

AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Spring 2017

Issue #42

Taos County Historic Sites

by Patricia Joy Richmond



**A Glimpse of
Early Education
In Taos**



by Enos Garcia

“Bent Lodge No. 42”

by Dave Cordova



A publication of the Taos County Historical Society

CONTENTS

- Taos County Historic Sites 3
by Patricia Joy Richmond
- “Bent Lodge No. 42” 6
by Dave Cordova, Past Master
- A Glimpse of Early Education in Taos 7
by Enos Garcia
- 75th Anniversary of Bataan - 1942-2017
Fall issue to feature a first-hand account
of the atrocities Taos soldiers endured in
the Philippines by Jack Boyer

AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County
and Northern New Mexico

Spring 2017

Issue No. 42

ISSN 1088-5285

© 2017 Taos County Historical Society

Taos County Historical Society's publication, *Ayer y Hoy en Taos - Taos County and Northern New Mexico*, is published semi-annually by the Historical Society.

We invite articles of a scholarly nature, as well as book reviews of recent publications pertinent to the Taos and northern New Mexico area. We are open to publishing occasional reminiscences, folklore, oral history and poetry that are of historical interest.

The Taos County Historical Society endeavors to maintain high standards of quality in *AYER Y HOY*, and we seek to make improvements as we go along. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcome.

All articles, maps, photographs, drawings, etc., are the property of the contributors and may not be used or reproduced in any way without permission from the Society and/or the contributor.

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

Editor

Dave Cordova

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.

Officers of the Board

Ernestina Cordova - President

Benton Bond - Vice-president

Judy Weinrobe - Secretary

Joan Pond - Treasurer

P.O. Box 2447 • Taos, New Mexico 87571

A Message from the TCHS President

Greetings Members of Taos County Historical Society,



Ayer y Hoy in Taos County and Northern New Mexico is one way Taos County Historical Society is preserving history and ensuring that, together, the history of Taos will be told for many generations. The TCHS Board and I encourage you to participate in our programs and to get involved. Please do not hesitate to ask any of our board members how you can be an active participant in the Society. We will surely have something for everyone to do.

Since our Fall 2016 issue, we enjoyed hearing about Taos Christmas Traditions from UNM Professor Larry Torres at our Christmas Luncheon. In February 2017, at our annual meeting, TCHS officers were re-elected by unanimous acclamation before listening to our featured speaker, Mirabai Starr, who shared her experiences of growing up in Taos and La Lama. March's lecture was a standing-room-only affair to hear "My Grandpa Painted Pictures," recollections by Barbara Brenner of her grandfather E. Oscar Berninghaus. The illustrated lecture, featuring a PowerPoint presentation, was very entertaining. The April lecture featured Marlon Magdalena, the Instructional Coordinator for the Jemez Historic Site located in Jemez Springs, NM, who spoke about "Jemez Pueblo Lifestyles, Customs and Runners."

The business of the Society is a year-round endeavor. We recently held our Board of Directors Retreat where we discussed future programs and initiatives. We also held our annual pancake breakfast sponsored by the Brethren of Bent Lodge #42 AF&AM in Taos for much-needed funds for the Society.

Our Honoree Luncheon in May honors Nick Branchal and Norbert Martinez Jr. for "Continuing the Tradition of Mariachi Musicians in our Schools." Our scheduled speaker is Nicolasa Chavez, Curator of the Museum of International Folk Art in Albuquerque.

Upcoming lectures include "Famous and Unusual Gravesites in New Mexico" by Dr. Richard Melzer in June, "Route 66 in New Mexico" by Baldwin Barr in September, and a field trip to the Hacienda de Torres in Arroyo Seco in July.

We are increasing our membership and we encourage you to invite your family and friends to join us in the Society. With several membership options, it is easier than ever to join! We have annual and lifetime memberships available and we look forward to adding Supporter, Benefactor, and Corporate Sponsor status to the types of memberships available. Payments and renewals may be made via PayPal at our website www.taoscountyhistoricalsociety.org.

Again, I would like to thank all the members of the Society for their wonderful support given to us through the years. I, personally, want to emphasize that our board members are fantastic hard workers and I commend their tireless efforts. Together, as a team, we are making a difference in preserving the irreplaceable.

Here's wishing you and your families a wonderful summer!

Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society

“TAOS COUNTY’S HISTORIC SITES”

by Patricia Joy Richmond - © 2017

What constitutes a historic site? Age? Pertinence to an important event? Geographic location? Cultural legacy? Architectural significance? The National Parks Service identifies three categories for management of “historic” properties: 1. Historic Sites (grounds or terrain); 2. Historic Structures; and 3. Historic Objects. All three categories may be considered primary “Historic Resources” in that they “enrich and illuminate” cultural heritage.

In 1962, under the guidance of their president, Mrs. Guadalupe B. Vaughn, members of the Taos County Historical Society [TCHS] began compiling a record of historic sites for Taos and Taos County. Documents preserved by Helen Greene Blumenschein, Taos artist, archeologist, historian, and author, reveal the careful consideration that established a foundation for the TCHS committee’s work.¹ In reading through letters, memos, and Blumenschein’s notations, and considering Taos’ rich and varied history, one begins to realize that eliminating what was not historic within the old village might have presented a simpler task than determining which sites held historic significance.²

Frances Marie Colbert chaired the TCHS committee. In reflecting on Taos Valley’s multi-cultural heritage, the committee categorized 34% of the proposed historic sites as being of *Spanish* origin, 8% of *Native American* origin, 46% of *Anglo-European* origin, and 12% with *Multiple Contributions* towards origin. The committee traced none of the listed sites to Mexican, Chinese, Pacific Rim, or African American origins. With Taos Pueblo’s long occupancy and Taos Valley’s role in Spanish colonial history, the committee might have anticipated a higher percentage ranking for those two origin categories. However, official designation as a historic site requires presence of some physical remains. By the 1960s, evidence of many structures relevant to Taos Valley’s history, such as the *torreón* at Talpa, no longer existed. Individual houses made up 30% of the TCHS committee’s proposed list. Schools constituted 6%; religious structures, 16%; transportation-engineering sites, 10%; commercial-industrial, 6%; historic districts, 14%; public buildings, 4%; archaeological sites, 4%; agricultural sites 6%; and “other,” 4%.

The committee members (Blumenschein in particular) compiled information about known historic structures, locations, and names relevant to Taos Valley’s story. However, the committee’s task remained specific to identifying historic sites that could be marked. In a letter dated February 23, 1962, Mrs. Colbert stated that off-hand she could think of “twelve or fifteen sites which should be marked” including the oldest house in town, Padre Martinez’s residence, Sheriff Lee’s residence, the San Antonio Chapel, and Martyrs’ Lane. She reminded the committee members that the final list would include only those sites that still held physical historic remains. Mrs. Colbert’s letter also mentioned that some existing historic markers were in *sad shape* and that some private property owners were reluctant to have markers set on their property. With no funds available for marking historic sites, she noted that the committee’s task would “remain in the talking stage.”

A handwritten list on the back of a copy of the National Parks Service’s guidelines for historic sites includes the following site suggestions: 1. *the flag over Taos Plaza*;³ 2. *Padre Martinez Home and Lane*; 3. *Governor Bent Home*; 4. *Teresina Bent Scheurich Home*; 5. *Demosteres Martinez’ Home (related to Padre Martinez, Doña Maria and Doña Emilia)*; 6. *La Cruz Alta*; 7. *Divisidora*; 8. *Christian Brothers Chapel (Sharp’s Studio-Couse property)*. *Some compound locations listed multiple sites - 9. La Loma Plaza: a. San Antonio chapel, b. Herbert Ivan Dunton House, c. Felix Valdez Home, d. Art and Selma Kay’s home*; 10. *Our Lady of Guadalupe: a. original church, b. church destroyed by fire, c. present church*; 11. *Ojitos Spring: original Taos Water Supply and Silver Road fish hatchery*; and 12. *Taos Plaza: a. Columbian Hotel (La Fonda), b. original Court House, c. Don Fernando Hotel, d. old movie theatre, e. Juan Santistevan Home, f. original bank, g. early merchants including McCarthy, Burch, Gusdorf, Saavedra, Boyers Grocery and Market, Hoffman’s Bar, and McGonigal.*



San Ysidro Oratorio in Los Cordovas

By the time the proposed historic sites list circulated as a typed memo, it had undergone editing to include the following: the flag, Padre Martinez’s home, Governor Bent’s Home, La Cruz Alta, Monastery-Couse Home, La Loma chapel, Ojitos Spring, a sign for the West Side of the Plaza, and the Quesnel Home. Blumenschein’s handwritten, initialed notes added another six sites to the numbered, typed memo including Valdez, Arroyo Hondo, Questa, and Los Cordovas. The typed memo also had the following unnumbered suggestions: Carlos Beaubien Home (McCarthy Plaza); Bent and St. Vrain Store (La Fonda Hotel); Customs House (Bond Plumbing Property); Juan Santistevan’s Home; Peter Joseph Property (West side of Plaza); Francisco Jaramillo Home (Beimer Chevron); First Masonic Hall (Texaco Service Station); Guadalupe Chapel (Ufer Studio). In reviewing this list today, one realizes that some 1962 occupants of historic premises also have passed into the historic records category.

Another typed, undated list, titled “Historic Sites-Key,” bears Mrs. Herschel Colbert’s name. Preceding each site is an alphabetical code letter that suggests the list accompanied a map. Sites listed within this key are Cruz Alta; Napinos and Scheurich homes on Teresina Lane; buildings on Kit Carson Street: a. Los Artesanos, b. Blue Door (old Wengert residence), c. Couse house, d. Sharp house; the entire west side of the plaza; the Antonio Joseph property; Padre Martinez House and Martinez Lane; Rosenda Martinez

house (occupied by Captain Montoya who was killed in the rebellion); San Antonio Chapel on Oratorio Lane; the Harwood Foundation (home of Captain Simpson family); Galeria Escondida (owned by the Lacrinaga and Trujillo families); Beaubien Clothier residence on LeDoux Street; Valdez house in Loma plaza; Jeantet house at the west tip of La Loma; the residences of a. O. E. Berninghaus, b. Blumenscheins on LeDoux Street, c. Dunton in Loma plaza, d. Victor Higgins on Morado Road, e. Ward Lockwood on Ledoux Street, f. Phillips on Pueblo Road; Guadalupe Plaza; and the property owned by Eric Gibbard (the old Santistevan home on Santistevan Street). The proposed list of historic sites had evolved considerably from Colbert's original dozen suggestions to those named within her "Historic Sites-Key."

Taos historians had started documenting historic sites within the Taos district several decades earlier. In May 1936, Taos resident Blanche C. Grant wrote a half page paragraph describing Sentinel Hill, an old Indian trail, the Penitente morada, and the foundation stones of an old house used both by Indians and Spanish settlers when on watch for hostile Indians. In a June 6, 1936, 810-word manuscript titled "U.S. Hill Circle Drive," Grant included historic data for Embudo, Dixon, the Picurís Pueblo, the settlements of Rio Lucio, Peñasco (Santa Barbara), Las Trampas, El Valle, Llano, Vadito, and Talpa plus Cantonment Burgwin. Grant's article described landmarks, rivers, and old roads as well as historic buildings and other features.

Reyes Martinez prepared a 1490-word manuscript, dated October 12, 1936, titled "Taos County West of the Rio Grande." Martinez focused on cultural traditions as related to the piñon forest and identified landforms pertinent to Taos' story: *El Cerro de las Orejas, Cerro de los Taoses, El Cerreto [sic] del Huerfano, Cerro Montoso, El Cerro de la Olla, Pelones, Los Agaujes, Los Bueyes, El Cerro del Chiflo, El Cerro de San Antonio, and El Cerro del Aire*, so named for a perpetual column of air blowing from a supposedly bottomless hole.

Blumenschein, who wrote and self-published several books about Taos Valley, was not only a stickler for accuracy but also unrelenting in ferreting out dates. In a letter dated February 17, 1966, and in other memos, she commented about information appearing on historic signs:

- Santa Cruz de la Cañada with its large church was founded in 1695.
- Ojo Sarco already had a small sign, but the hill section of the old road west to Embudo was particularly significant and should be mentioned.
- Velarde was a family name that had replaced that settlement's name of La Joya. The earliest name actually was "Olla." (Blumenschein noted in her letter and again in a memo that the sign at Velarde incorrectly had Vargas fighting the Taos Indians at that location instead of near Taos Pueblo.)
- The sign at the Rio Grande Gorge incorrectly suggested the modern highway followed a historic trail. (Blumenschein had identified Taos Valley's historic trails with fords of the Rio Grande located at Arroyo Hondo, the mouth of Rio Pueblo de Taos, and west of Pilar.⁴)
- Dynamiting the granite hill at Pilar completed "Camino Militar," the U. S. Military Road (1860-1875). Prior to the American Period, travelers from Santa Fe turned east to Embudo Pass. Pack trains and expeditions used the road designated as the "Camino Real" by Anza in 1779.
- The U. S. Hill route, built between 1852 and 1860, connected Ft. Union and Camp Burgwin.
- In 1760, Bishop Tameron gave the settlers at Las Trampas a license to build a church, which was located on the summer wagon road that passed through Picurís.
- The sign for Taos indicated the village as founded in 1615. Blumenschein's correction read that Taos Valley was colonized after 1629 when Fray Miranda completed the Taos Pueblo Mission Church.

In June of 1962, the Taos Historical Society received a request from Franke and Cornell, Inc., planning consultants for the Town of Taos, for corrections in the names of existing streets and suggestions for naming new streets. In conducting a complete survey of Taos streets, Mr. Felix D. Valdes worked with Pasqual Martinez, who had been responsible for the official naming of Taos streets in 1933-34. A letter signed by Mrs. Herschel M. Colbert, Felix D. Valdes, Mrs. Joan Reed, L.L. Feight, and Brice Sewell requested that the mayor and city council reaffirm as official names: *those appearing unchanged on the Taos map as well as the corrections re-establishing original names plus additional names for new streets, as requested by the planning consultants.* (Possibly, the Taos map showing original street names and recommended names for new streets also contained the code markings for the historic sites.)

The "List of Corrections and New Names for the Streets of the Town of Taos" referred to the following numbered sites as placed on the aforementioned map:

1. *Don Fernando goes from the NW corner of the Plaza west to Saavedra and Santistevan streets.*
2. *Santistevan Street instead of Camino de la Loma.*
3. *Trujillo Lane from intersection of Don Fernando and Santistevan.*
4. *San Antonio Lane instead of Camino del Ranchito Arriba from Lower Ranchito west to Valverde Street.*
5. *Oratorio Lane instead of San Antonio Lane.*
6. *Jeantet Lane on SE corner of Loma Plaza.*
7. *Baca Rd. instead of Ojitos Rd. in eastern section from Santa Fe Highway to Raton Highway.*
8. *Morado Road instead of Lujan Lane.*

9. *De Tevis Lane.*
10. *River Drive instead of Ranchito-Placita Road.*
11. *Montano Lane (1 block south of Brooks Street).*
12. *Simpson Road instead of Vocational School Road.*
13. *Randall Lane.*
14. *La Posta Road instead of (West) Cruz Alta, between Camino del Medio and Santa Fe Highway.*
15. *Hogar instead of Hagur (de Bellas Artes).*
16. *La Serna Lane.*
17. *Frontier Road.*
18. *Cordoba Road.*
19. *unnamed.*
20. *Monte Vista Street (in Floyd Santistevan's Subdivision).*
21. *non-existent.*
22. *not named, map in error, road goes all the way through to Camino del Medio.*
23. *non-existent.*
24. *Road to the Dump; map in error, road goes all the way through to Camino del Medio.*
25. *[blank]*
26. *No attempt was made re: Canon Streets.*
27. *unnamed.*

The Taos Historical Society's mission of identifying, registering, and marking sites significant to the cultural and historic heritage of Taos Valley eventually brought national recognition to several sites. On July 25, 1963, during ceremonies commemorating Kit Carson's Taos home as a national landmark, Kit Carson III of Alamosa, Colorado, raised a 36-star flag, symbolic of the flag under which his ancestor had served as a brigadier general.⁵ Through the efforts of Blumenschein, Jack Boyer, Frances Colbert, Corina Santistevan, Guadalupe Vaughn, and other Taos County Historical Society members, a number of sites in Taos Valley, many appearing on the lists prepared in 1962, became part of the "State Register of Cultural Properties" and/or the "National Register of Historic Places":

File #	Site	State Register	National Register
• 783	San Ysidro Oratorio	9/16/80	1/05/84
• 174	Camino Real		4/20/70
• 833	Andrew Dasburg House	9/04/81	
• 696	Duran Chapel	9/20/78	
• 405	Molinas de los Duranes	8/20/75	
• 51	Ranchos de Taos Plaza	3/21/69	10/02/78
• 24	San Francisco de Assisi Mission Church	12/20/68	4/15/70
• 790	St. Vrain's Mill Site	10/31/80	
• 409	Vigil Torreon	8/20/75	
• 50	Governor Bent House	3/21/69	11/16/78
• 6	Blumenschein House	12/20/68	10/15/66
• 8	Kit Carson House	12/20/68	10/15/66
• 246	Chapel of San Miguel del Valle	5/20/72	
• 718	Fechin House	6/20/79	12/31/79
• 705	Leon Gaspard House	10/20/78	2/23/79
• 362	Harwood Foundation	2/20/75	12/22/76
• 530	E. Martin Hennings House	5/18/90	7/05/90
• 661	La Loma Plaza	4/15/82	7/08/82
• 540	Mabel Dodge Luhan House	12/20/77	11/15/78
• 763	Manby House	1/25/80	
• 202	Severino Martinez House	9/20/70	4/23/73
• 368	Morada de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe	2/28/75	6/29/76
• 216	Millicent Rogers Foundation	5/20/71	
• 272	Taos County Courthouse	5/09/86	
• 860	Taos Downtown Historic District	4/15/82	7/08/82
• 802	Taos Inn	4/03/81	2/05/82
• 243	Taos Pueblo	3/20/72	10/15/66

“BENT LODGE NO. 42 - A.F. & A.M.”

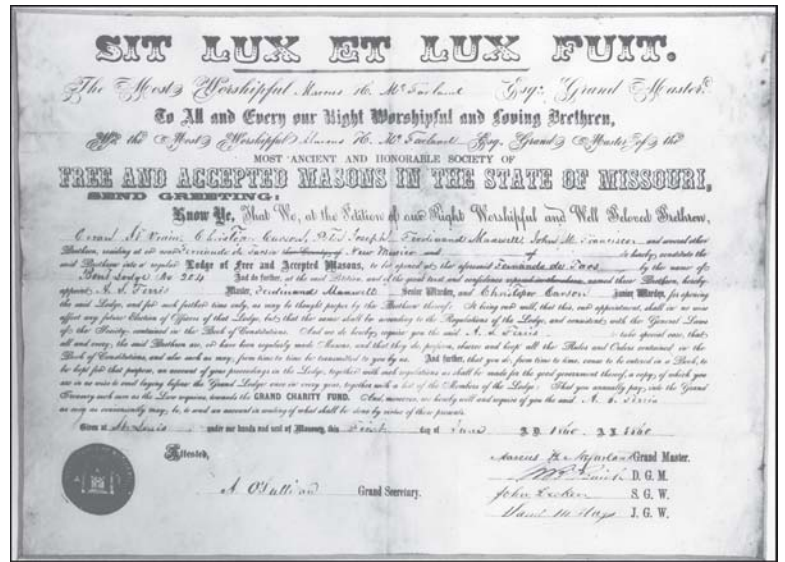
by Dave Cordova, Past Master

What is that old adobe building behind Quality Inn in Taos? It appears to be an old abandoned house, but every now-and-then there is a lot of activity there and the parking lot fills with cars.

That building houses an honorable fraternity, steeped in the history of America, the Southwest and Taos known as the Freemasons. More specifically, it is the Lodge Temple of Bent Lodge No. 42.

Freemasonry in Taos goes back to the 19th Century Americans who came to the Southwest in search of adventure, trade and a good life. These were Masons from lodges east of the Mississippi. Among these men were Kit Carson, Lucien Maxwell, the Bent brothers and Dr. David Waldo. These men had to travel many miles to attend lodge meetings in Santa Fe, Las Vegas and Ft. Union, then located in Watrous, NM. Kit Carson himself was made a Mason in 1854 at Montezuma Lodge in Santa Fe and frequently made the trip to attend the monthly meetings, traveling at night by the light of the moon.

In 1859, several Taos Masons petitioned the Grand Lodge of Missouri for a Charter to open a lodge in Taos. At the time, the Missouri Grand Lodge was closest to points west and had previously chartered Montezuma in Santa Fe, Aztec in Las Cruces and Union at Ft. Union. The petitioners for a lodge at Taos were Ceran St. Vrain, Christopher Carson, Peter Joseph, Ferdinand Maxwell and John Francisco and a lodge charter was granted under the name of Bent Lodge 204, so named in commemoration of massacred Mason Governor Charles Bent. The first officers were A.S. Ferris, Master; Ferdinand Maxwell, Senior Warden; and Christopher Carson, Junior Warden. The first meetings were held in the home of Ferdinand Maxwell before establishing a more permanent lodge in the second floor of Maxwell’s Mercantile. In 1861, Bent Lodge



forest and cut down trees for the vigas, made many adobes and bought some, mixed mud and laid the adobes and took care of the electrical and plumbing of the building. There is a story about a convoy of six or more pickup trucks driving to the Raton rail yards to load the many sacks of cement for the floors and sidewalks, a testament of a lot of very hard work done with care and love.

The Brethren of Bent Lodge erected more than a building; they built an institution which has endured 55 years and has been a place that not only serves the Masonic Fraternity, but has served the Taos community in many ways. With its kitchen and large dining room, the members of the Lodge sponsor pancake breakfasts to raise funds for charitable organizations, such as Taos Feeds Taos, Taos County Crime Stoppers, Taos Optimists Club, Masonic Charity Foundation, Ensueños Y Los Angelitos, Taos Cross-Country Team and Taos County Historical Society among others. The dining room has been used for graduation, birthday and baptism parties, for memorials, dance and singing groups. Recently, the Unitarian Church of Taos began holding their Sunday services open to the public. The building is not open all the time, but when it is, stop in and look around. When a Mason present, you may ask to see the more private parts of the Lodge, including the Lodge Room which features a photo gallery of all but two of the Past Masters since 1909. The Past Masters who have passed on are on the north wall and the living are on the south wall. All the photos are found at www.bentlodge42.org.

Again, there was not a lodge in Taos until the Grand Lodge of New Mexico (chartered in 1877) was pressured into taking a protective role in the preservation of Brother Kit Carson’s home. A plan was formulated to resurrect Bent Lodge, this time under a New Mexico Charter, and Bent Lodge No. 42 was chartered in 1909 and charged with the stewardship of protecting Kit Carson’s home. From that time until 1962, the Lodge held its meetings in different locations. That year, property donated by the Albright and Gusdorf families on Camino de Santiago was used to erect a Spanish hacienda-style building to house a permanent meeting place.

The members of the Lodge in 1962 worked many months to plan, finance and build the structure as it stands today. In the photo, you see Bro. Charles Randall digging the foundation on his company’s excavator. There are no photos of the other men, Brothers of the Lodge, who sacrificed their time and efforts for the cause. It was all very hard work, without the modern labor-saving devices. The men went into the



“A GLIMPSE OF EARLY EDUCATION IN TAOS”

by Enos Garcia

Indian Rule

Many centuries ago the Indians found their way into the Southwest, into New Mexico, and finally into what is now Taos County. Exactly when and whence they came are still largely matters of conjecture, but all the evidence shows that in prehistoric times a multitude of Indians passed their lives in the valleys and mountains of what is now the County of Taos. Most of these Indians had settled in villages to which the Spaniards applied the name *pueblo*, to distinguish them from the Indians of the plains, and had attained considerable progress in civilization.

The houses were built of *adobes* (sun-dried brick) and the work was done by the women with the help from the men only in quarrying stone or bringing and putting into place the heavy beams used in making the roof. All this work was done by the hands of men and women, for the Pueblo Indians had no horses or other beasts of burden until the Spaniards brought them in the seventeenth century.

Whatever rule or form of government existed during this time was originated in the inner-sanctum of the *kivas*. These were ceremonial chambers, round or square, generally underground, entered by a ladder through a trap-door in the top, and heated in very cold weather by a fire built in a pit in the center of the floor. The *kiva* was the center of the life of the clan. In it the men assembled to discuss war and peace, to engage in religious rites, and to prepare for the great pagan festivals and other ceremonial occasions. Though the houses belonged to the women, the *kivas* belonged to the men.¹

The First White Men

According to Ralph Emerson Twitchel in his *Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, an account of the first white men to visit the present site of Taos County reads as follows:

Following up the Rio Grande from this point (the Spaniards had been at San Juan Pueblo) the Spanish came to a village which they (the Indians) called Braba, and which the Spaniards named Valladolid. This river was crossed by the natives upon wooden bridges, made of very long, squared logs. Here the Spaniards saw the largest and finest “hot rooms or *estufas* that there were in the entire country, for they had a dozen pillars, each one of which was twice as large around as one could reach and twice as tall as a man.” Castaneda says that Hernando de Alvarado also visited Taos at the time he discovered Cicuye. Leaving the people of this province entirely at peace, Captain Barrionuevo and his party returned by quick marches down the valley to the winter quarters at Tiguex.²

Francisco de Barrionuevo was captain under the great explorer Francisco Vasquez Coronado, and Hernando de Alvarado was one of his lieutenants. Alvarado visited Taos in the year 1540 and Barrionuevo went there the following year. Taos was not again visited by white men until the year 1590, when Castaño de Sosa, the lieutenant governor of Nuevo Leon, entered New Mexico with a command of 170 persons and fought his way through all the Indian *pueblos*, going as far north as the present site of the County of Taos. Eight years later the “great colonizer,” Don Juan de Oñate, visited Taos on July 14, 1598. A few years later the Taos *pueblo* was mentioned in a record made by Fray Alonzo de Benevidez concerning a great miracle that took place there. Fray Francisco de Zamora was assigned as minister to the Taos Indians in 1602, but the mission of San Geronimo was not founded until about 1617, its establishment being attributed probably to Fray Pedro de Miranda.³

Nothing more is mentioned concerning the white men in Taos until the year 1627 when a document was found dated in this year giving a description of the Indian *pueblo* and the conversion of the 1,627 inhabitants. This report was made by an unknown priest.⁴

The Spanish and explorers came and went for over half a century before mention is given again to this area. This was in 1680, the year of the Indian uprising.

Indian Revolt

Taos and vicinity, prior to the revolution of 1680, was not very thickly populated by Spain. In truth there were comparatively few settlers so far north in the province, which at that time contained approximately 2,800 Spanish inhabitants, most of whom had their farms in the valley of the Rio Grande, south of Santa Fe.

There were thirty-two Franciscan missionaries in the province at the time of the revolt. Of this number, twenty one were killed on the day of the revolt. Of the entire population 1950, including eleven priests and 155 men capable of bearing arms, made their escape to Paso del Norte. At the time of the revolt Taos had two resident missionaries, Fray Antonio de Mora and Fray Juan de Pedrosa, both of whom were killed. The monastery at Taos was burned. The Fray at Picuris was Matior Rendon, who was also murdered.

The Indian leader, *Popé*, having been driven from San Juan, came to Taos, where he became exceedingly active in preparing for the revolt. It was known at Taos and Picuris that the revolution was set for August 13, 1680, but in fact it broke out three days earlier than expected. Early in the morning of August 10 the Taos Indians and their allies, the Apaches and the Jicarillas, attacked the settlers, who were a little over seventy in all, and a bloody massacre followed. Out of the general slaughter only two managed to escape, Don Sebastian de Herrera and Don Fernando de Chavez. They found their way to Santa Fe but upon seeing the town besieged by the Indians they made their way further south, where three days later they joined the refugees at Isleta. After their victory over the Spaniards the Taos Indians and their allies went south to Santa Fe, where they helped drive out the remaining of the white men.

During the period 1680 to 1692 the Indians at Taos went back to their pagan customs and mode of living; however it did not take long for the different tribes to begin waging war against each other. The Taos Indians suffered great losses at the hands of the Ute tribe. The feuding wars among the tribes came to an end with the return of the white men in 1692.

De Vargas Reconquest

In the latter part of the month of September of the year 1692 General Don Diego de Vargas Ponce de Leon Zapata Lujan arrived in the northern settlements to reconquer the land from the Indians. General de Vargas arrived at Taos in October of the same year but found no one, as the Indians had fled to the mountains upon hearing of his coming to their *pueblo*. After some persuasion the leaders came down and a treaty was

agreed upon, but this was not for long. General De Vargas again went to Taos to quiet the uprising but once more found no one there. The Indians again had taken to the hills and nothing could persuade them to come down. This retreat to the mountains lasted until 1696, when they finally submitted to a peace treaty.

The series of revolts against Spanish authority now ceased, but the Indians and settlers of Taos County had other difficulties. Their old enemies the Utes, and their new ones, the Comanches, were almost constantly hostile, and Taos, being the pueblo most exposed and remote in the north, suffered a great deal from the attacks of these tribes. These attacks were made upon them in 1716 and in 1760, in the latter years the Comanches killing many of the Indians and settlers and capturing fifty women.

Because of its strategic location, Taos *pueblo* gradually became a great trading center for the Indians of the mountain regions and of the large parties to the east. The Spaniards and others established the town of Fernandez de Taos, three miles south of the pueblo. This place in time assumed and maintained an importance equal to that of the capital of the territory. Among her citizens were to be found some who took the lead in the territory in almost all lines of thought and action, namely the Presbyter Antonio Martinez, Kit Carson, Carlos Beaubien, Don Carlos Bent, Ceran St. Vrain, and many others.

Education During the Spanish and Mexican Occupations

Prior to the coming of the Franciscans, who brought with them the Old World concepts of education, the Indians of the Southwest already had evolved a traditional system of instruction which suited their needs. Indian youths were taught the meaning of tribal dances and legends, the making of pottery, the construction of dwelling places, the preparation of food herbs, and the conversion of pelts and hides into clothing.

They were also taught the unwritten laws of certain commandments of right living such as no drinking, no sodomy, no sacrifices, no eating of human flesh, and no stealing; that a man had but one wife, and that they bury their dead and with them the implements used in their work; that when a man wished to marry, the arrangements were made by those who governed, and the man had to spin and weave a blanket and place it before the woman who covered herself with it and became his wife; that the houses belonged to the women and the *estufas* to the men; that the men did the spinning and weaving, and the women reared the children and prepared the food.

These village Indians had, of course, no written language in which to record their history and ideals. Instead, they possessed an abundance of traditional lore, taught by the older generation to the younger with great care and as a social duty. Like most histories of ancient peoples, it may well be said that the Indians' attitude toward life was based entirely upon some kind of religious belief. Throughout his life almost every act might be called religious. When he got up in the morning, when he lay down at night, when he went forth to hunt, when he killed his game, even when he took a scalp in war, he did certain definite things in certain definite ways. In other words he acted according to ritual.

This level of primitive Indian education may seem very insignificant to many educators today, but its importance to the natives of that time cannot be overlooked. It may well be considered that in order to get a clear and concise picture of the development of the history of education in Taos County, it is of importance to pause briefly and give thought to the role played by these natives who had been occupying this area hundreds of years before the coming of the first white men.

Education Attempts During the Spanish Occupation

Even though as early as 1590 the lieutenant governor of Nuevo Leon, Mexico, came up north as far as the county of Taos, no mention was made by historians regarding formal education in this area.

The few Spanish *conquistadores* referred to earlier in this work, who came to explore this new land, were more interested in securing material wealth quickly than they were in establishing colonies. With the coming of the missionaries, whose main purpose was to convert the Indians to the Christian faith, the neophytes began to attend early mission schools where they were taught the mass in Latin. In March, 1609, the viceroy instructed Governor Peralta, who was about to come north, "to teach all the Indians, especially the children, the Spanish language." No provision was made, however, for the formal education of descendants of the Spanish *conquistadores* until as late as 1721, when public schools were established in New Mexico by royal decree. Little came of this, as the schools were closed shortly afterwards for lack of funds. Not until Mexico won its independence from Spain was a practical movement launched toward general education for the common people. Meanwhile instruction for the Indians and Spaniards was left entirely to the church. This led to the founding of at least one mission school in each Spanish settlement and similar schools in the other Indian *pueblos* besides Taos and Picuris.

Educational Attempts During the Mexican Era

In the beginning of the year 1822 the new government under the Mexican Republic went quietly into effect. When Facundo Melgares, the last Spanish governor, turned his office over to Francisco Xavier Chaves, the first Mexican political chief, on July 5, the change was complete.

Even though the Mexican regime was to last but a scant twenty-five years, it was during this period that Padre Antonio Jose Martinez played such an important role in the educational development in the county of Taos as well as throughout the northern part of the Territory. A short resumé of his life, his works, and some of his many accomplishments are clearly stated in the *New Mexico Historical Review*:

Antonio Jose Martinez was born in Abiquiu, New Mexico, January 17, 1793, the son of Antonio Severino Martinez and Maria del Carmel Santistevan. At the age of five, that is October, 1797, he entered the primary school and in two years learned to read, write correctly and a little arithmetic. In March, 1804, his family moved to Taos, where the boy brought in wood on his shoulders and kept the cows, although the family had some small means. At the age of fourteen they put him to work in the fields taking care of animals on the hacienda and looking after the mules on some journeys. He always, however, took every opportunity to read, write and extend



sacraments. He continued his studies at home until 1839, principally in the civil law as well as the ecclesiastical law. After passing through the customary rites he was ordained *presbiterio* February 10, 1822, and sang his first mass on the 19th of the same month. Having passed the usual examination he qualified for the confession, preaching, and other services of ministry June 1. He practiced these ceremonies until January, 1823, when he returned to his father's house. From November of that year until March 1824 he served as substitute curate of Tome and in May 1826 was placed in charge of the curacy of Santo Tomas de Abiquiu. In July of the same year he was entrusted with the curacy of Taos which he afterwards served, first provisionally and finally by regular appointment. In September he stopped serving Abiquiu due to the impossibility of serving that place as well as Taos, under which jurisdiction were a number of other places. In 1856 he asked for an assistant at Taos and one was allotted to him.

As early as 1829 Martinez became involved in a dispute regarding tithes, as he protested against the heavy obligations which these brought on the poor. As a result of these, he states, the poor buried their dead without being married because they had no money with which to pay for the wedding. Against these practices he made a protest to the deputation of the Territory at the city of Santa Fe which finally reached the Congress of Mexico, and being aided by other individuals the tithes were removed in 1833. Between 1830 and 1833 he wrote a book on religious toleration which was enlarged, and provided with a prologue and appendix, but he did not state that it was printed.

From 1826 to 1856 he was engaged in educating young people of both sexes in reading, writing and arithmetic and at the time scheduled a special school for pupils who wished to enter the holy orders, teaching them Latin, grammar, religion, moral theology, etc. Twenty-seven of these, he said, were ordained by Bishop Zubiria and three by Bishop Lamy. Others studied only grammar, rhetoric and the principals of logic. During the years of 1830 and 1831, 1836, 1845 and 1846, he served as a deputy in the Territorial Assembly in Santa Fe. He also served under the American rule as president of the Convention on organizing a territory in October, 1848, and in 1851 as president of the Council of the first Legislative Assembly and as a member of the Assembly in 1852 and in 1861. In 1843 he prepared an *Exposicion* on the barbarous Indians who surrounded New Mexico, that they be civilized. This he sent to the president of the Republic who recommended it to the consideration of the Assembly of New Mexico. In December 1847 he headed a petition in favor of annexation to the United States. On June 20, 1850, a constitution for a state government was adopted by a convention of which Martinez was President.

In October, 1856, Bishop Lamy, who had become Bishop in 1850, suspended him from his office on account of some articles that he had published in the Gazette of Santa Fe, criticizing a circular of the Bishop of January 14, 1854, in which a rule was laid down that the *curas* were prohibited from administering the sacraments or giving ecclesiastical burial to the heads of the families who refused to deliver the tithes which were due them. Martinez took exception to this, basing his action on the ecclesiastical law, and published some articles in which he demonstrated the evil results of following this circular letter. He did not resign his curacy and in 1862 was excommunicated by the Bishop. He answered this by a published manifesto and still continued to officiate as parish priest of Taos until he died on July 28, 1867. Before his death he demanded that he be buried in his own chapel and he was so buried by Father Lucero, one of his followers.

Historians give accounts of Padre Antonio Jose Martinez' cleverness and foresight in realizing the handicaps that the people in Taos County were undergoing. He also knew that the conditions would get worse and worse unless something was done about them. He sensed that the Mexican rule was not there to stay for long and, with the new immigrants coming from the eastern part of the United States, he would have to get some of the members of the younger generation prepared to meet the new element. He realized that the only way would be by means of education through proper schooling. This he set out to do.

Taos, Cradle of New Mexico's Formal Education

It was the pleasure and privilege of the writer to interview one of Padre Martinez' direct descendents, L. Pascual Martinez, concerning the first school opened in this area during the Mexican Occupation. The first students to attend classes in the newly founded school were Padre Martinez' own nephews and other relatives. Before long, however, he had students attending from throughout the Territory. This school was opened for boys as well as for girls, but only boys attended. The few books that were used were printed on his own printing press which he had brought to Taos from Mexico. His original school was held in one of the rooms of his own house, which is the present Montaner home, and at first was solely for the purpose of preparing young men for the priesthood. Later he held a separate class of boys so he could teach them the fundamentals of reading, writing and numbers.

The seed of education was planted in many different places within the Territory, but as time went on, for unavoidable reasons, the growth stopped. This was not the case in Taos. Once Padre Martinez established his first school, it was not discontinued until it finally gave way to the public schools which were founded during the American Occupation. It is true that his schools operated within a rather narrow scope, but they truly may be called the cradle of the present New Mexico educational system.

Many outstanding men received their preliminary schooling under Padre Martinez' tutoring. Some of these students, who later became leaders in their communities, were Jose Manuel Gallegos, who served as a delegate during the American congress; Diego Archuleta, a prominent figure in the political affairs of New Mexico; Antonio Joseph and Francisco Manzanares, both United States congressmen; and Captain Francisco Gonzales, of the American army. It is said that an entire generation in the northern part of the Territory was influenced by Padre Martinez' teachings.

Attempts toward public schools

When Mexico won her independence from Spain on September 28, 1821, educational conditions in Taos County were at a low ebb. The Mexican Congress had directed the town councils throughout the Territory to organize primary schools in each settlement. The efforts made by the local authorities to establish public schools were not successful on account of the poverty of the people and the government. Voluntary subscriptions were asked by Governor Baca in July, 1825, for the purpose of establishing schools which were to be open to all. Only four schools were established on this basis of contributions, but Taos was not among them.

Regarding the schools in the Territory about this time Coan says:

In June, 1832, there were schools at Santa Fe, Bado, Cañada, Taos, Albuquerque and Belen. The salaries of the teachers were as follows: Santa Fe, 500 pesos; Cañada, 300; Albuquerque, 300; San Miguel, 250; Taos, 250; and Belen, 250. Antonio Barrerio stated that nothing was better supported than the schools, and that nothing was in worse shape. He accounted for this condition by stating that there were no capable teachers in the territory. The public schools were closed in October, 1834, due to the lack of funds. The school fund had 200 pesos in the treasury and a credit of 500 pesos due from Bartolome Baca to whom the tithes had been farmed. On account of action taken by the Mexican government the use of part of the tithes for school purposes came to an end in July, 1833. It was hoped that the visit by the Bishop of Durango in 1833 would result in fostering schools, but that dignitary was not able to render any assistance. When the public schools were closed the opening of private schools was authorized. (This was in 1834.)

Conditions in Taos County changed very little during the next ten years, which saw the coming of the American Occupation. Outside of the little one-room school sponsored by Padre Martinez, history has nothing to offer regarding education in this area.

Progress Made by Early Educational Pioneers

Education in the county of Taos remained in a very backward condition during the Spanish and Mexican Occupations. What little formal education was available at that time emphasized mostly religion and ancient languages and was totally lacking in modern history and geography. The missions established had always been primarily for the instruction of the Indians. All efforts at public education during these periods failed completely, due, in part, to the poverty of the people and to the lack of interest in schools for the masses. Education was still at a low ebb when New Mexico became a territory of the United States. Most of the missionaries, with the exception of Padre Martinez and a few others, had been driven out. The private teachers were poorly prepared; the population was sparse, and distances were great. The people, with very few exceptions, were uneducated themselves and did not see my practical value in education.

Education During the Territorial Days Under the American Occupation

General Stephen W. Kearny, commanding the army of the West, entered New Mexico via Raton Pass, reaching Las Vegas August 15, 1846. There he absolved the people from allegiance to Mexico and proclaimed himself governor. On August 18 General Kearney occupied Santa Fe without a shot being fired in his bloodless conquest and again declared the end of the Mexican period and the beginning of the American. This was officially announced by the firing of thirteen guns.

Before General Kearny left Arkansas for New Mexico two advance parties were sent, one to Taos and the other to Santa Fe. "Lieutenant De Courcay and twenty men went to Taos to determine the attitude of the people toward occupation of the country by the United States." Apparently Lieutenant De Courcay and his men found the citizens of Taos in a peaceful mood, because no report of his brief visit seems to be on record.

General Kearny hastened to organize a new government for New Mexico as a Territory of the United States and appointed Charles Bent as civil governor and Donaciano Vigil as secretary. This new government found educational conditions in Taos County almost at rock-bottom level.

First Educational Attempts

But for Padre Martinez' little one-room, private school, educational facilities for the masses were completely unavailable. Even this little school was an advantage which the rest of the Territory could not boast of. Conditions were just as bad every where else in the Territory, according to the report made by the acting governor, Donaciano Vigil, in 1847. All schools except one in Santa Fe had been discontinued. The urgent appeal of the governor's message was "to give all an equal chance of being educated. The appeal had no effect, and New Mexico went without schools, except an insignificant private school here and there."

To try to make a thorough study of the development that took place in the educational field in Taos County during this period is almost an impossibility. Truly, these must have been the dark ages in the county's fascinating history! Even though a few parochial and mission schools were being founded during these years, the coming generation was still growing up in ignorance. The American Congress proved to be as neglectful of education in New Mexico as Spain and Mexico had been.

It was not until the legislative session of 1891 that what may be called a comprehensive, modern, public school system was inaugurated. Governor Prince made that subject the salient point of his biennial message to the legislature, with a powerful appeal for immediate action. It was under this law that the present educational system in Taos County was organized.

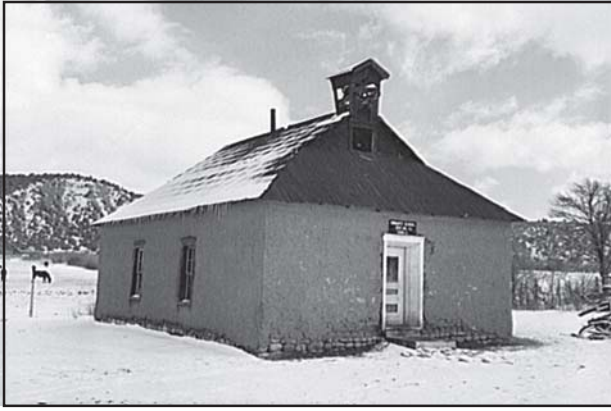
The law created the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which was to be filled by the governor's appointment, and a Territorial Board of Education comprised of the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the presidents of the University of New Mexico, the Agricultural College, and St. Michaels College. The act gave the Superintendent of Public Instruction powers of actual oversight of all the public schools in the territory.

At this same legislature the office of superintendent of schools for each county was created. This was to be an elective office for a period of two years. Amado Chavez held the first office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Territory of New Mexico and Ramon Sanchez was the first county superintendent for Taos. The powers exercised by the county superintendent were very extensive. Since there was no county board of education at this time, it was the superintendent who allotted the county school funds to the county schools, supervised the course of study, and approved all expenditures of the funds of the school districts. Each of the county districts had a school board of directors composed of three members. This board, with the approval of the county superintendent, hired the teachers and issued warrants for school expenditures. The district board of directors had much more authority in local school affairs than they do now. A great deal of the progress of the school depended on how actively they would work at their responsibilities.

Since the establishing of the first schools in Taos County, under the law of 1891, there have been only a few minor changes. The Territorial Board of Education became the State Department of Education and in 1912 the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction became elective instead of appointive as it had been since its creation.

Description of the First Schools

It was this writer's greatest endeavor to secure information regarding written records by historians giving a complete description of the type of schools found in Taos County during the period of 1846 to about 1875. This was an impossibility, as there seem to be no available sources of this nature. The information which follows is from interviews which the writer had with old-timers throughout the County concerning the first schools in this area.



One Room School House in Rodarte, NM

The descriptions of the schools were highly uniform from all sources. The typical school room was usually one of the rooms of a house which was temporarily vacated for this particular purpose. Sometimes the community would build a one-room structure made of adobe. The windows were very small and the lighting was very poor. Mr. Solomon Ortega of Peñasco made some very interesting and unique remarks concerning these windows. In the school he attended at Llano as a young lad, the light coming through the tiny window in the school would cast a streak across the floor, whereby the teacher could tell what time of day it was, as he did not have a clock nor own a watch.

The dirt of the floor often became loose. When it was swept, this loose dirt was used to fill the holes that some mischievous scholar had managed to dig during the course of the day. The ceiling was flat and covered with *latillas*. These were pieces

of round wood about three inches in diameter which extended from one beam to another, thus forming the support for the roof. The roof was also flat and covered with dirt. During rainy days the roof would leak and the students had quite a time trying to get away from the *goteras* (places where the roof was leaking). First, water would start coming down in one place, then in another, and still in another until the students felt it was more like a game instead of a classroom. Frequently, school would be dismissed for the day on this account.

The conventional adobe fireplace was a feature of great concern to those attending these schools. During the cold months, when the fires had to be kept going all day, these fireplaces played havoc with the entire student body. Those next to it would have to sit and bear the uncomfortable direct heat while those at the far end of the room nearly froze to death. To keep the necessary fire going each student was required to bring one piece of wood to school everyday. In a few cases the students were required to bring two pieces, one in the morning and one at noon. Sometimes this arrangement was profitable for the professor in charge. Mr. Antonio Pacheco from Arroyo Seco recalls how the teacher would take all the extra *leños* (pieces of wood) to his home at the end of each school day.

Every student was requested to bring his own seat from home. The seats varied from a crude piece of two boards nailed together to a sturdy, well-built stool which most of the scholars managed to obtain. Some of the schools, however, had nothing but a row of benches along the walls. Sometimes these benches were nothing but boards set on blocks of wood. None of these early schools had individual desks. Some of the more energetic teachers tried to overcome this inconvenience by building a long wooden table and placing it in the middle of the room. Different groups took turns using the table as occasion demanded.

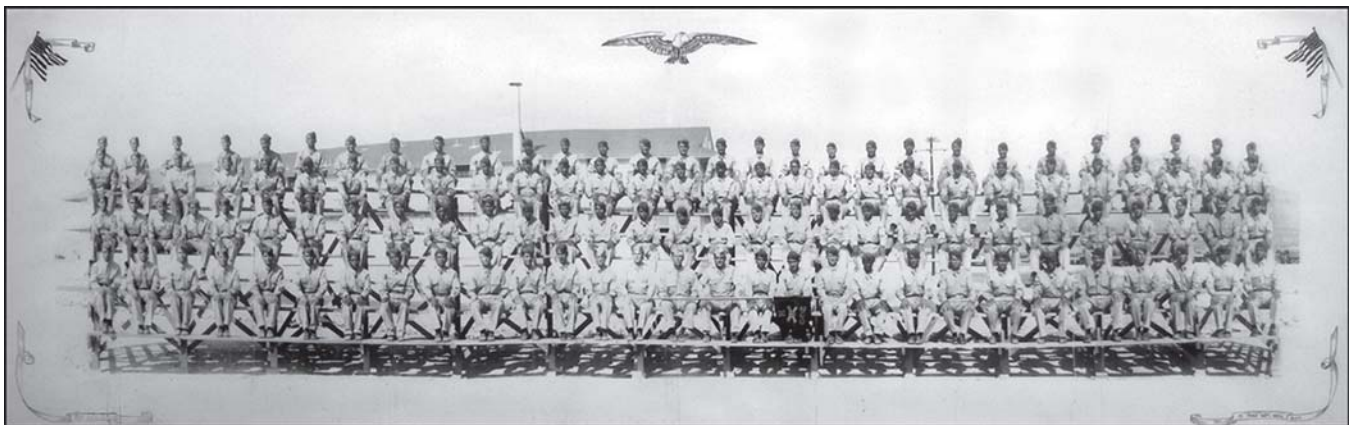
Classroom Supplies

Apparently books were not used for instruction in most of the early schools throughout this period. Later, however, a few texts began to be a more of a common sight in the school rooms, but even then they were very limited. All the texts used during these early days in Taos County were written in Spanish. The most popular books which came into use were *Las Cartillas*. These were a series of books which began with the alphabet, a few numbers, then worked up to words to be spelled, and finally advanced to reading and poems. Another series was referred to by the people interviewed as *Mantilla's*, deriving their name from the author whose name was Mantilla.

Other schools which were not fortunate enough to have books would manage with whatever they could obtain. The Bible, the Testaments, letters from home, and all similar literature helped the instructor get along as well as he could.

Most of the students brought with them their *pizarra* (slate) and their *pizarrin* (slate chalk) with which they did their writing. Others brought only a piece of cardboard.

75th Anniversary of the Bataan Death March 1942-2017



Lectures, Field Trips & Special Events
(Tentative Schedule)

May 7, 2017 - Honoree Luncheon
National Preservation Month

June 3, 2017 - Lecture
“Famous & Unusual Gravesites in New Mexico”
Dr. Richard Melzer
-*-

July 8, 2017 - Field Trip
Hacienda de los Torres in Arroyo Seco
David Torres
-*-

September 9, 2017 - Lecture
“Route 66 in New Mexico”
Baldwin Burr
-*-

Please visit our website for a complete schedule
-*-

First Saturday of the month at 2:00 PM
Kit Carson Coop Meeting Room
118 Cruz Alta Road - Taos

Taos County Historical Society
Board of Directors

President: Ernestina Cordova
Vice-president: Benton Bond
Treasurer: Joan Pond
Secretary: Judy Weinrobe
Member-at-large: Paul Figueroa

Board Members

Jennifer Felsburg • Dave Cordova
Mark Henderson • David Maes

Programs

Paul Figueroa

Membership

Jennifer Felsburg

Publications/Website

Dave Cordova

Hospitality

Elaine Montaña

Preservation

Charles Hawk

Folklore

David Maes

The Taos County Historical Society was formed in 1952 for the purpose of “...preserving the history of the Taos area.” This part of New Mexico has a fascinating history, full of people, events, stories and places.

If you are interested, we invite your participation in our field trips or lecture programs, or by supporting the Society by becoming a member.

BECOME A MEMBER

We invite your participation and support through an annual membership, which includes subscriptions to "Ayer Y Hoy" and our periodic newsletters. Other activities include recordings of oral histories, maintaining archive materials and participating in community events.

Membership categories:

Student	\$10
Individual	\$20
Family	\$30
Sustaining	\$50
Business	\$75
Lifetime	\$500

To become a member sign up on our website:
<http://taoscountyhistoricalsociety.org/members.html>
or send a check, along with your name and address, to:

TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 2447 - TAOS, NM 87571

For more information call (575) 770-0681
or e-mail: cordova@taosnet.com



Taos County Historical Society
PO Box 2447 i Taos, NM 87571