

TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 1968

The Taos County Historical Society letter wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Taos News for its September 12, 1968 supplement on the first Taos Society of Artists organized in 1912, the year New Mexico realized statehood.

If more people in this valley would just realize how closely the present reflects past actions we would not be making so many mistakes. In one breath we speak of the importance of tourism and at the same time destroy the atmosphere which has attracted people from all over the U.S.A.

On November 21, 1968 in the Harwood Community Room, 7:30 p.m. Mr. Merle Clark of the State Planning Office will speak to us on how at the federal and state levels New Mexico is going to preserve historic buildings and sites. He will help the Taos County Historical Society to map and photograph our sites in Taos Valley. He will be glad to answer the questions which will crop up, such as how will the state enforce the laws against vandalism of old pueblo ruins, old abandoned houses, etc and to what extent will the government pay the owner to restore old buildings or put them in repair? The Friends of Taos Valley have been invited to join us in this meeting as "two heads are better than one."

While the C. A. R. (Children of the American Revolution) step westward to help finance a recreation area and wilderness trail in the Carson National Forest and the Federal Government promotes the saving of historic sites all over the U. S. A. through the National Park Service, we in Taos County allow colorful "torreones" to crumble away. (A torreón was a two storey fortress tower to help fight off invading Plains Indians).

The old "Molinos" stone-wheeled flour mills propelled by the water of rivers and ditches were thick in Taos Valley where "the bread basket of the West" produced flour for the U. S. Army. Today all but one (on the Pueblo River) have gone into decay. The Taos County Historical Society several years ago, tried to

purchase one to be maintained by the family. The family did not sell it nor keep the roof in repair and it is now worthless rotten lumber which has lost all its meaning.

Evidently the Blue Lake question was shelved again which means the Taos Indian Pueblo will have to start from scratch. Perhaps if they would ask for less acreage next time they would be more likely to succeed, say 35,000 acres instead of the 50,000 acres.

It should be realized that the Taos Mountain is their sacred mountain as well as Blue Lake their sacred lake.

Which statement brings me to announce our paid speaker next May 1969 will be Miss Editha Watson. She will show slides and speak about the sacred places and mountains of the Navajo tribe. I would also like to announce the publication of Laura Gilpin's book this month The Enduring Navajo. This book culminates 30 years of photographing the Navajo. Her text too is excellent.

The Taos County Historical Society will continue its annual historic sites tour the first week in June. The petroglyphs tour last summer was greatly enjoyed by professionals from Texas as well as our amateurs.

Will our members express what they would like to see in June, Pike's Stockade in Colorado or ghost towns, mines, El Camino Real or old houses, etc.?

Put on your calendar July 9, 1969 when El Camino Real will be dedicated by the C. A. R. and the Carson Forest with the Taos Chamber of Commerce assisting with hospitality. A new forest lookout picnic area on top of the U. S. Hill will be the location of the dedication. More about that in June.

El Camino Real entered the Picuris Mountains by Telephone Canyon on the south side of the mountain and down the Miranda Canyon on the north side. This later became the east boundary of the La Serna Grant in 1710 and is now the west fence of the Carson Forest in that area to the top of the Picuris Saddle.

In 1692 de Vargas referred to the "Paraje de Miranda" on his expedition from

Santa Fe to Taos via the Picuris Pueblo. He passed this way again in 1694 and 1696.

This designation, El Camino Real was first mentioned in his military Journal by Col. de Anza in 1779 when he came through Taos on his return to Santa Fe after the ambush he successfully made on the Comanches near Rye, Colorado.

"Miranda" probably is in memory of Fray Miranda who was stationed at the Taos Pueblo. He was killed in 1639.

Another traveler on this road was Bishop Tameron 1760 on his "Visitation to New Mexico." He was the first Bishop to take the trouble to see the priests under his jurisdiction. The arch-diocese was based at Durango, Mexico. Most of this trip was on horseback covering at least 2,000 miles and he was in his 60's. Incidentally he had previously established a University in Caracas, Venezuela before being sent to Durango, Mexico.

In 1776 Fray Anastasio Dominguez came to Taos when checking inventories of all the missions in New Mexico. These two men wrote journals which you would enjoy reading as well as the notes of Fray Benavides in 1630.

Where the three trails cross the Picuris Mountain was not too difficult to determine since the mountain forms such a high barrier to the south of Taos Valley. ⁸⁴⁰.. 10,000 feet high at the fire lookout. On some maps the Picuris Mountain is called U. S. Mountain. Col. Price called it Taos Mountain.

Finally in 1854 the U. S. Army built the present crossing over the U. S. Hill to connect Fort Union with other forts in ^{present} Colorado. Taos Valley soon was to become rich in wheat fields.

Mrs. Fish will finish her index on the tapes now available from the 8 years of the Taos County Historical Society's many speakers. The Taos County Historical Society will also condense one of the more interesting hour long talks into a history letter for the members in 1969. These will be the two newsletters in 1969.

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November 21st is also the day for election of the officers for 1969. Dues for the year are only \$2.00 per person. Come and vote.

1968 has been a year of alarm and confusion for many. To those who have followed the prehistory and history of our widely divergent country, today's events are not so surprising. If only we would heed the words of wisdom of the past we could avoid many errors in the future. We seem to make the same mistakes every 20 years.

Helen G. Blumenschein
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(Other members include: Jacob Bernal,
Elmer Shupe and Jack Boyer)

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