

# The San Miguel Chapel, Santa Fe, New Mexico



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The San Miguel Chapel is believed to be the oldest chapel in the United States and the original walls are still standing. The chapel dates from 1628 or even earlier. It is the centerpiece of the El Barrio de Analco, a national historic district in Santa Fe, New Mexico. El Barrio was, according to lore, founded by a group of Mexican Indians from Tlaxcala (central Mexico). For over four-hundred years, under the rule of Spain, Mexico, and then the U.S., the chapel is dedicated to the Archangel Michael. This chapel is a place of worship to all kinds of people, and it is also a place for celebrations and ceremonies. There is also a sanctified place for Sunday Mass in Latin and English.

At the base of the tower of San Miguel Chapel is probably the richest bell in America. It too, has its own history. In 1536, so the legend runs, the Spaniards were fighting the Moors. Battle after battle was fought and lost by the Christians, until the people vowed a bell to St. Joseph as a gage of their confidence in his assistance. They brought their gold, silver plates, their rings and their bracelets, their brooches, and earrings, and cast them into the melting-pot with the other metals. The bell was cast and in its tone was the richest and richness of gold and the sweetness of sacrifice. It sounded the defeat of the Moors in Spain and then came to ring in the birth of Christianity in Mexico.

I have visited the San Miguel Chapel in Santa Fe with my family, and it is a wonderful place to go and pray. I have got to ring the bell and it has pretty tone. I hope you also will go and visit this beautiful chapel in Santa Fe, New Mexico!