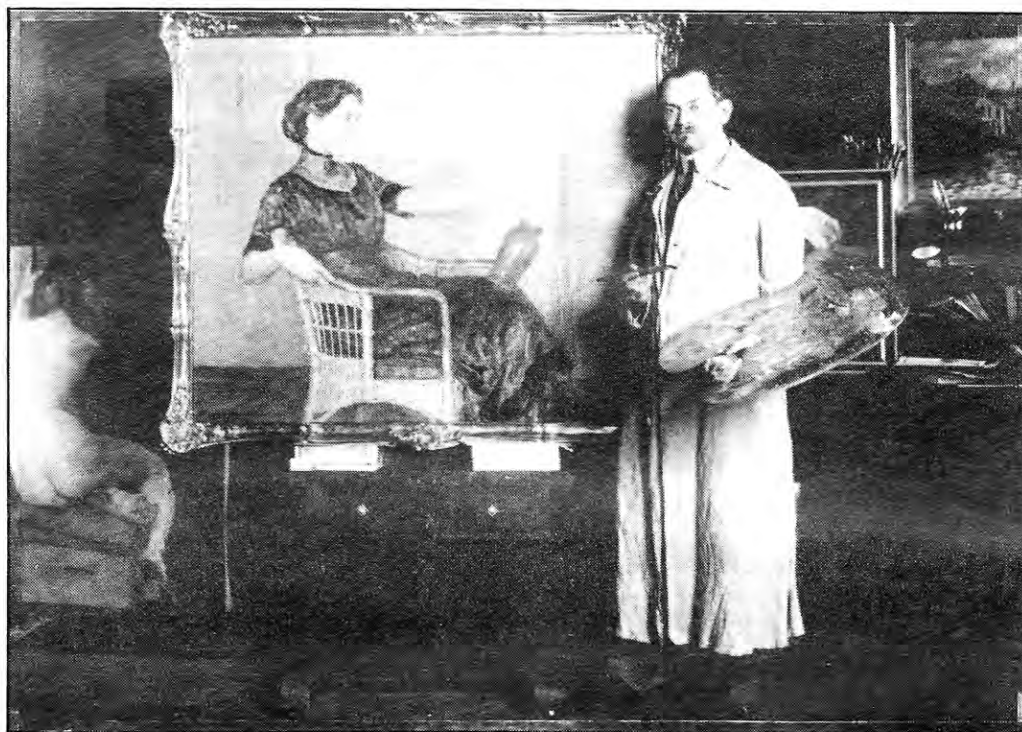


AYER Y HOY en Taos

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and
Northern New Mexico



**TAOS AND THE AMERICAN ART COLONY MOVEMENT:
THE SEARCH FOR AN AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ART**

by Virginia Couse Leavitt

page 3

WINTER 1987

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EDITOR'S PAGE

by David L. Caffey

Virginia Couse Leavitt is the granddaughter of early Taos artist Eanger Irving Couse. Though she was only four years old when E.I. Couse died, Virginia became interested in the artists of Taos through the many stories of old times in the art colony that continued to circulate in her family. Virginia spent summers in Taos as a child and youth, and as time unfolded, her grandfather and his colleagues became a research interest.

A few years ago Virginia traveled to France to re-trace E.I. Couse's steps there--where he had gone as a young art student to study with European masters. While in France Virginia visited three art colonies where Couse had spent time, and she became interested in the art colony movement as it must have developed in the U.S., around the same time or a little later than in France. Thus the feature article of this issue of *Ayer y Hoy*.

The article was originally developed as a presentation for the first New Mexico Art History Conference, held in Taos at the Harwood Foundation last June.

* * *

Residents of the Southwest have a golden opportunity to see a broad survey of some of the best work of Taos and New Mexico artists when the landmark exhibit, *Art in New Mexico 1900-1945: Paths to Taos and Santa Fe*, comes to Denver this spring. The exhibit, organized by the National Museum of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution, includes traditional Hispanic and Native American arts as well as the products of the art colonies that brought many eastern and European trained artists to the area.

The Denver stop is the fourth and final showing for this excellent exhibit of New Mexico arts, developed with assistance from the H.J. Lutcher Stark and Nelda C. Stark Foundation of Orange, Texas. The show will be at the Denver Museum of Art from February 18 through April 19. Two Taos museums have planned a joint field trip to the exhibit in April.

* * *

The Taos County Historical Society welcomes Dr. Herbert Dick and Arthur Wolf as its new President and Vice-President. Both are trained in Anthropology. While a faculty member at Adams State, Herbert Dick spent some ten summers excavating prehistoric sites at Picuris Pueblo. Many Society members have admired Art Wolf's remarkable accomplishments as Director of the Millicent Rogers Museum. He is also currently serving a term as a member of the Board of the New Mexico Humanities Council. Both are wished an enjoyable and productive tenure as T.C.H.S. officers.

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Cover: Walter Ufer with "Portrait of Mary Ufer." Both the painting and the photograph are in the Harwood Foundation collections. Used by permission.

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AYER Y HOY en Taos

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Published semi-annually by the Taos County Historical Society. AYER Y HOY publishes materials of historical interest in Taos County and the northern New Mexico area, including articles of a scholarly nature and informal narratives judged to be of general interest. Editorial contributions are welcome.

AYER Y HOY is mailed to all members of the Taos County Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

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THE TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a New Mexico non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of the historical resources of Taos County and northern New Mexico. Membership is open to any interested person, regardless of residence.

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P.O. Box 2447
Taos, New Mexico 87571

**TAOS AND THE AMERICAN ART COLONY MOVEMENT:
THE SEARCH FOR AN AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ART**

by Virginia Couse Leavitt

ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER, 1898, Bert Phillips and Ernest Blumenschein drove their wagon into the village of Taos for the first time. It was fate, not design, that led them there, but they were both so captivated by the town, its picturesque people and beautiful environment, that it became their spiritual and literal home. Phillips immediately decided to settle in Taos and Blumenschein made plans to return as soon as possible. This early permanent commitment to Taos gave Phillips and Blumenschein the distinction of being the actual founders of the art colony, although Henry Sharp had just spent two summers painting there.

A year after their arrival, Phillips wrote to Blumenschein, who had gone to Paris for further study, saying:

. . . if (our) your, I mean, scheme goes through we can come together better prepared for a mutual aid to each other. You and Butler with new experience of the world and I with the necessary local knowledge including Spanish. We'll be . . . like the group of Barbizon painters and writers. . . (Phillips file, Fenn Archive, letter dated Sept. 25, 1899. Ellis Parker Butler was a writer and friend of Blumenschein.)

It is clear from this letter that Phillips and Blumenschein, having once discovered Taos, intended to form an art colony there. Taos had the perfect combination of elements necessary for a successful colony. The amenities of the town, crude as they might have been, provided the means for daily living, while the nearby Pueblo provided ready access to Indian models. Combined with these two elements was an incomparable landscape and an extraordinary quality of light.

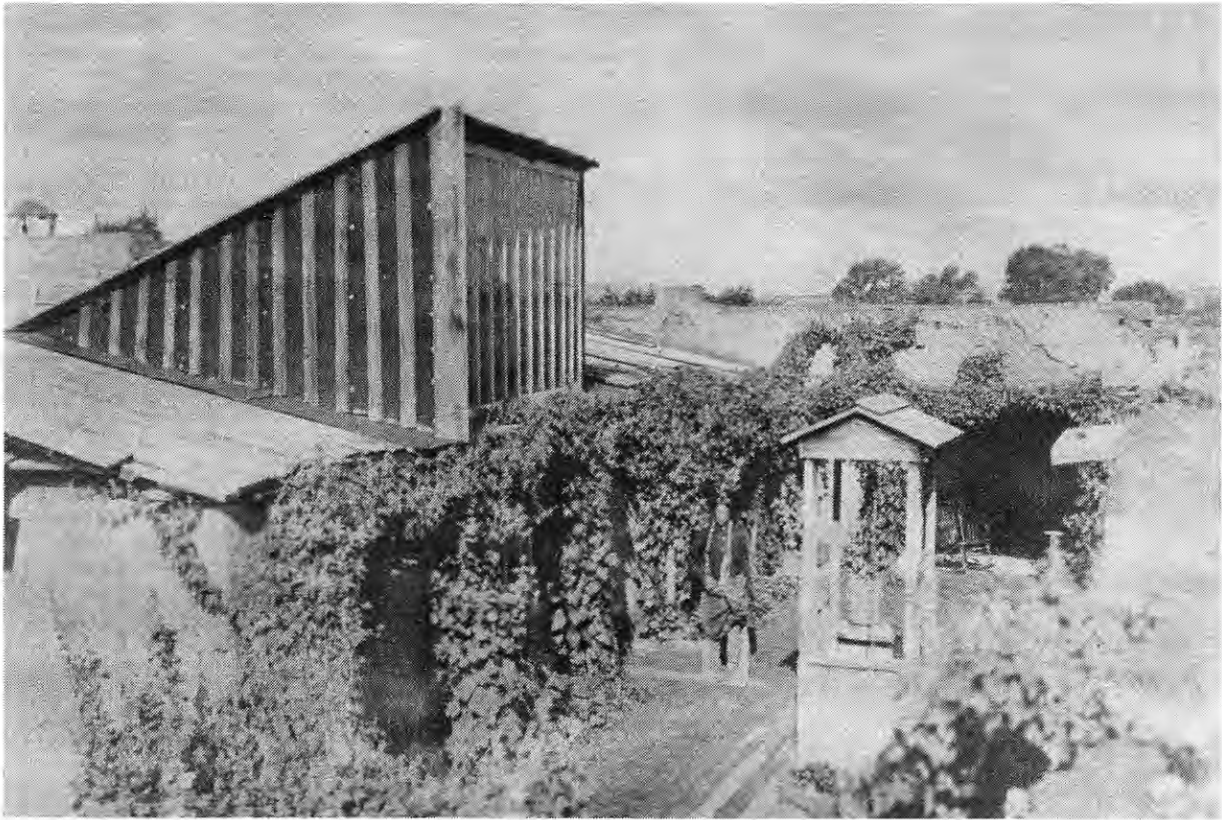
Henry Sharp, who divided his allegiance between Taos and the Crow Agency in Montana, also mentioned Barbizon in a letter. He wrote from Taos on June 15, 1906, to the Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum:

. . . you see, we are at our first love and stomping ground. Bert Phillips is here year round. Couse has just bought a little place, fitted up a studio and is at work, and likely for many summers. Young Berninghaus of St. Louis has just left and Curtis and Sauerwein and others are coming, so there may be a Taos colony a la Barbizon yet! (quoted by Forrest Fenn in *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, pp. 201-202)

In referring to Barbizon, both Phillips and Sharp had invoked the name of the most famous of the French art colonies. Founded in the 1830s, Barbizon became the prototype for all art colonies to follow, representing freedom from urban pressures, communion with nature, and a spirit of camaraderie. The colony at Barbizon developed as a result of the new interest in painting directly from nature. Thus it became the general habit of French artists in the late 19th century to desert their Paris studios during the summer months and retreat to small villages where they could live inexpensively and could gather motifs for their future work. Certain



Taos artists join the spectators at Taos Pueblo to view the dances, c. 1916. (Couse Family Archive, used by permission)



An early art studio on Pueblo Road. The property was owned by E.I. Couse 1906-1909. New owners subsequently rented it to various artists, including Oscar Berninghaus (1909) and E.L. Blumenschein (1910). (Couse Family Archive, used by permission)

locations gained in popularity and thus became artists' colonies. With later developments in plein-air painting, particularly as influenced by the Impressionists, many other art colonies were established in France, including such famous locations as Giverny, Pont-Aven, Concarneau, and Etaples. Many of the Americans studying abroad experienced life in one or more of these French colonies. It is not surprising then that an art colony movement developed in the United States after these students returned.

The establishment of art colonies in America began in the mid 1880s. Their popularity lasted into the 1920s and began to wane in the 1930s. It was, however, at the very period that the Taos Colony was established, around 1898, that the proliferation of American colonies was at its height. At that time colonies were also established in Pennsylvania at New Hope, in California at Laguna and Carmel, in Connecticut at Cos Cob and Old Lyme, in Massachusetts at Provincetown and Gloucester, in New York at Woodstock, and in Indiana at Nashville. These are but a few examples of a movement that reached into all parts of the country.

In speaking of this proliferation of colonies as a "movement" we are not, of course, referring to a stylistic movement, but simply to an identifiable social phenomenon among American artists at this particular period of history. Yet, there was an almost subconscious ideology common to the art colonies in America: the desire that American artists of

the period felt to create a uniquely American art. Unfortunately, until recently their accomplishments have been underestimated and even disparaged. The remainder of this article will be devoted to an examination of the impact of art colonies in general on American art, and of how Taos, in particular, fits into this overall picture.

There was nothing new in the fact that American artists were going to the countryside for their summer's work. The Hudson River valley, for instance, had long been the summer haunt of painters in the early 19th century. These artists painted grand panoramic hymns to the American wilderness, but did so in relative isolation. Beginning in the mid-1880s, however, artists preferred to gather into colonies where they began to paint intimate, personal landscapes as a result of their experience in France with Barbizon and Impressionist plein-airism.

In the late 19th century there were no art schools in this country that could compare with the art academies of Europe. American art students, therefore, considered study abroad as an absolute necessity and by the 1880s and 90s American names swelled the rosters of Munich and the Parisian academies. When these young artists returned to the United States they suffered a great sense of culture shock. As students they were nourished in an atmosphere where art was venerated; but when they came home, they found people preoccupied with commercial, rather than with artistic, development. They turned

therefore to each other in an attempt to recapture and reinforce the creative stimuli they had experienced in Europe. This camaraderie could, to some extent, be accomplished in the cities and in the great studio buildings that were built in New York at this time, such as the 10th Street Studio, the Sherwood Building, and the Van Dyck. These buildings were in essence urban art colonies and provided artists with living and working space during the winter season. However, most of the artists turned to rural communities and the countryside for their subject matter, just as their European mentors had, and so they began to establish regional summer art colonies.

At first some of these artists were unable to come to terms with American subject matter. In an article entitled, "The Summer Haunts of American Artists," published in 1885 in *The Century Magazine*, the author gives us a glimpse into the nostalgia felt by painters at Easthampton on Long Island, one of the earliest of the American colonies. Writing about the subject matter to be found in Easthampton, the author observed that:

Mr. Smillie finds here a likeness both to England and Holland. The gardens and orchards, the lanes, barns, and shrubbery, are all English; while the meadows stretching to low horizons, the windmills... are Dutch. Mr. Jones, on the other hand, is struck by the resemblance of the locality to Brittany. Mr. Bruce Crane, too, is carried straight to Pont-Aven by the hay-ricks and poultry-yards, and by the soft gray atmosphere.

Figure painters found few substitutes for the picturesque peasants of Barbizon or the colorful Breton fisherfolk. In an attempt to further extol the attractions of Easthampton, the author added that:

Nowhere on our coast can be found quainter houses and people, fishermen more available as models... or men of more isolated lives and rugged individuality. Nantucket is not more unique or Brittany more poetic. (by Lizzie W. Champney, v. 30, Oct. 1885)

Critics despaired that Americans had been forced to turn to Europe for their technical training and decried the fact that American painting, because of this, lacked a distinctive national character. In a review of the American section at the Paris Exposition of 1900, one critic lamented that:

Despite the extent and excellence of the exhibition, there remains the somewhat depressing fact that its works in the main are not national, do not exemplify American spirit or reflect American life.

This same critic also noted sorrowfully that:

In faithfully and sympathetically depicting American landscape and in adequately representing our hamlets, and our great cities, we have comparatively few masters. (Ellis T. Clarke, "Alien Element in American Art," *Brush and Pencil*, v. VII, no. 1, Oct. 1900)

This paucity of artists "sympathetically depicting American landscape" was remedied, however, with the proliferation of art colonies throughout the United States at the turn of the century. American artists began consciously to strive for an American School of painting. Significantly, it was to subject, not to style, that they turned in their quest, and the landscape was their primary source of subject matter. "The spirit of place," a phrase borrowed from D.H. Lawrence, who wrote, "Every continent has its own great spirit of place," was used by art historian Charles Eldredge to pinpoint the essence of the contribution to American art made by painters in American art colonies. (Connecticut Impressionists: *The Spirit of Place*, "Art in America", v. 62, Sept./Oct. 1974; also *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945: Paths to Taos and Santa Fe*, 1986, p. 13) From these art colonies across the country began to come an intimate American portrait: the upland pastures of Branchville; the sand dunes of Provincetown and the rugged coast of Gloucester; the woods and harbor of Old Lyme; the winding lanes and rail fences of Brown County; the brilliant flora of Laguna and the blue-green water of Carmel. It is obvious that the Taos and Santa Fe painters added their own special dimension to this rich depiction of America.

In a 1915 article for *Fine Arts Journal*, Birger Sandzen, a Rocky Mountain artist who spent some time in Taos and Santa Fe and who was elected to the Taos Society of Artists in 1922, wrote about the Southwest in comparison to other locations:

As a sketching ground the Southwest... can offer the painter abundant material of every conceivable character. He will find... all those friendly, quiet little motives that everybody loves and admires and understands, the Barbizon-Woodstock theme and its many variations. The East and West have many of these charming subjects in common, although the atmospheric effects peculiar to the high plateau of the Southwest give them a somewhat new setting.

His defensiveness about the parallels between western and eastern scenes leads us to believe that paintings from the west were somehow suspect to the eastern establishment. Later in this same article Sandzen praised the uniqueness of the Southwest:

It is neither possible nor necessary to describe the great romantic wonderland of the Southwest, its rugged, primitive grandeur, its picturesque people, its scintillating light and mystic color. The spell of this fairyland is quite irresistible. Once under its magic influence, the artist will hardly be able to break away, even if he cared to do so. (v. 30, "The Southwest as a Sketching Ground.")

When the Taos Society of Artists began to exhibit nationally as a group, some critics heralded the arrival of an "American school." A reviewer for the *New York World* wrote in 1920:

In that desert land a real school of American art has developed, which is equally distinctive and worthy. Prospective colonies elsewhere may well take pattern by this example of what may be done by determination and persistency. . . these painters have presented that region with artistic truth and vigor. It is one of the notable exhibitions of the season. (Feb. 1, 1920)

Taos was unique among the American art colonies because the Indian and Spanish peoples provided a colorful subject matter for figure painters, an authentic American alternative to the peasants of Barbizon and the fisherfolk of Brittany. The figure studies coming out of east and west coast art colonies were often genteel, langorous women, impressionistically painted in house and garden settings. In a much quoted paragraph, Ernest Blumenschein voiced the boredom that Taos artists had felt with the hackneyed European subjects of windmills and peasants, as well as with "lady in negligee reclining on a sumptuous divan. . ." (*El Palacio* XX, no. 10, May 15, 1926) Blumenschein's cry was for a vigorous, unequivocally American subject matter, and he and his fellow Taos artists felt they had found this in the American Indian. American Indians, like Millet's peasants at Barbizon, were the victims of social change. The depiction of their rich culture and noble character signified not only the documentation of a vanishing race, but also a social comment on the effects of materialistic modern society. The Taos Indians were an

ideal substitute for picturesque European subjects. The fact, however, that Indians were, and have remained, inexorably exotic and alien to Anglo-European society, has tended to obscure the fact that the Taos painters themselves were very much in the mainstream of American art at the time.

In an enthusiastic review of the 1918 exhibition of the Taos Society of Artists, a critic for the *Boston Herald* praised the exhibit saying:

Whether as art or as pictorial record of a primitive culture. . . this exhibition is one that everybody will want to see.

He then, however, made the following prophetic observation:

That phrase "love of subject" suggests possibly the liability that the Taos movement, interesting as it is, may never culminate in the illusive "American school." (Jan. 6, 1918)

The inescapably dominant role of northern New Mexico's vivid imagery was acceptable as long as strongly representational art was still considered desirable. Julius Rolshoven was enthusiastic about Taos and Santa Fe when he arrived there in 1916. He was quoted in the *Detroit Free Press* as saying:

I have traveled all over Europe and Northern Africa in search of atmosphere but nowhere else have I seen nature provide everything, even the conception, as it does in New Mexico. (Jan. 20, 1918)



Romantic subject matter, such as that provided by Taos Pueblo, interested the early artists in Taos as a place to live and work. This model, posed by a pond at the Thorne House, is believed to be Jerry Mirabel. (Harwood Foundation collection. Used by permission)



Ernest Blumenschein, Bert Phillips, and J.H. Sharp critique a painting by E.I. Couse. 1911. (Couse Family Archive, used by permission)

Stuart Davis, however, a younger American artist who was steeped in the intellectualization of modernism and more interested in style and formal concerns than in representation, found New Mexico's environment too domineering. He complained that "You always have to look at it," and that the forms were "made to order, to imitate." (quoted by El-dredge, *Paths to Taos and Santa Fe*, p. 169)

In a period of our art history when an "American School" was being sought in the "place" that was America, the Taos artists were able to make a significant contribution to American art. Ironically, however, it was in an abstract movement, the Abstract Expressionism of the 1940s, that a great American School was finally critically recognized.

It is important to make a few brief observations about style in relation to American art colonies. Impressionism was the most pervasive and enduring influence evident in the style of work produced in east and west coast colonies. None of the American Impressionists, however, were drawn to Taos, although, interestingly enough, Robert Reid was one of the founders of the Broadmoor Art Academy in Colorado Springs and Ernest Lawson taught there as well. Artists influenced by Cezanne, on the other hand, did settle in Taos. Cezanne's geometrical style was clearly compatible with the defining, synthesizing quality of light and rugged geometry of New Mexico, whereas the dissolving and scintillating reflections of Impressionistic technique were not. It must

be recognized, however, that Impressionism did influence, to some degree, all artists of the period, and Taos artists were no exception. The brilliance of their palettes and their ability to capture New Mexico's extraordinary light, owed much to the example of the Impressionists. Nevertheless, it was the Post-Impressionists with whom the Taos artists had the most affinity, sharing with them an interest in structure, an emphasis on the decorative, a broad style of painting, and an admiration for primitive art.

Let me end by quoting a critic writing in 1920 for the *New York Tribune*:

An interesting question is raised by the exhibition which is being held by the Taos Society of Artists at the Milch Gallery. The members of this body are frequenters of a corner of the northern part of New Mexico, where the Taos Indians supply the artist with picturesque models. . . Painters who have lingered there have become thoughtful students of customs and manners that command respect. But does Taos do anything talismanic for its devotees? Granting that place and people are paintable, is there anything about either the one or the other which will give the artist any special advantage? . . . One is driven to some such reflections as the foregoing by the very fact that the Taos Society of Artists should exist as a society. It asserts itself as though it were entitled to a certain singularity. Yet it has accomplished nothing singular.



Early Taos artist poses an Indian model. The artist is believed to be Ernest Blumenschein or Bert Phillips. (Harwood Foundation collection, used by permission)

The critic continued his review with compliments to the work of Couse, Rolshoven, Blumenschein, Higgins, and Ufer, but then resumed his former theme:

None of them, however, appears to have captured the one thing justifying such extensive travels--none of them has achieved beauty. They all have manual dexterity. They are all skillful in the bold delineation of those broad effects, full of sharp contrasts, characteristic of Taos. And they all wake doubts as to whether those effects are worth while. Taos, we fear, will not become a great artistic shrine until it has been put on the map by a great artist. (Feb. 1, 1920)

We do not know what this critic's criterion for beauty was. He may have been a progressive looking for new ways for beauty to be exposed through more modern conceptions of style and structure, or he may have been a conservative, disturbed by the "broad effects and sharp contrasts" he mentioned as being characteristic of Taos, and unable to find in them any poetic beauty. It doesn't really matter. What does matter is that such criticism has never been satisfactorily answered. The questions he raises are still significant to art historians who with the additional perspective of sixty-five years, continue to reexamine the position of New Mexico painters in the history of American art and to reassess their contribution to the art of their time.



BOOK REVIEWS

The Red River-Twining Area: A New Mexico Mining Story. Jim Berry Pearson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986. Pp. x, 221. Illus., notes, biblio., index.

CORONADO'S EXPLORATION of the American Southwest in his search for gold was hardly the beginning of man's effort to extract the riches of this intriguing land. Prehistoric Indians had long sought, and succeeded, in obtaining copper and turquoise as evidenced in their ornamentation. Old Spanish lost or hidden gold and silver mines seem never to completely lose their intrigue.

Jim Pearson has done an excellent and thorough job in researching the material found in this book. It is no doubt as authentic as possible considering the diversity and lack of documentation concerning early mining activities in New Mexico. *The Red River-Twining Area: A New Mexico Mining Story* is the ninth volume in the joint publication series between the Historical Society of New Mexico and the University of New Mexico Press. The book attempts to tell, in a well documented fashion, the history of mining during the last hundred years in North Central New Mexico. Preceding this "boom and bust" period, early settlers were more or less active long before the California Gold Rush. But only within the last century has mining in Taos County and surrounding areas been of appreciable economic importance. Following the Civil War and the discovery of gold in the Mount Baldy and Elizabethtown region in Colfax County, up to the present, is the period primarily portrayed by Pearson.

Today "Mining for the Tourist Dollar" is perhaps of greater importance than the recent Molybdenum activities. In any event, from a purely historical standpoint, this book should prove of interest to most Taos County Historical Society members. This is especially true for those of us who have spent most of our lives living in and exploring the places mentioned: LaBelle, Midnight, Anchor, Red River, The Big Ditch, Elizabethtown, and on and on.

Ernest Lyckman
Taos

Along the Santa Fe Trail. Photographs by Joan Myers; essay by Marc Simmons. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986. Pp. xxiv, 184. Illus., map, biblio, colophon.

ALONG THE SANTA FE TRAIL includes a 96 page essay by Marc Simmons and 80 pages of photographs by Joan Myers showing present day impressions of crossings and night camp locations on the old Santa Fe Trail.

Be sure to find the excellent map near the front of the book before you start reading. (The Table of Contents does not mention it.) The duo-tone lithography of the photos is too muted for my taste--used to the brilliant sunlight of the west and the star studded skies spoken of so often by the early travelers. These photos show the rapid disappearance of our historic buildings, a grave here, a few wagon ruts there.

What makes the very words, "Santa Fe Trail," so intriguing to the public is the romantic sense of adventure brought out by Marc Simmons, who has walked over this old wagon trail. I regret he did not mention the pack horse trail continuation north, over Picuris Mountain to the Taos Pueblo, where trade fairs were held every year and still continue on San Geronimo Day, September 30.

William Becknell is considered the first person to bring the value of the trail and trade to public attention in 1821. He traveled from Franklin, Missouri to Santa Fe and back, one thousand miles each way.

Our famous Kit Carson furthered the movement west, and by 1849 the gold rush to California made the ruts of the trail still deeper. Finally the railroad in 1880, taking the "mountain route" by Raton, N.M., ended the old wagon trail and the freedom of the buffalo and Indians in what became the food basket of the U.S.

Through all these interesting facts of history Marc Simmons has woven many tales of the settlers, along with his own thoughts of the present as related to past history.

By 1857 40,000 wagons had left for the West. Many boats had landed on the banks of the Missouri River near Independence to bring supplies for these caravans and for others headed for the 2,000 mile Oregon Trail.

The Civil War disrupted all of this. Afterward, Westport became Kansas City and the so-called Great American Desert became the wheat and corn belt. The present day Hays House restaurant of Council Groves, Kansas, built in 1857, is left from the old days. Today a sign proclaims the birthplace of the Santa Fe Trail.

Marc Simmons gives a list of good journals to read. You soon realize that our history is now reflected in our present day thinking, self-confidence, aggressiveness and persistence, and a love of space.

*Helen G. Blumenschein
Ranchos de Taos*

The Chief: Ernest Thompson Seton and the Changing West. H. Allen Anderson. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1986. Pp. xii, 363. Illus., notes, biblio., index.

A LONG TIME AGO I spent an entire summer sorting through arsenic-preserved birds collected (killed) around the turn of the century. The man who collected them, Ernest Thompson Seton, was at various times in his life a wolf killer, an environmentalist, a socialist who courted acceptance by East Coast capitalists, a mystic and scientist, an illustrator who painted a sort of proto-abstract expressionist work titled, "What I see with my eyes closed."

I read his books and personal journals, and was both inspired and bothered by him. H. Allen Anderson, one of three persons to have attempted a Seton biography, catches these paradoxes, treating the artist-naturalist's life with admirable objectivity. He has much to report, both good and bad, on a successful man obsessed with success and a need for public recognition. An artist or writer with a towering ego is not unusual, indeed this is an asset in fighting through the hard times of a career in the creative pursuits. For Seton, this ambition was tempered by equally high ethical standards which he maintained all his life.

Seton elected to spend the final years of his life in Santa Fe, in large measure to be in proximity to the Rio Grande pueblos, including Taos, thus his inclusion here. But it was elsewhere, and earlier, that he reached his major achievements as a naturalist, artist, lecturer, writer, and founder of national youth organizations.

A first-rate researcher, Seton published his findings in scholarly journals and produced a magnificent work in mammalogy, *Lives of Game Animals*. He sought to reach a larger audience by writing his wildlife observations in the form of short stories. Some of these were moralistic, others bitter, some heroic, most were honest. For instance, he held that all wild animals meet a tragic fate through exposure, starvation, being preyed upon, etc., a profound truth. His sympathy always lay with wild things and against the death of wildness. He disliked urban industrial civilization, and the sheep, cows, and cowboys which are its vanguard.

In 1902 Seton invited local boys who had been vandalizing his property to a campout which was to launch the Woodcraft Indians and provide a model for the Boy Scout movement in England and America. Seton claimed to be the founder of the Scouting movement. Lord Baden-Powell seems to have rather freely plagiarized Seton's writings, and Seton, in the belief that youth organizations were essential, let him get away with it. In 1910, a number of groups including the Woodcraft Indians merged to form the Boy Scouts of America with Seton as its head. He quickly lost control to a coalition of bankers, retired generals, and others of the political right who distrusted

Seton's mild socialist and pacifist ideas. Anderson's unraveling of this mess is of considerable interest, given the importance of the Scouting movement.

The author makes an attempt to relate the larger events of American history during this period (1860-1946) to Seton's life. He is rather more successful at describing the smaller scale doings of his subject. This is an altogether satisfying biography about one of North America's finest naturalists.

David L. Witt
Taos

The Folklore of Spain in the American Southwest: Traditional Spanish Folk Literature in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. Aurelio M. Espinosa; edited by J. Manuel Espinosa. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. Pp. ix, 310. Illus., appendices, notes, bibliography, index.

IN AN ESSAY TITLED, "The Significance of the Borderlands," Herbert E. Bolton wrote, "Among the most priceless treasures of a country are its historical records and its *folklore*." This study of Spanish folk literature and Spanish language of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado is based on a comparative analysis of folk tales and folk sayings collected in Spain, other parts of Europe, South and Central America, the Orient and the American Southwest. It aptly illustrates Bolton's point and is indeed a priceless treasure in itself.

J. Manuel Espinosa begins the monumental task of documenting his father's works by introducing us to the author in a biographical sketch that includes a family history, the educational background of the author, his service in the educational field, a complete list of writings and publications and an impressive summary of the honors conferred upon Aurelio M. Espinosa.

Aurelio M. Espinosa was born in 1880 in a village in southern Colorado named El Carnero, which has since disappeared from the map. His father, Celso Espinosa, not only engaged in farming and sheep raising, but also taught in the public school which his son, Aurelio, attended. In 1898 Aurelio graduated from Del Norte High School and the family moved to Boulder, where Aurelio enrolled in the University of Colorado, from which he graduated in 1902.

That fall he became a professor of modern languages at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. In 1905 he married Maria Margarita Garcia from Santa Fe. His work with his students at the University and his contact with members of his extended family throughout the upper Rio Grande valley initiated what was to be a lifetime interest in the study of the Spanish language and of Colorado's and New Mexico's Spanish folklore.

His first of numerous publications was "Studies in New Mexico Spanish," his doctoral dissertation. It was received with great acclaim and as a result he was invited to accept a professorship at Stanford University, where he established a home base until he retired in 1947.

It is impossible in a review to enumerate all his accomplishments. Suffice it to say that he became known throughout the world as a scholar, teacher and writer. One of the many honors conferred upon him was Knighthood by King Alfonso XIII of Spain and his own New Mexico elected him to be the first person placed in its New Mexico Folklore Roll of Honor.

For the student of folklore *per se* and folklore of the Spanish Southwest in particular; for the student of Hispanic dialectology and linguistics and for the student of cultural anthropology this book is very valuable. The Taoseno reader might take issue with the statement made on page 73 that in Taos it was traditional to light nine luminarias for each of nine nights to guide the three kings. The custom has been to light one luminaria the first of the nine nights, two on the second, and so on until the ninth night all nine luminarias were built. Considering the wealth of material collected so early in the 1900s, and preserved for future generations, this error is of minute importance.

J.M. Espinosa is to be highly commended for making it possible for this generation and for generations to come, to recognize and appreciate the rich cultural heritage of the Hispanic Southwest in folk literature.

Corina Santistevan
Ranchos de Taos



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HISTORIC CHURCH VIDEOS PLANNED FOR FEB. 28

The first program meeting for 1987 has been set for 2:00 p.m. Saturday, February 28.

The meeting will feature a program of video programs on three of Taos County's historic churches, one now extinct and the other two endangered.

The video programs were produced by Harold Joe Waldrum and Jim Heese of Taos. Many T.C.H.S. members had the opportunity to see part of one of the programs, on the Church of San Miguel in El Valle, at a historical society program two years ago. The February 28 program will include that tape, plus a "requiem" portion showing the eventual demolition of the church following a church decision that it could not be saved. Also to be shown are video programs on the Church of San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo and the Church of San Jose at Las Trampas.

President Herbert Dick has planned to make a definite schedule of meeting dates and make use of the local media to notify members. This will facilitate reduction in mailing of individual notices. The February 28 meeting is tentatively planned for Coronado Center, but members should consult the media for confirmation of the place as the date draws near.

MARC SIMMONS ON THE MEND

Many readers of *Ayer y Hoy* know TCHS member Dr. Marc Simmons--either through his highly respected historical writings or as a friend to anyone interested in history. As author and speaker on a variety of New Mexico topics, Simmons has made his mark with regional history enthusiasts, and as head of the Committee for the Promotion of History, he has made manifest his belief in the value of history in school curricula.

Simmons is currently recovering from the effects of serious injuries sustained in an auto accident last November. As of mid-January, Simmons expected to be at St. Joseph Hospital in Albuquerque for about two more weeks, then at his home in Cerrillos. Simmons expressed appreciation for the many expressions of concern from friends in the Taos area. Dr. Simmons can be reached at P.O. Box 51, Cerrillos 87010.

TRUJILLO HEADS MAIN STREET

Tom Trujillo, former Taos County Manager, has been selected as administrator for the Taos local organization of New Mexico Main Street. Taos was one of seven New Mexico community's taken on in the government and foundation supported program that emphasizes community development through historic preservation and business promotion. The Taos Main Street program has an office at Kit Carson Road and Montoya Street.

DOZEN DEFY SNOWSTORM TO PLAN 1987

Approximately one dozen T.C.H.S. members braved the winter's heaviest storm to attend the Society's annual business and planning meeting at the Millicent Rogers Museum, Saturday, January 31.

New President Dr. Herbert Dick called for committee reports on 1986 activity and asked members for program ideas for 1987.

Two major survey projects were identified for possible effort by T.C.H.S. One is a survey of Taos County cemeteries, starting with Sierra Vista. The other project involves efforts to identify and preserve petroglyphs in the area.

Program ideas for 1987, tentatively planned but not scheduled as yet, include trips to the Harding Mine, Red River, Fort Garland and the Pike Stockade, La Cienega, and ruins near El Rito. Indoor program possibilities include a lecture by Dr. Dick on Mayan culture, historic church videos, and the annual holiday social function.

Due to the inclement weather on January 31, it was decided to leave committee assignments and program specifics indefinite until the next meeting, when perhaps more members can attend.

TRADE FAIR A BIG HIT

The Old Taos Trade Fair organized by the Kit Carson Memorial Foundation, its Spanish Cultural Advisory Committee, and Director Neil Poese, drew hundreds to the Martinez Hacienda on two beautiful September days, Saturday and Sunday the 27th and 28th.

Living history exhibits included a tipi village, mountain men, and the re-enactment of the arrival of a trade caravan from Mexico. Bread and roasting ears were cooked in *hornos* built for the Hacienda by adobe craftsperson Carmen Velarde. For TCHS and Kit Carson board member Ernest Lyckman, who contributed a handmade loom and a *careta*, the successful Trade Fair was the realization of a dream and a goal of some twenty years.

NEW MEXICO CELEBRATES 75TH

New Mexico officially marked 75 years of statehood on January 6, 1987, and will continue to celebrate the event throughout the year with a variety of observances planned by the state's museums, libraries, and other state and local governmental units.

New Mexico became the 47th state when admitted in 1912.



Dorris Boyer, Ruth Fish, Pete Concha, and Corina Santistevan were honored by the Taos County Historical Society at a December 7 luncheon at Carl's French Quarter. (Taos News photo, by Judy Romero-Oak. Used by permission)

Each fall the Taos County Historical Society officers put their heads together to plan for the Society's annual holiday function. A major part of that planning is the selection of individuals to be honored for their efforts in historic preservation and the study and promotion of area history. A list of nominees comes from the suggestions of TCHS members and from the officers themselves. It is gratifying to see, from the number of names that come up, how many people have given significant time and effort to causes that coincide with those of the Historical Society. It is also somewhat discouraging to realize that, at the rate of one a year, we are never going to get around to recognizing many of the people who truly deserve the appreciation of friends and fellow citizens who share their interest in the historical traditions of Taos.

The desire to recognize as many worthy nominees as possible resulted in a decision, in 1985, to name several honorees rather than one. And that resulted, on Sunday, December 7, 1986, in the colorful verbal mural of life in Taos that was enjoyed by some 120 members and guests at our 1986 holiday luncheon.

Honorees represented several cultural traditions and a variety of talents and contributions--a variety that helped us appreciate again the beautiful and complex Taos Mosaic that Claire Morrill described so well in her book of that name.

Dorris Boyer, clerical specialist, hostess to the Board, and chief support system to hus-

band and retired Kit Carson Memorial Foundation Director Jack Boyer, described the early home life that got her started. Her early lessons included the idea that the satisfying experiences in life are the ones that come back to you when you serve others.

Pete Concha, now Cacique or spiritual leader of Taos Pueblo, shared his love of the Taos Valley and its people. He recalled a time when, as a delegate of the Taos people seeking the return of Blue Lake and surrounding lands to the Pueblo, he told members of Congress that he was going to stay right there in Washington until his people got justice. The sacred lands were conveyed to Taos Pueblo.

Ruth Fish was honored for an association with Taos and an interest in its history spanning more than fifty of her more than ninety years. Mrs. Fish was engaged in a number of activities prior to her retirement, including Chamber of Commerce promotion, teaching, public administration, and writing for the newspaper. She worked history into all of those pursuits, helping re-organize the Taos Fiestas at one point and writing about local historical figures for the paper.

Corina Santistevan grew up in the Taos Valley, and she has never forgotten the people who influenced her life in a positive way--from the kind librarian who persuaded her that she could go on to college and succeed there, to the friends with whom she has shared enjoyable and far-flung journeys in quest of the Spanish origins of the people and culture of northern New Mexico.