948,
- Maxwell A. and Frances Fullerton: May 16, 1948 to April 3, 1968,
- Manuel and Margaret Brown: April 3, 1968 to May 14, 1970,
- Rosalie V. Archey and Dr. Dorothy Anne Bromme: May 14, 1970 to February 17, 1971,
- Helen Leighton Cannon: February 17, 1971 to December 22, 1996,
- Susan Cannon Torres: December 22, 1996 to July 7, 2022, and
- Diana "Didi" Betherum: July 7, 2022 to present." [10]

Photographs of the historic Pullman House in Seton Village are available at:

<https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjzKQb1>

References

- [1] Wikipedia, March 2022; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seton_Village
- [2] National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination: Seton Village"; https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/66000492_text
- [3] Historic American Buildings Survey - Indian Village (Seton Village) HABS No. NM-182; <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/nm/nm0200/nm0207/data/nm0207data.pdf>
- [4] Wikipedia, March 2022; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pullman_\(car_or_coach\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pullman_(car_or_coach))
- [5] Ernest Thompson Seton's Life in New Mexico - Notes taken from his daily Journal and other sources, Jerry Zollars, May 25, 2007.
- [6] Written history of Seton Village; Helen Leighton Cannon, date unknown.
- [7] Recollection of Susan Cannon Torres, April 2022.
- [8] Wikipedia, March 2022; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_L._Cannon
- [9] Recollection of Gary William Enos, January 2023.
- [10] Santa Fe County Clerk, May 2022.