About the Taos Historic Museums

**Hacienda de los Martinez**

The Hacienda de los Martinez is one of the few northern New Mexico style, late Spanish Colonial period, "Great Houses" remaining in the American Southwest. Built in 1804 by Severino Martin (later changed to Martinez), this fortress-like building with massive adobe walls became an important trade center for the northern boundary of the Spanish Empire. The Hacienda was the final terminus for the Camino Real which connected northern New Mexico to Mexico City. The Hacienda also was the headquarters for an extensive ranching and farming operation.

Severino and his wife Maria del Carmel Santistevan Martinez raised six children in the Hacienda. Their eldest son was the famous Padre Antonio Martinez who battled the French Bishop Lamy to preserve the Hispanic character of the Catholic Church in the territory. The Padre was a dynamic social reformer who created the first co-educational school in New Mexico and brought the first printing press to Taos.

After Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821, Severino Martinez and his family became active in trading with the Americans who were bringing badly needed trade goods in by the Santa Fe Trail.

Today the Hacienda's twenty-one rooms surrounding two courtyards provide the visitor with a rare glimpse of the rugged frontier life and times of the early 1800s. Additionally, regularly scheduled demonstrations present the continuing traditions of northern New Mexico.

The Hacienda is on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior.

**E.L. Blumenschein Home**

Welcome to the home of E.L. Mary Greene, and Helen Blumenschein!

Located on historic Ledoux Street in downtown Taos, the E.L. Blumenschein Home and Museum is maintained much as it was when the artist and his family were alive. The home is filled with a superb collection of the Blumenschein family's art, a representative sampling of works by other famous Taos artists, fine European and Spanish Colonial style antiques, and the family's lifetime of personal possessions. The home beautifully illustrates the lifestyle of Taos artists in the first half of the twentieth century.

In the early autumn of 1898, a fortuitous accident resulted in Taos becoming a great American art colony. Having recently returned from studies in Paris, young American artists Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert G. Phillips were on a sketching trip from Denver to northern Mexico when the wheel of their surrey slipped into a deep rut and broke on the mountainous road just north of Taos. Ernest Blumenschein made the twenty-mile trek to Taos with the broken wheel. The ensuing delay gave them time to become captivated by the spectacular landscape and remarkable cultures of the Taos Valley. Thus began a great experiment in American art. Blumenschein and Phillips spread the word about the incredible beauty of Taos and urged other artists to come and see for themselves. Shortly thereafter, many artists came and saw; some of them came and stayed.

In July 1915, E.L. Blumenschein, Bert Phillips, Joseph Henry Sharp, and fellow Taos artists, Oscar E. Berninghaus, E. Irving Couse and W. Herbert "Buck" Dunton, created the Taos Society of Artists. The society was formed to promote the artists’ work through annually organized traveling exhibitions to several major American cities. These exhibitions brought considerable attention to both the artist and Taos, resulting in ever greater numbers of artists coming here and wishing to participate in the Society. The Society which grew to include twenty-one members and associate members was active until March of 1927 when it was officially disbanded. By that time, Taos had become known as a significant American art colony.

Blumenschein came back nearly every summer until 1919, when he and his wife, Mary Greene Blumenschein, purchased four rooms from a fellow member of the Taos Society of Artists, W. Herbert “Buck” Dunton. Between 1919 and 1931, the Blumenscheins acquired several of the adjoining rooms and remodeled and adapted the home to its present layout. One portion of the home was constructed in 1797, making it an example of some of the oldest standing architecture in town. The house formed part of the outer wall of the village which was built for defense against marauding Native American tribes, principally the Comanches to the east.

Today the entire home is furnished with the Blumenscheins’ original belongings and paintings. Rooms were arranged by Helen to be much as they had been when the family was living there.

Some of the paintings by other members of the Taos Society of Artists and later artists were donated to the museum by members of the community as a tribute to the early years of the art colony.

In 1962 Helen Greene Blumenschein gave the family’s home and furnishings as a gift to the community of Taos and the Kit Carson Historic Museums (now the Taos Historic Museums).

The museum celebrates the lives and art of Ernest L. Blumenschein, Mary Shepherd Greene Blumenschein and their daughter Helen. It also commemorates the formation of the Taos Society of Artists and the establishing of Taos as a world-renowned art colony.

Recognized for its significance, the E.L. Blumenschein Home and Museum was registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1966.