

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## EANGER IRVING COUSE HOUSE AND STUDIO AND JOSEPH HENRY SHARP STUDIOS

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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### 1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

**Historic Name:** Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios

**Other Name/Site Number:** La Lomita, Studio of the Copper Bell, Couse-Sharp Historic Site/1865

**Street and Number (if applicable):** 146 Kit Carson Road

**City/Town:** Taos

**County:** Taos

**State:** New Mexico

### 2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

**NHL Criteria:** 1, 2

**NHL Criteria Exceptions:** N/A

**NHL Theme(s):** III. Expressing Cultural Values  
2. visual and performing arts

**Period(s) of Significance:** 1908-1953

**Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2):** Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp

**Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6):** N/A

**Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder:**

**Historic Contexts:** XXIV. Painting and Sculpture  
Cultural Nationalism Era, 1900-1940

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement.** We are collecting this information under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467) and 36 CFR part 65. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate properties nominated as National Historic Landmarks. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has approved this collection of information and assigned Control No. 1024-0276.

**Estimated Burden Statement.** Public reporting burden is 2 hours for an initial inquiry letter and 344 hours for NPS Form 10-934 (per response), including the time it takes to read, gather and maintain data, review instructions and complete the letter/form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate, or any aspects of this form, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop 242, Reston, VA 20192. Please do not send your form to this address.

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**3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

Yes

No

**4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

- 1. Acreage of Property: 2.23 acres
- 2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:

UTM References:

Point	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	448660	4029079
2	13	448700	4029154
3	13	448717	4029145
4	13	448736	4029178
5	13	448763	4029161
6	13	448782	4029146
7	13	448802	4029119
8	13	448789	4029095
9	13	448743	4029077
10	13	448713	4029073
11	13	448700	4029074

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### **3. Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated property comprises two legal parcels, identified by Taos County, New Mexico, as parcels 1074148408439 and 1074148406449. Together the parcels encompass 2.23 acres lying south of Kit Carson Road and north of Quesnel Road in Taos, New Mexico. The boundary is presented visually in the following Boundary Map, drawn to reflect the parcel boundaries documented in the Taos County Assessor parcel map.<sup>1</sup> The NHL boundary can be further described as follows:

The NHL boundary begins at Point 1, the southwest corner of the property at the north edge of Quesnel Road, and extends about 280' northeast along the west property line to Point 2. From Point 2 the boundary turns sharply to the southeast, extending about 64' to Point 3, then turns sharply to the northeast and continues about 129' to Point 4 at the northwest corner of the property at the south edge of Kit Carson Road. The boundary then follows the north property line and Kit Carson Road southeast about 107' to Point 5, then about 95' to Point 6, and about 100' to Point 7 at the northeast corner of the property near the intersection of Kit Carson and Quesnel roads. From Point 7 the boundary turns southwest, extending about 90' to Point 8 before continuing west along the south property line and Quesnel Road for about 166' to Point 9, about 93' to Point 10, about 40' to Point 11, and about 140' to return to Point 1. The triangular area between the NHL boundary and the intersection of Kit Carson and Quesnel roads is understood to be outside the ownership parcel and part of the public right of way.

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## **5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Summary Statement of Significance**

The Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio, and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios (referred to as the Couse-Sharp Site) meet NHL Criterion 1 as an exceptional property representing the Taos Society of Artists (TSA), a group that significantly contributed to national appreciation of the regional landscapes and American Indian cultures of northern New Mexico in twentieth-century painting in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the property meets Criterion 2 as the longtime studios and home of two charter members of the Society, E. Irving Couse and J. Henry Sharp, both of whom trained in European art academies before establishing nationally prominent artistic careers that contributed to recognition of the Southwest as home to a regional school of American art.

The Taos Society of Artists was founded in 1915, with Sharp and Couse as two of six founding members along with Bert Phillips, Ernest Blumenschein, Oscar Berninghaus, and W. Herbert Dunton. During its twelve-year existence and through its annual circuit exhibitions across the country, the Society garnered unprecedented interest in the American Southwest and its indigenous cultures as sources of artistic inspiration and national identity. The Society helped to establish New Mexico as a regional art center and a must-see tourist destination. As president of the TSA for its first five years,

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<sup>1</sup> The parcel map is accessible online at <https://taoscountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ab467cea4f974194967d9c6a4de17765>, accessed December 28, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Although the NPS Harper's Ferry Center Editorial Style Guide suggests using the term "Native American" when referring collectively to indigenous people of the U.S., this nomination uses "American Indian" instead. The two terms are used interchangeably by Taos Pueblo, and in tribal interviews conducted for this interview, Pueblo members consistently used the latter to refer to themselves and indigenous cultures generally.

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Couse hosted meetings at his home and studio throughout the Society's tenure, as well as member reunions after its dissolution. The integrity of the Couse-Sharp Site is exceptionally high and compares favorably with the extant homes and studios of other TSA members, many of which were less frequently used, if at all, for Society meetings. Perhaps no other site associated with the TSA collectively provides as strong an opportunity to examine the relationship between the artists and their Pueblo Indian subjects and understand the influence of European academicism on the TSA.

The property is directly associated with the productive lives and careers of J. Henry Sharp and E. Irving Couse. In addition to serving as members of the TSA who were instrumental in its success throughout its existence, both artists had prominent careers that demonstrated the influence of European art academies on an emerging American vocabulary of art, particularly in the depiction of American Indians. Couse and Sharp trained in Paris and Munich, respectively, and their oeuvres reflect the differences between these two approaches to painting while portraying similar subjects of American Indian peoples, craftwork, and cultures. Both are considered masters of American painting in the early-twentieth century.

The Couse-Sharp Site is nationally significant under the National Historic Landmark theme "Expressing Cultural Values" due to its exceptional value and quality in illustrating and interpreting the heritage of visual art in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The site encompasses both the studios and homes of nationally renowned artists E.I. Couse and J.H. Sharp and possesses a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Contributing elements include Couse's home, studio, garden, and outbuildings, and Sharp's two studios. The studios illustrate each artist's approach, technique, and technology developed for the purpose of creating art, and because they were modified specifically for each artist, the studios also demonstrate the artists' use of space and sense of design.<sup>4</sup>

The Couse-Sharp site sits at the southern edge of Kit Carson Road within the Taos Downtown National Register Historic District (listed July 8, 1982) and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 under Criteria A and B for its significance at the state level in the area of Art for its association with both Couse and Sharp, and for Architecture. The site includes three contributing buildings associated with Couse: the Couse House and Studio, acquired by Couse in 1909 and extensively expanded between then and 1931; an associated Well House; and the 1933 Lower Shop built for son Kibbey Couse. Three contributing buildings are associated with Sharp: his first studio, the former Juan de Luna family chapel, acquired by Sharp in 1909; his second studio, first built around 1840 and enlarged by Sharp in 1915; and "Little Egypt," an adobe outhouse associated with the second Sharp studio. The landscape surrounding the buildings played a role in the work of both artists and is a contributing component of the site.

The period of significance for the National Historic Landmark is 1908 to 1952, beginning with the year Sharp first acquired property at the site to the year he last worked in Taos. This period also encompasses the productive life and career of Couse at the site, from 1909, when he first moved next door to Sharp, to 1928, the year of his death. The National Historic Landmark nomination discusses the Taos Society of

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<sup>3</sup> "Workshop Findings and Recommendations: Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop" (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1991), 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop," 22-24.

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Artists, the lives and careers of E. Irving Couse and J. Henry Sharp, and the depiction of American Indians in American art at the turn of the twentieth century.

### TAOS SOCIETY OF ARTISTS

#### Art in the American West

Although an increasing number of American art schools in the 1880s “provided the rudiments of an adequate art education,” European academies, especially in France and Germany, were considered to offer the best art education possible at the time.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the American art students who flocked to Paris and Munich for their training returned to the US with European predilections of composition, technique, and subject matter. As art historian Virginia Couse Leavitt explains, this generation of American artists’ “new sense of belonging to the larger world of art, evident in their attitude toward the art of the past and toward contemporary European art, challenged the provincialism of the older generation, who feared what they considered to be decadence and un-Americanism in the work of their younger rivals.”<sup>6</sup>

Due to this phenomenon, as the twentieth century approached, “American artists training in Europe were sending back thousands of pictures that were almost indistinguishable from those of their European counterparts,” sowing doubt among American critics that an American school of art could be founded upon paintings of European subjects.<sup>7</sup> The critics’ primary concern was that while American artists might best be taught the techniques and methods of painting in the academies of France and Germany, they should find their subjects among the American people and landscapes. Furthermore, as the young country proved its strength in areas such as agriculture and industry, the call for creation of a uniquely “American” art that would demonstrate its cultural maturation became more urgent.

The Cultural Nationalism Era (ca. 1900-40s), as defined by the NPS Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop findings, maintained that American art should authentically capture the country’s landscapes, people, and cultures found in its diverse regions. Spurred in part by this ideology, many American artists began to gather in conclaves where the regional traditions and surrounding natural environment were considered wellsprings of artistic inspiration. (Art historian Van Deren Coke also points out that the cost of living in such places was low, and their isolation and small populations “gave painters a major place in the local society.”)<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art business practices, which required artists to develop and maintain social connections in urban art markets, heightened the need for quiet retreats where artists could turn to the actual production of art. Doing so in environments where compatriots joined them lessened the isolation and continued the artistic comradery of the cities, leading to the spread of art colonies across the country. Prominent examples included Woodstock, New York (est. 1902), Provincetown, Massachusetts (est. 1899), New Hope, Pennsylvania (est. 1898), and Carmel, California (est. 1902). Although the proliferation of art colonies in the US arose in part from the desire to create American regional art, it also mimicked the

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<sup>5</sup> Virginia Couse Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times of an American Artist, 1866-1936* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2019), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> James Peck, “A Defining Moment: William Bouguereau and the Education of Eanger Irving Couse,” in *In the Studios of Paris: William Bouguereau & His American Students*, ed. James Peck (Philbrook Museum of Art, 2006), 84.

<sup>8</sup> Van Deren Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe: The Artist’s Environment, 1882-1942* (University of New Mexico Press, 1963), 28.

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European academic tradition of devoting summers to painting in rural, bucolic settings using local folk culture as subjects.

A particularly rich source of artistic subjects considered unique to the US was thought to reside in American indigenous cultures. Yet with the forcible removal and assimilation of tribal peoples on the rise, such cultures were also popularly thought to be on the verge of extinction. The need to depict American Indians took on its own kind of urgency, arising from both ethnographic and artistic goals. With many tribes having been forced out of the East, the American West was considered the frontier in both an expansionist and artistic sense.<sup>9</sup> Many artists, such as Frederic Remington and George Catlin, famously depicted the tribes of the Great Plains. Others were increasingly drawn to the American Southwest, thanks in part to Charles F. Lummis, a particularly enthusiastic promoter who touted the region as the greatest source of inspiration for an American art. Lummis wrote numerous articles and books and published photographs to convey the region's artistic possibilities.<sup>10</sup> (For further discussion about the legacy of artistic depictions of American Indians, please see below.) It was due to this combination of searching for untapped artistic inspirations from the country's American Indian tribes while also wishing to establish a retreat of like-minded colleagues that a small group of artists created a colony in Taos, New Mexico in the early 1900s.

### **An Art Colony in Taos**

#### *Taos Pueblo and Village of Taos*

Taos Pueblo (NHL October 9, 1960) is a continuously inhabited Pueblo Indian settlement located along the Rio Pueblo, a small tributary of the Rio Grande on the western edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains (a subrange of the Rocky Mountains). The multi-story adobe pueblo sits on the valley floor and is thought to have been constructed as early as 1300, though its people claim a presence in the valley from time immemorial.<sup>11</sup> Primarily an agricultural community, Taos Pueblo also historically served as an important trade center with Plains Indian tribes and other Pueblos well before the arrival of Spanish expeditions beginning in the 1540s. Spanish rule over the area was sporadic through the seventeenth century due in large part to Pueblo resistance, including the famous 1680 Pueblo Revolt, and Spanish settlement was often disrupted by raids from the Comanche and other tribes. Author William deBuys states that, "of all the pueblos of the eastern frontier [of Spanish rule] only Taos, which also guarded a mountain pass of importance, endured the first two centuries of European occupation with anything like its original strength and vitality."<sup>12</sup>

Less than three miles to the southwest of the Pueblo, the village of Taos was founded by Spanish settlers on the Don Fernando de Taos land grant around 1795. Believed to have been originally constructed as a fortified plaza to protect against raids, the town evolved and expanded as the threat of raids lessened and

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<sup>9</sup> The 1991 exhibit "The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920" at the National Museum of American Art (now known as the Smithsonian American Art Museum) was one of the first critical examinations of how art depicting the discovery and settlement of the American frontier helped to define Western expansion in the ideological terms of heroism and progress, while "rarely noting damaging social and environmental changes." Paraphrasing William H. Truettner, *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920* (Smithsonian Institutional Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Keith L. Bryant, Jr., "The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and the Development of the Taos and Santa Fe Art Colonies" *Western Historical Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1978): 438, <https://doi.org/10.2307/967446>.

<sup>11</sup> "Taos Pueblo," UNESCO World Heritage Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/492/>.

<sup>12</sup> William deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range* (University of New Mexico Press, 2015), 36.

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trade with first French and American fur trappers, followed by wagon trains from the East, rose in importance in the 1810s-1820s. Furthermore, annual trade fairs, originally held at the Pueblo and then relocated to town, continued to be an important draw. Taos was declared an official port of entry into the Republic of Mexico in 1837 and was a vital trade hub along the Mountain Route of the international Santa Fe Trail.

After the Mexican-American War and the resulting 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo established the area as United States territory, Anglo visitors increasingly made their way to the Taos Valley.<sup>13</sup> Railroads established lines in the area beginning in the late 1870s, but the closest stop, for the Denver & Rio Grande Railway (D&RG), was thirty miles away at Tres Piedras and could only be reached via a six-hour stage line. The nearest stop for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF; also commonly referred to as “the Santa Fe”) was even farther, sixty miles southeast as the crow flies and on the other side of the mountains in Las Vegas, New Mexico. As a result, though Taos slowly became more accessible to the rest of the country, it remained relatively isolated during the United States’ Western expansion through most of the nineteenth century.

By the 1890s, Taos was an “ethnically stratified and segregated society, in which three major groups—Hispanics, Indians, and Anglos—interacted...[but were] circumscribed by cultural boundaries as well as by a socioeconomic hierarchy.”<sup>14</sup> Although the Pueblo tribes were supposed to enjoy special protections as former Mexican subjects per the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, in reality, their communal agricultural practices and religious traditions were suppressed by US federal policies and Anglo encroachment. No longer able to fully sustain themselves due to the loss of irrigable land, Puebloans turned to selling handcrafted goods to the growing number of Anglo tourists who arrived to observe their dances and feast days.<sup>15</sup> As tourism’s less than beneficial impacts began to be felt, tribes developed social (i.e., non-religious) dances geared towards outsiders and limited access to ceremonial events.<sup>16</sup>

### *Artists Arrive in Taos*

Although European-American artists had ventured into present-day New Mexico and the Taos Valley as early as the 1840s, a colony of artists in Taos did not begin to take shape until 1898, when Eastern painters Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert Geer Phillips encountered trouble on an extended journey along the Rocky Mountains.<sup>17</sup> Phillips and Blumenschein had heard of Taos from Joseph Henry Sharp while all three painters were in Paris ca. 1896: Sharp had first visited Taos in 1893, and encouraged

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<sup>13</sup> In much of the American Southwest, the term “Anglo” is consistently used to this day to differentiate between non-Spanish Europeans and/or European-Americans and those of Spanish background or ancestry.

<sup>14</sup> Sylvia Rodríguez, “Art, Tourism, and Race Relations in Taos: Toward a Sociology of the Art Colony,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 45, no. 1, (Spring 1989): 82, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3630172>.

<sup>15</sup> Sascha Scott, *A Strange Mixture: The Art and Politics of Painting Pueblo Indians* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 34.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Hutchinson, “Taos and its other Neighbors: Intertribal Visiting in Taos School Painting,” in *Branding the American West: Paintings and Films, 1900-1950*, ed. by Marian Wardle and Sarah E. Boehme (University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 156-58.

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Janis Broder, *Taos: A Painter’s Dream* (New York Graphic Society, 1980), 4. Aside from artists who accompanied survey and military expeditions in the 1840s, French-trained artist Alexis Compera (also known as Comparat) was reportedly one of the first to paint in Taos in 1879, and Charles Craig completed paintings and sketches of the area in 1881. For the Bureau of Indian Affairs census in 1890, Peter Moran visited and painted the first known image of Taos Pueblo. (See also David L. Witt, *Modernists in Taos: From Dasburg to Martin* (Red Crane Books, 2002), 4.)

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Blumenschein and Phillips to also visit upon hearing their interest in American Indians as a subject matter.<sup>18</sup>

In May 1898, Phillips and Blumenschein traveled from New York to Denver and spent the summer sketching along the Rocky Mountains before heading south to New Mexico that August, with plans to continue on to Mexico. Now the stuff of art history legend, the pair's horse-drawn wagon broke a wheel about twenty miles north of Taos on September 3, requiring Blumenschein to walk into town to have it repaired.<sup>19</sup> While struggling to carry his heavy load through the isolated and rough terrain, Blumenschein reflected upon Sharp's description of the area, later recalling, "But Sharp had not painted for me the land or the mountains and plains and clouds. No artists had ever recorded the New Mexico I was now seeing."<sup>20</sup> Upon his return to Phillips at the side of the road a few days later, the two, both now entranced by the surrounding landscape, decided to stay in Taos rather than continue with their travels.<sup>21</sup>

As Blumenschein recalled in 1954, the two painters "pitched into work with unknown enthusiasm" while in Taos.<sup>22</sup> Blumenschein eventually departed in November, 1898 for New York and Paris, but Phillips stayed. Within a year, he married Pennsylvanian Rose Martin, who was visiting her brother Dr. Thomas P. Martin, one of the first Easterners to settle in Taos (in 1890) and a major figure in the town's modern development.<sup>23</sup> Phillips committed to living fulltime in Taos and earnestly encouraged other artists to join him, writing to Blumenschein in 1899: "For heavens [sic] sake tell people what we have found! Send some artists out here. There is a lifetime's work for twenty men. Anyhow, I'm lonesome."<sup>24</sup> Over the next several years, Phillips would find the artistic company he craved as a colony of artists formed. Blumenschein reminisced in 1954 of his fellow Taos painters that "We all drifted into Taos like skilled hands looking for a steady job."<sup>25</sup>

The first to join Phillips was Oscar E. Berninghaus, who traveled to northern New Mexico in 1899 on the D&RG for a series of sketches commissioned by the railroad. He departed the line after hearing of nearby Taos from the rail crew.<sup>26</sup> After arriving in town, he encountered and befriended Phillips, staying a week before eventually making his way back home to St. Louis. As Berninghaus later recalled, he "became infected with the Taos germ and promised myself a longer stay the following year."<sup>27</sup> Berninghaus returned nearly every year for the warmer seasons, staying for longer and longer stretches of time, until he settled permanently in Taos in 1925.

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<sup>18</sup> Robert R. White, *The Taos Society of Artists* (University of New Mexico, 1983; second ed. 1998), xiv.

<sup>19</sup> Sharp had been in Taos the summers of 1897 and 1898 and had just left before Phillips and Blumenschein arrived. See Virginia Couse Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: Image Maker for America* (The Albuquerque Museum, 1991), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Laura M. Bickerstaff, "Ernest L. Blumenschein," in *Pioneer Artists of Taos*, ed. Laura M. Bickerstaff (Old West Publishing Company, 1983), 31.

<sup>21</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 2. Photographs taken by Phillips of the broken wagon and Blumenschein starting off down the road to Taos are reproduced on pages xvi-xvii. In 1993, White located the exact site of the wagon's breakdown near the community of Lama, which he documents in detail in "Sacred Site," *Southwest Art* 23, no. 12 (1994): 60-66, 100.

<sup>22</sup> Bickerstaff, "Ernest L. Blumenschein," 32.

<sup>23</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xvii.

<sup>24</sup> Julie Schimmel and Robert R. White, *Bert Geer Phillips and the Taos Art Colony* (University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 65.

<sup>25</sup> Ernest L. Blumenschein, "Introduction to the Original Edition," in *Pioneer Artists of Taos*, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Bickerstaff, "Oscar E. Berninghaus," in *Pioneer Artists of Taos*, 86.

<sup>27</sup> Bickerstaff, "Oscar E. Berninghaus," 87.



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Apart from Berninghaus and his chance discovery of Taos, Blumenschein would prove an important catalyst for the formation of the art colony, spreading the word among their shared associates that Taos and its environs provided endless artistic inspiration. In close proximity to Taos and continually occupied, Taos Pueblo provided artists an opportunity to explore American Indian themes while avoiding arduous travel. Likewise, Taos provided easy access to the contrasting natural landscapes of the forested Sangre de Cristo Mountains, rugged Rio Grande Gorge, and vast openness of the Taos Plateau. With its Spanish Colonial roots, picturesque adobe buildings, and Hispano cultural traditions, Taos itself exuded a type of romantic old-world charm. As anthropologist and native Taoseña Sylvia Rodríguez explains, “In comparison to the industrial East and Midwest whence the painters came, the place was arid, empty, rugged, and foreign. It promised the quintessential frontier experience [as imagined by many Americans at the time]—vast desert-mountain spaces, wild but noble savages, and unlimited personal freedom.”<sup>28</sup>

In 1902, Blumenschein encouraged Eanger Irving Couse to visit, with the promise that Phillips would help him and his family settle. That same year, Sharp returned as an annual summer resident, eventually living there year-round beginning in 1912. Couse would do the same, annually spending winters in New York and summers and early autumns in Taos until he became a fulltime resident in 1928. After departing New Mexico in 1898, Blumenschein lived and worked mostly in France and New York before returning seasonally to Taos in 1910, then fully relocating with his family in 1919. In 1912, W. Herbert Dunton, a student of Blumenschein’s at the Art Students League in New York, followed his teacher’s advice to visit Taos, arriving that summer and by 1914 choosing to live there year-round.<sup>29</sup>

By 1908, the Taos colony had gained a national reputation, in part due to a *New York Herald* article that covered the summer activities of several New York artists, including Couse. The newspaper declared the village “quite a colony of artists” and a “Mecca for Indian painters.”<sup>30</sup> Over the ensuing few years, many more artists made their way to Taos to work in the area seasonally, but only Phillips, Couse, Sharp, Dunton, Blumenschein, and Berninghaus committed to staying long-term by purchasing summer studios and fulltime residences.<sup>31</sup> Though Taos had yet to support any local art galleries or a national art scene, the six artists had already begun to acquire national recognition for themselves.

#### Formation of the Taos Society of Artists

As William H. Gerds explains in the multi-volume book series *Art Across America* on the multitude of artists’ colonies that formed in the US over the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, “often, as a regional art community matured, some combination of artists and art lovers would band together to form

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<sup>28</sup> Rodríguez, “Art, Tourism, and Race Relations,” 80.

<sup>29</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 203. Quoting “With the Artists on Their Outings,” *New York Herald*, August 16, 1908. The group was never a “colony,” in the true sense of the word—the artists lived in their own homes in various locations around town, with varying schedules of residing there. However, since many of them frequently referred to themselves as a colony, this nomination maintains its usage.

<sup>31</sup> Another artist, Frank Sauerwein (1871-1910) of New Jersey, began to visit Taos regularly in 1899, purchased a home in 1906, and lived there fulltime a year later. However, due to ill health, Sauerwein was forced to retreat to lower altitudes in 1908, never returning to Taos and dying of tuberculosis in Connecticut in 1910. “Frank Paul Sauerwein (1871-1910) Biography,” Mark Sublette Medicine Man Gallery, accessed November 30, 2023. <https://www.medicinemangallery.com/blogs/biographies/frank-paul-sauerwein-1871-1910-biography>.

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OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

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a local exhibition society.”<sup>32</sup> However, Gerdts goes on to explain that these numerous provincial colonies did not compare to the far more nationally-known and sophisticated group of Taos artists who “were heir to a cosmopolitan, strongly professional tradition” that would become possibly “the best-known regional art colony in the nation.”<sup>33</sup>

Bert Phillips had long advocated for the Taos artists banding together in the manner of the Society of Western Artists (SWA), a group of artists primarily from the Midwest that organized in 1896 for the purpose of promoting its members’ work by organizing annual traveling exhibitions, and of which he, Sharp, and Berninghaus were members.<sup>34</sup> (The group’s name came from its regional membership base, from the Alleghenies westward to the Rocky Mountains, and from Minnesota south to Texas, rather than any commitment to western subjects.)<sup>35</sup> SWA’s shows had proved instrumental in helping Phillips receive national exposure, especially since he had remained year-round in isolated Taos. In addition, Couse and Blumenschein were members of the Society of Painters of the Far West (SPFW, also known as the Society of Men Who Paint the Far West), a group of mostly landscapists formed in 1912 who sought to depict the West’s “distinctively American themes in a thoroughly American manner,” and who also organized annual exhibitions promoting their work.<sup>36</sup> Despite familiarity with these organizations, there was originally little interest among the six Taos artists to organize and exhibit as a group; in 1914, Phillips turned down an offer by Charles A. Cumming of the Cumming Art School in Iowa to organize an exhibition of the Taos artists after speaking with Couse, Sharp, and Blumenschein, who believed there was little chance of sales originating from an exhibit and instead preferred to, in the words of Phillips, “keep their stuff to show to tourists.”<sup>37</sup>

Notwithstanding this initial hesitancy, the Taos Society of Artists (TSA) formed in 1915 at a July meeting at the home of Dr. Martin, in the studio Berninghaus was renting from him that summer.<sup>38</sup> Five of Taos’ six artist regulars were in attendance; Blumenschein was absent but listed with the other five as a charter member. Although by-laws were not adopted until 1918, parameters for TSA membership were established at this first meeting; membership required nomination by two existing members, and applicants “must have worked in Taos three years or at least part of three different years and have been exhibitors in some representative American art exhibition.”<sup>39</sup> Leavitt notes that these requirements established from the outset that TSA was to be comprised of professional artists, “thus setting high standards for membership,” with a commitment to New Mexico’s people, culture, and landscapes, thereby setting it apart from other regional art colonies.<sup>40</sup> (White surmises that Blumenschein may well

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<sup>32</sup> William H. Gerdts, *Art Across America: Two Centuries of Regional Painting, 1710-1920, Vol. I* (Abbeville Press, 1990), 10.

<sup>33</sup> Gerdts, *Art Across America Vol. III*, 149-51.

<sup>34</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 28 and White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xviii.

<sup>35</sup> This Society of Western Artists (1896-1914) should not be confused with the California-based group of the same name that formed in 1939 and which is currently known as the Society of West-Coast Artists.

<sup>36</sup> Society of Painters of the Far West, “Painters of the Far West: first annual exhibition, February 27 to March 16, 1913,” (Art Institute of Chicago, 1913).

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xix.

<sup>38</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xix.

<sup>39</sup> TSA Minutes, 1915, reproduced in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 234. Virginia Couse Leavitt is a granddaughter of E.I. Couse, daughter of his son Kibbey Couse, who went on to become an art historian and one of the preeminent scholars of E.I. Couse’s life and career. She and her late husband Ernest Leavitt were fundamental in the preservation of the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, where she currently resides in the former rooms of her grandparents.

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have chosen to skip the meeting in protest of the three-year membership requirement, which meant the exclusion of Victor Higgins and Walter Ufer, artists who had recently begun to paint in Taos and with whom Blumenschein felt an artistic kinship.)<sup>41</sup> At the first meeting, Couse was elected president, an office he would hold for five years, and Phillips elected treasurer and secretary. Meetings were to be held annually each summer, when all TSA members would be in town for the painting season. In practice, meetings were held at the current president's or secretary's studios, and over the TSA's twelve-year existence, the group most frequently met at the studios/houses of Berninghaus, Couse, and Blumenschein.

TSA members paid annual dues and occasional assessments to cover Society expenses, such as the printing of a "biographical data sheet," that exceeded what was held in the treasury.<sup>42</sup> It appears that for the first several years, members collected the full price of any sales of their works made through the circuit exhibitions, but beginning in 1921, artists were assessed 1 percent of any sales.<sup>43</sup>

In 1918, the group adopted a formal constitution and by-laws written by Berninghaus, Higgins, and Couse, which stated in part that the TSA was formed,

for educational purposes, to develop a high standard of art among its members, and to aid in the diffusion of taste for art in general...to facilitate bringing before the public through exhibitions and other means tangible results of the work of its members...to encourage sculpture, architecture, applied arts, music, literature, ethnology and archaeology solely as it pertains to New Mexico and the States adjoining.<sup>44</sup>

#### *Membership*

For the first few years, TSA's membership consisted of the original six artists: Couse, Berninghaus, Sharp, Blumenschein, Dunton, and Phillips. At the Society's 1917 annual meeting in July, held at the Couse studio, Ufer and Higgins, now having met the three-year requirement, were elected as active members, forming the core group of eight artists commonly associated with the TSA. At the same meeting, a new category of associate member was created for artists who occasionally worked in Taos but did not meet the three-year requirement.<sup>45</sup> Such associates, who were invited to exhibit with the Society, allowed TSA to establish ties with other artists who could add prestige and publicity to the group's exhibitions without compromising its focus on Taos. Julius Rolshoven (1858-1930) was elected as the first associate member at the 1917 annual meeting.<sup>46</sup>

At the following year's annual meeting, when he was elected an active member, Rolshoven indicated that the TSA's colleagues in Santa Fe wished to link "the name Santa Fe with that of Taos, so that the

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<sup>41</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xxi.

<sup>42</sup> 1921 TSA Secretary's Report, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 72.

<sup>43</sup> 1921 TSA Secretary's Report, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 72. Couse paid the first sales assessment, having made a sale in Nashville during the 1920-21 circuit.

<sup>44</sup> Special Meeting August 26, 1918 notes and TSA Constitution (adopted August 26, 1918), in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 17-18, 30-31.

<sup>45</sup> 1917 TSA Annual Meeting Minutes, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Higgins made the motion to create the associate member category at this meeting. Both Leavitt and White opine that considerable discussion outside of the TSA meetings must have regularly taken place among members and would-be members to account for such expedited motions.

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Society may be known as the Santa Fe-Taos Society of Artists.”<sup>47</sup> Though Rolshoven and the seven other artists who became associate TSA members over the ensuing years all had connections to the Santa Fe art scene, the TSA members declined to consider the suggestion—as Leavitt notes, “One can imagine what the Taos artists thought of this impertinence!”<sup>48</sup> TSA associate members were Ashcan School-founders Robert Henri (1865-1929, a friend of Couse’s from their art school days in Paris), elected 1918, and John Sloan (1871-1951), elected 1921; Albert Groll (1866-1952), elected 1919; Randall Davey (1887-1964) and B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955), both elected 1921; and Gustave Baumann (1881-1971) and Birger Sandzén (1871-1954), both elected 1922.<sup>49</sup>

The 1918 by-laws added a third category of membership for honorary members “who are closely identified with the progress of the Arts and Sciences pertaining to the Southwest.”<sup>50</sup> The only two honorary members of TSA, both elected at the August 1918 meeting, were Edgar L. Hewett (1865-1946), director of the Museum of New Mexico (MNM), who had exhibited the Taos artists from the outset and encouraged sales of their works; and Frank Springer (1848-1927), a “paleontologist-attorney-rancher-territorial senator” who was an MNM Board of Regents members and in 1917 donated more than half the funds to build a new art museum for MNM in Santa Fe where TSA exhibits would be prominently displayed.<sup>51</sup>

Several events tested what it meant for the TSA to be an “American” art society in the context of World War I and its aftermath. Some of the artists, such as Couse, whose son Kibbey had enlisted in 1918, were personally invested in the outcome of the war, but all were involved with the national war effort in capacities that befit their talent. Couse, for example, helped raise money for the National Arts Club American Artists’ War Emergency Fund, provided a range finder painting for the Salmagundi Club in New York to help train soldiers, and conceived of possible war posters to encourage public support of war programs.<sup>52</sup> Blumenschein, “possibly embarrassed by his German name and sensitive to the prejudice against Germans” in the US, “was particularly zealous in his war work” and was appointed by the Salmagundi Club’s War Committee to oversee production of range finder paintings by artists in Taos and Santa Fe.<sup>53</sup> Disappointed by his colleagues’ “sluggish” response, he issued a very public indictment of them in an article in the September 14, 1918 issue of *American Art News*, only to be chastised by outraged TSA members into retracting his comments and seconding a motion that all subsequent letters for publication required approval by TSA officers.<sup>54</sup>

After the war, amid widespread “lingering war hatred of ‘the Hun’ and of pervasive antifoigner sentiments,” the TSA by-laws were amended at the annual 1919 meeting, in a resolution presented by Couse, to require that all members be US citizens. A few months later at an October special meeting, members resolved to write a letter requesting deportation of Henry Balink, a Dutch artist who had been

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<sup>47</sup> 1918 TSA Annual Meeting Minutes, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 241.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 5-6. Due to his taking up residency in Florence, Italy, Rolshoven reverted back to an associate member in 1923.

<sup>50</sup> TSA By-Laws, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 19-20.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of the August 26, 1918 Special Meeting, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 30; and Porter et al., 37.

<sup>52</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 289. Couse’s war poster proposals are not believed to have been produced.

<sup>53</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 288-89.

<sup>54</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 32.

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painting in the area.<sup>55</sup> (The source of TSA's animus against Balink is unknown, but has been linked by White to possible professional jealousies of his immediate success in Taos. Whether the TSA ever wrote such a letter is also unknown.) White points out that several other foreign-born, successful painters who settled in Taos, such as Nicolai Fenchin and Leon Gaspard, were never invited to join the TSA, ascribing this to a sentiment among TSA members that "developing an American form of art...necessitated freedom from foreign influences."<sup>56</sup> However, this does not readily account for the fact that many TSA associate members, such as Baumann, Nordfeldt, and Sandzén were also European-born.

In its last few years, the TSA welcomed only three additional members: Catharine C. Critcher (1868-1964), the sole female TSA member, and E. Martin Hennings (1886-1956), both elected 1924; and Kenneth Adams (1897-1966), elected 1926.

#### *Subject Matter and Style*

Although the term "school" has been applied to the Taos artists by various observers over the years, the Society never imposed specific philosophies, styles, or techniques on its members that resulted in an identifiable unity of their work, as can be seen with such movements as the Hudson River School of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Characterized by art historian Dean A. Porter as "a loose confederation at best," the TSA members were united in their devotion to the Taos area as a source of artistic inspiration, with a general adherence to figurative painting and an interest in depicting American Indian subjects as the basis of a uniquely American art.<sup>57</sup> As American West art historian Patricia Janis Broder asserts, TSA's "individual artists with diverse backgrounds, technical abilities, and artistic beliefs found in Taos the subject matter and aesthetic inspiration that served as the focus of their art."<sup>58</sup>

Most of the TSA members were classically trained and had attended European art academies, save for Berninghaus and Dunton, who were trained in American schools and began their careers as illustrators. The TSA artists were particularly focused on American Indians, but many of them also employed southwestern landscapes and Hispano people as subjects.<sup>59</sup> In this regard, Dunton stands the most apart from the group, as his subjects were almost exclusively cowboys, cattle, and Anglo-frontier life, leading many critics and art historians to consider him a successor to Frederic Remington (1861-1909).

As modernism began to take hold in the American art world in the 1920s, the artistic styles of the TSA members diverged in a more pronounced manner. Leavitt writes that "many Taos artists were beginning to paint from a nonacademic perspective" at this time, and contemporaneous critics noted that Blumenschein, Ufer, and Higgins were increasingly employing more modern uses of color and abstraction.<sup>60</sup> Finding their interests aligned, these three artists formed a competing group in 1923, the New Mexico Painters, with several Santa Fe artists (including TSA associates Baumann and Nordfeldt) while remaining members of the TSA. As Robert White explains, this group "represented the avant-

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of the 1919 TSA Annual Meeting, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 58, and n. 12, 115.

<sup>56</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, n. 12, 115.

<sup>57</sup> Porter, "W. Victor Higgins," in *Pioneer Artists of Taos*, 175.

<sup>58</sup> Broder, *Taos: A Painter's Dream*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> "Hispano" is the term generally used and preferred in New Mexico when referring to people of Spanish culture or origin, rather than "Hispanic" or "Latino" as suggested by the HFC Editorial Style Guide.

<sup>60</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 296 and John H. McGinnis, "Taos," *Southwest Review* 13, no. 1 (1927): 40-41.

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garde of art in northern New Mexico” at the time.<sup>61</sup> Ultimately, Blumenschein’s commitment to the New Mexico Painters led to his departure from the TSA soon after (see below).

#### *Exhibitions and Critical Response*

Although its predecessors the SWA and SPFW formed to promote their members’ works through circulating exhibits, TSA did not specifically define its goals or ambitions at the outset. As Leavitt points out, “no effort was made during the first years to establish a national exhibition circuit, and the exhibitions actually held during those years were the results of requests, not of self-promotion.”<sup>62</sup> The lack of self-promotion in the TSA’s early years may very well have been due to the almost immediate interest in the Society. Indeed, within weeks of its formation, TSA was solicited to form a group exhibition at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe; in addition to the original six TSA members, the show included works by Higgins and Ufer and an amateur artist named Ralph Meyers. Myers was the co-owner of a Taos shop that sold American Indian craftwork as well as paintings by local artists. Higgins, Ufer and Myers were invited to display with the group but not made members due to the membership requirements.<sup>63</sup> This first show was very well received by the Santa Fe art scene and critics, and was soon followed by invitations for exhibitions at the state fair in Albuquerque and then again in Santa Fe and Boulder, Colorado the following year. Artist and author Ernest Peixotto wrote for *Scribner’s Magazine* of the second TSA exhibit in Santa Fe,

The success of these men who paint the Indian should influence and encourage others to follow their lead. Why some of our moderns, with their love for vigor and vitality, their fondness for primitive color and pattern...have not hit upon this pueblo country for their inspiration is a mystery.<sup>64</sup>

In the winter of 1917, TSA works were included in two circuit exhibitions, one organized by Carl J. Smalley of McPherson, Kansas that toured several southern and midwestern cities, and another organized by the American Federation of Art (AFA), a non-profit organized in 1909 to promote art in the US through traveling exhibitions.<sup>65</sup> In April that year, the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a front-page article in its magazine section on the art colony under the headline “Real American Art—At Last!” noting that “The United States has heretofore produced great painters, but never a school that was distinctively and peculiarly American. Both in subject and technique the Taos painters are original...The whole school is the sensation of the art world.”<sup>66</sup> Possibly encouraged by this positive response and the Society’s individual working relationships with the AT&SF, Sharp reached out to the railway’s advertising chief William H. Simpson that spring to suggest that the company organize its own circuit exhibition of the Taos artists, though apparently Simpson declined.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Robert R. White, “The New Mexico Painters, 1923-1927,” in *The New Mexico Painters*, ed. by Robert R. White (Gerald Peters Gallery, 1999), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 29.

<sup>63</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 29. It appears that initially there were no set rules for non-TSA members exhibiting with the Society. At a special meeting held on the Taos Plaza on August 12, 1916, TSA voted to allow visiting artists to exhibit with them (White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xxii).

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in “Records of the Past; Old Palace Notes,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, July 24, 1916.

<sup>65</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 236.

<sup>66</sup> “Real American Art—At Last!” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 15, 1917. See the discussion above on TSA subject matter and styles regarding the use of the term “school” to describe the art colony.

<sup>67</sup> Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 447. Citing Sharp to Simpson, April 20, 1917, AT&SF Files.

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On the heels of this meteoric rise, the Society chose to launch its own national exhibition circuit at its 1917 annual summer meeting. Members were required to exhibit only paintings of “southwestern subjects,” likely to encourage a unified theme recognizable to audiences.<sup>68</sup> The first national TSA circuit debuted in New York in November 1917 at the Majestic Hotel for the grand opening of its “Literary and Art Salon.”<sup>69</sup> The exhibition traveled on to Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Des Moines, and Denver, and ran in conjunction with a western circuit exhibition that launched at the opening of the new Museum of New Mexico on the Santa Fe Plaza the same month.<sup>70</sup> After traveling to Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Salt Lake City, the western circuit was united with its eastern counterpart in Colorado Springs at the Clifford Hardy Gallery.<sup>71</sup>

The reception of the 1917-18 exhibit varied depending on the reviewer’s inclination for one TSA member’s work over another, but consistently focused on how collectively the TSA defined American art through its fundamentally “American” subjects of Taos Pueblo people, whose culture was deemed as inevitably doomed to disappear. A review of the show in the *New York Times* betrayed a condescending and racist attitude toward the Pueblo Indians, describing the depictions of them as “remarkably mild in aspect for a type that has resisted invasion and change through many centuries,” going on to conclude that “The exhibition as a whole has the interest of new subject matter, but the painting is done in the spirit of illustration, perhaps the right spirit, when it is the affair of making records of a race certain to vanish.”<sup>72</sup> A review in St. Louis declared that “The whole show is luminous with [Taos light],” calling it “A good show—and American as few exhibitions of paintings can be American. As big as this country is, there are not many spots in it just like Taos.”<sup>73</sup> A *Los Angeles Times* critic opined that the “discovery [of Taos by Philips and Blumenschein] marks an epoch in the history of American art, for from that time on we have been able to show to the world that we have an art native to our soil, or at least a vast subject in art that is distinctive and absolutely our own. It cannot be denied that we are working this rich vein for all the gold there is in it.”<sup>74</sup>

In his annual 1918 Secretary and Treasurer’s report, Bert Phillips reflected on the success of the two circuits, noting several sales were made and that,

Our pictures have met with no little appreciation from thousands of people and a great deal of advertising matter has been printed and circulated until it would be difficult to find a person in the whole country making any pretention to being posted in art matters who has not heard of Taos and the “Taos Artists.”<sup>75</sup>

Unlike the much larger SWA (totaling over 140 members), TSA paintings for circuit exhibitions were selected by the artists themselves, rather than through a jury selection process.<sup>76</sup> As such, the TSA

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<sup>68</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 237; and TSA Minutes, 1917, reproduced in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 27.

<sup>69</sup> Henry McBride, “News and Comment in the World of Art,” *The New York Sun*, November 25, 1917.

<sup>70</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer’s Report 1918, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 26. The 1917 museum building is now known as the New Mexico Museum of Art, a unit of the multi-facility state-run Museum of New Mexico.

<sup>71</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 33.

<sup>72</sup> “Art Notes: First Exhibition of the Taos Society of Artists,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1917.

<sup>73</sup> Clark McAdams, “Just A Minute: The Taos Painters,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 12, 1918.

<sup>74</sup> Antony Anderson, “In the Realm of Art,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 6, 1918.

<sup>75</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer’s Report 1918, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Dean A. Porter, Teresa Hayes Ebie, and Suzan Campbell, *Taos Artists and Their Patrons, 1898-1950* (University of Notre Dame Snite Museum of Art, 1999), 38.

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members, and especially Couse, Berninghaus, Ufer, and Sharp, as officers, repeatedly exhorted each other to contribute their best paintings, both to create a high standard for their work and to maintain the TSA's growing reputation.<sup>77</sup>

The 1918-19 TSA exhibition opened in New York and traveled to major cities in the Midwest, such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City. Though White argues that the TSA had "reached the peak of its success" during this season, in which twelve paintings were sold, Berninghaus noted in his secretary's report that the "impression prevailed that the collection was not as strong as last year's exhibition."<sup>78</sup> The 1920-21 season was one of the Society's most ambitious, with an opening at a Fifth Avenue gallery in New York, followed by stops across the country and on to California and Honolulu, but resulting in the sale of only three paintings.<sup>79</sup>

TSA exhibitions continued to receive extensive press coverage, but Berninghaus suggested in 1920 that there was "nothing new in these articles" and "some steps should be taken towards creating a new interest thru some...publicity" consisting of "a new story on different lines about the Society's work, its efforts, etc."<sup>80</sup> Perhaps moved to action by the lackluster sales of the 1920-21 season, the group finally followed Berninghaus' advice by assigning Dunton to write an article describing Taos and its surroundings to stimulate further interest in the TSA. Dunton's piece, published in the August 1922 issue of *The American Magazine of Art*, reproduced works by Berninghaus (*A Bit of Pueblo*), Couse (*The Medicine Spring*), Ufer (*Don Pedro de Taos*), Blumenschein (*New Mexico*), Sharp (*Taos Pueblo*), Higgins (*Pablita Passes*) and one of his own (*White Horses*). The article also masterfully described the allure of Taos village, Taos Pueblo, and the surrounding mountains to artists in such a way as to entice the tourist as well:

to each one of the little group who, a few years ago, organized the Taos Society of Artists there was no other place which lent them so enduring an appeal—remote from commercialism and the sordid, restful in its peaceful isolation, quiet along its crooked alleys, in the soft shadow of the adobe walls.<sup>81</sup>

Whereas the circuit exhibitions and efforts such as Dunton's article continued to generate national interest, sales of the artists' work through the circuits remained low. As Ufer wrote in his 1922 report, "our Society is very much in demand throughout the country [but I] suggest to hold still closer together and work much harder than before in order to keep the Society in its rightful place and that as the foremost art organization of the United States."<sup>82</sup> The report by Berninghaus a year later was more critical: "It is unnecessary to state that the Society is undoubtedly one of the best known in the United States. It is noted, however, that there is a feeling among some that our traveling exhibition is somewhat commercial, and that we are not showing canvasses we are capable of."<sup>83</sup>

In 1923, TSA became a member of the AFA, a move the members clearly hoped would bolster sales. Meanwhile, reports that the circuit works on display were "too large and prices too high" began to

<sup>77</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 32.

<sup>78</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xxiii; and Report of Secretary 1919, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 56.

<sup>79</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer's Report 1922, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 78.

<sup>80</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer's Report 1920, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 62-63.

<sup>81</sup> W. Herbert Dunton, "The Painters of Taos," *The American Magazine of Art* 13, no. 8 (1922): 247-52.

<sup>82</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer's Report 1922, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 78-79.

<sup>83</sup> TSA Secretary and Treasurer's Report 1923, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 84.



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mount, with a Kansas City art dealer advising the TSA in 1925 that their prices were too high for sales outside of the New York and Chicago art markets.<sup>84</sup> Though the Society never resolved to lower its prices (White finds them to be comparable to prices asked by top artists of the 1980s), it did limit a painting size to no more than 1300 square inches for the 1924-25 circuit.

Over the final years of the TSA, before it dissolved in 1927, publicity resulting from the circuits continued to be “effusive,” while the number of sales remained in the single digits.”<sup>85</sup> In addition, many venues refused to cover expenses, often making the exhibitions a losing proposition. At its 1926 annual meeting in July, the TSA moved to require from the AFA that one sale per exhibition venue be guaranteed, but postponed arranging the next circuit to a later meeting, which ultimately never occurred before the Society disbanded in early 1927.<sup>86</sup>

### *TSA Patrons and Supporters*

As documented in the book *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, TSA members enjoyed individualized support from devoted collectors and did not typically share patrons.<sup>87</sup> One notable exception was the AT&SF, which frequently relied upon visual artists to create stunning images that would attract tourists to its rail lines through the American Southwest. As historian Keith Bryant notes, “at a time when color photography was unknown, paintings substituted as visual representations of the scenic wonders of the West.”<sup>88</sup> The Santa Fe first employed artists in 1892 by providing Thomas Moran and Fernand Lungren free transportation to scenic monuments such as the Grand Canyon. In addition to depicting natural wonders, these artists painted American Indian tribes, and their works were widely disseminated in prints paid for by the railway and in publications like *McClure’s Magazine* and *Harper’s Weekly*. Over time, the head of the AT&SF advertising department, William H. Simpson, developed a sophisticated advertising program that relied upon acquiring fine works of art.<sup>89</sup> Simpson’s plan for the artworks, which almost always included obtaining the copyright, was twofold: to help decorate the expanding network of AT&SF lodgings, stations, and other facilities, and to use the images in advertising campaigns. Thus, Bryant states, AT&SF “initiated what would become one of the largest and finest collections of southwestern art in the country.”<sup>90</sup>

In about 1900, AT&SF began a far-reaching promotional campaign that included illustrated lectures, American Indian artifact displays, art exhibitions, an annual calendar, and other printed materials to entice middle-class travelers to California and points along the way through the American Southwest.<sup>91</sup> The works and artistic training of the TSA members fit the railway’s purposes well; their adherence to realism, coupled with a use of rich, bright colors inspired by the New Mexico sunlight, struck an artistic

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<sup>84</sup> Official TSA report 1925, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 98; letter from Sam M. Yunt to J.H. Sharp, May 5, 1925 in *Taos Society of Artists*, 117.

<sup>85</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 48.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes of TSA Annual Meeting 1926, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 101-02.

<sup>87</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 317.

<sup>88</sup> Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 438.

<sup>89</sup> Restaurateur and hotelier Fred Harvey opened dozens of eating and lodging establishments in conjunction with the AT&SF, and his Harvey Houses would also become a patron of artists depicting the American West in its advertising. Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 439.

<sup>90</sup> Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 442.

<sup>91</sup> Michael E. Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 3 (2001): 281, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40170222>.

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balance—between the muted traditionalism of the salon and more radical, overt expressions of style—that resonated with the larger public. As Bryant opines, the artists Simpson employed “knew how to create paintings that could be printed for mass circulation, and they recognized the limits of public taste.”<sup>92</sup> Simpson cultivated long-standing relationships with numerous artists of the American West, including Louis Akin (a frequent painter of the Hopi tribes of Arizona), and William R. Leigh (a specialist of cowboy, frontier life, and landscape canvases). He also patronized the Taos art colony; under Simpson’s leadership, the railway acquired at least a few paintings from each of the TSA artists over the period of 1903-1927. Couse proved to be Simpson’s favorite among the railroad’s stable of artists, supplying the company with twenty-seven works, far more than any other painter.

Another important booster of the TSA was the Museum of New Mexico (MNM), founded in 1909 by the New Mexico territorial legislature as the museum of the School of American Archaeology (SAA) and initially housed in the ca. 1610 Palace of the Governors (NHL October 9, 1960) on the Santa Fe Plaza (NHL December 19, 1960).<sup>93</sup> In 1913, just a year after New Mexico gained statehood, MNM undertook an ambitious restoration of its home.<sup>94</sup> It also began a campaign to encourage and promote artists working in New Mexico, due to MNM Director Edgar Hewett’s belief “that the artists of Taos—and those they could attract to Santa Fe [the state capital]—were potentially beneficial to the economic and cultural development” of the new state.<sup>95</sup> As part of this campaign, MNM hosted visiting artists in small studios it created as part of its building restoration in order to build up Santa Fe’s reputation as an art colony alongside Taos. It also launched *El Palacio*, the official journal of the interrelated MNM, SAA, and the Archaeological Society of New Mexico (all headed by Hewett) dedicated to coverage of history and archaeology, but which from the beginning also reported on the lives, works, and accolades of artists in Taos and Santa Fe. According to Porter et al., “Artists were considered equals to and colleagues of the scientists” [i.e., ethnographers and archaeologists] who were MNM’s patrons, and “all were engaged in the same lofty mission” of recording the ancient places and cultures of the American Southwest.<sup>96</sup>

As early as 1914, MNM began regularly hosting art shows at the Palace of the Governors, inviting all artists working in the state to hang their work, with the Taos artists being some of the most acclaimed exhibitors. At the beginning of 1915, before TSA formed that July, the museum launched its own traveling exhibition to show works by Sharp and other New Mexico artists across the state.<sup>97</sup> Then in the fall of 1915, MNM hosted the first group exhibit of the TSA, reported in *El Palacio* as “the most notable art exhibit in [Southwest] history.”<sup>98</sup> In 1917, MNM constructed a new museum building (today’s New Mexico Museum of Art) dedicated to displaying the artists of New Mexico, just west of the Palace of the

<sup>92</sup> Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 444-45.

<sup>93</sup> SAA was established in Santa Fe in 1908 at the behest of the Archeological Institute of America. (Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 356, n.2).

<sup>94</sup> The 1913 restoration removed most nineteenth-century additions and Territorial-styled decorative details, rendering the building “an approximately faithful representation of about two-thirds of the original structure.” Richard Greenwood, “Palace of the Governors,” (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1966) 2.

<sup>95</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 247.

<sup>96</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 248.

<sup>97</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 253. Museum staff also directed several influential exhibits at that year’s Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, including AT&SF’s five-acre commercial display of American Indian settlements, such as Navajo hogans, cliff ruins, and two pueblo replicas.

<sup>98</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 254, quoting “Art Exhibits,” *El Palacio* 3, no. 1 (1915): 49.

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Governors in Santa Fe.<sup>99</sup> For several years, TSA's annual circuit exhibition was launched from this building, and TSA members enjoyed prime exhibit space of their works there throughout the year, swapping in paintings when pieces sold. In addition to acting as a sales agent for the Taos artists, MNM itself acquired several of their works, with the help of its Board of Regents member Frank Springer, to form its core permanent collection.<sup>100</sup>

One other notable example of shared patronage between TSA members was a series of murals created for the Missouri State Capitol in the 1920s. Destroyed by fire in 1911, the capitol was rebuilt in 1917 significantly under budget, leaving a large project-dedicated surplus that was used to commission artworks in the ensuing years. Thanks to Berninghaus' connections to the St. Louis art world and the TSA circuit exhibition's regular appearance there, seven TSA artists (Berninghaus, Couse, Phillips, Ufer, Higgins, Dunton, and Blumenschein) were among those selected to paint murals for the building in Jefferson City. From 1924-25, each artist painted three 6' x 12' lunettes depicting themes they selected from a curated list of Missouri historical subjects. Porter et al. assert that "the project united the group, provided welcome income, and gave them permanent, public exposure in the capitol while enhancing their reputations, especially in the Midwest, home of so many of their most loyal patrons and admirers."<sup>101</sup>

#### *Dissolution of the TSA*

The complex logistics for arranging a TSA circuit exhibition fell largely to whomever was the elected secretary at the time, a position that was also responsible for conducting the voluminous correspondence for the group. White notes that "serving as secretary was a task so burdensome and time-consuming that most of the members demonstrated a reluctance to undertake the position."<sup>102</sup> In addition, as each member was busy with the production and promotion of his own art, the Society was frequently unable as a group to respond to exhibition requests, or to settle on details for enroute exhibitions after the initial stops on a circuit. As a result, many opportunities went unmet, all of which led to unease within the organization.

This tension came to a head in 1922-23, with first Dunton resigning in 1922 for reasons unknown, but hinted at as relating to rancor among members.<sup>103</sup> At the 1923 annual meeting, no one was willing to serve as secretary, and subsequently, Sharp, though he had just been elected, refused to serve as president. As a result, at Couse's suggestion, an amendment to the by-laws was passed, creating a single Officer of the TSA by combining the offices of president and secretary, and requiring each member to serve as Officer for one year in alphabetic order; refusal to serve, unless for an acceptable reason, would be considered a resignation.<sup>104</sup> Since Berninghaus had served as secretary for the 1922-23 season, Blumenschein was next in line to serve, but he declined due to his commitment to serve as secretary for

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<sup>99</sup> The new art museum was a close replica of the New Mexico building constructed at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, which was in turn inspired by Pueblo mission churches at Acoma, Cochiti, Pecos, and Laguna (Porter et al, *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 254).

<sup>100</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 260, 262.

<sup>101</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 215.

<sup>102</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 10.

<sup>103</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 10.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of Continued Session of Annual Meeting 1923, in White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 86-87.

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the newly-formed New Mexico Painters. Finding this an unacceptable reason, the TSA forced Blumenschein to resign.<sup>105</sup>

Though these logistical responsibilities and lack of sales from exhibitions led to dissonance within the TSA ranks, many art scholars have found that additional, yet fundamental, tensions could be found in the members' progressively differing artistic styles. Art historian Peter H. Hassrick posits that "one of the underlying reasons for Blumenschein's departure from the society had to do with the discord between the academic and modernism...Blumenschein did not care to be a painter of cliché [a characterization by one critic of the 1922 TSA exhibition] and increasingly found kindred spirits among more radical modernists..." leading the artist to form the New Mexico Painters with Ufer, Higgins, and modernist painters in Santa Fe.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, Porter maintains that "From the earliest meeting it was obvious that the group was made up of members each of whom placed a higher value on his artistic individuality than on the artistic unity of the group."<sup>107</sup>

Despite Dunton's and Blumenschein's less than amicable departures, Critcher, Hennings, and Adams joined the TSA in 1924-26. However, less than a year after Adams joined their ranks, the TSA disbanded for unspecified reasons; Adams recalled decades later that a unanimous vote at a meeting in March, 1927 ended the Society, but no meeting minutes or other documentation has been found to date by scholars.<sup>108</sup> As White explains, "It is often said that the [TSA] dissolved because it became too successful, that the work of these artists was so popular that they could not keep up with their other work and continue the circuit...[Yet] It seems that for most of its members the Society had outlived its usefulness [due to dwindling sales and diverging styles] and maintaining it had become a burden."<sup>109</sup>

#### Impact and Influence of TSA

The impact of the Taos Society of Artists on American art and culture was multifold: the establishment of a regional art industry in the Southwest and an art center in Taos that would compare favorably to far larger cities such as New York City and Chicago in its relative sophistication, scale, and import; the rise of a codependent tourist industry; and advocacy for Pueblo sovereignty that had long-reaching political ramifications.

Foremost was the early artists' devotion to Taos' "crystal-clear sky and brilliant sunshine, the glorious landscape, and a unique blend of cultures" that offered "unlimited pictorial possibilities."<sup>110</sup> From the outset, their creative productivity attracted visiting artists in increasing numbers each year and established Taos as an important art center within the United States. This in turn inspired the newly-formed state of New Mexico to embrace the artists working there as paramount to its economic success, and to promote the state capital, Santa Fe, as another artists' colony that grew into Taos' only regional rival in its quality of art and uniqueness of setting and culture. White writes that the TSA brought into

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<sup>105</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xxv.

<sup>106</sup> Peter H. Hassrick, "Chasing Rainbows: Taos in the 1920s," in *In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 154.

<sup>107</sup> Dean A. Porter, "W. Victor Higgins," in *Pioneer Artists of Taos*, 175.

<sup>108</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 12.

<sup>109</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 13.

<sup>110</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 1.

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being “a period of creative excellence in northern New Mexico that has assumed legendary proportions.”<sup>111</sup> Thanks to this legacy, Taos continues to be an esteemed art center.

The area’s reputation as an art mecca grew only more with the TSA’s national traveling exhibitions of the 1910s and 1920s, which introduced the rest of the nation to the art of Taos and northern New Mexico. This introduction might have inspired only curiosity for a far-flung place were it not for the TSA members’ collective and individual reputations as master artists. A notable example of this phenomenon is arts patron Mabel Dodge Luhan, who moved to Taos in 1918 and attributed her first interest in the area as having arisen from “falling in love with a painting by E. Irving Couse of a Taos Indian,” which scholar Lois P. Rudnick surmises she may have seen at the TSA’s November 1917 circuit exhibition in New York.<sup>112</sup>

By 1927, the same year the Society disbanded, Taos’ reputation had been secured; as the *Southwest Review* described it,

Art in Taos is what a Chamber of Commerce booklet would call the town’s major industry. There are perhaps a dozen painters in Taos who are known on both sides of the Atlantic. Taos paintings are displayed by New York dealers in their annual exhibitions; they adorn the Metropolitan; they win medals abroad. There are probably more artists in Taos per thousand of population than in any other town in the world.<sup>113</sup>

In the decades following TSA’s tenure, a new generation of modernist artists settled in northern New Mexico, inspired in no small part by the artistic environment established by the Society and encouraged by locally-based patrons such as Dodge Luhan, Millicent Rogers, and Helene Wurlitzer. As Charles Eldredge notes, “After the First World War, the desert art colonies were visited by increasing numbers of modernists, whose innovative styles and techniques were not always compatible with the more conservative approaches of the pioneering generation...[Yet] Like their predecessors, the modernists were drawn by the elemental experience of New Mexico.”<sup>114</sup> Artists who through the decades found their artistic voice in the Taos area included such notable figures as Georgia O’Keeffe, Gene Kloss, Andrew Dasburg, Agnes Martin, Earl Stroh, and Rebecca Salsbury James, among many others.

Writing in 1951, TSA member Kenneth Adams (who joined the Society just months before it disbanded) described the TSA’s impact as reaching far beyond northern New Mexico by fostering art and culture within the greater American West:

At the time of [TSA’s] first show, there were few if any art dealers between the Mississippi and the West Coast, and no museums with exhibitions of contemporary art as part of their programs. Consequently, within this wide area an expanding population hungered for the cultural nourishment of the visual arts ... It is not too much to say that

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<sup>111</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 102.

<sup>112</sup> Lois P. Rudnick, “‘A Real Creator of Creators’: How Mabel Dodge Luhan Catalyzed American Modernism,” in *Mabel Dodge Luhan & Company: American Moderns and the West*, ed. Lois P. Rudnick and MaLin Wilson Powell (Museum of New Mexico Press, 2016), 40–41. The specific Couse painting Luhan referred to is unknown.

<sup>113</sup> John H. McGinnis, “Taos,” *Southwest Review* 13, no. 1 (1927): 38.

<sup>114</sup> William H. Truettner, “Beyond the Picturesque” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945: Paths to Taos and Santa Fe*, ed. Charles C. Eldredge, Julie Schimmel, and Truettner (National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 14.

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contemporary interest in painting and the allied arts, manifest throughout the West today in its art associations, regional exhibitions, and civic and state museums, received its initial impetus from the traveling exhibitions of paintings of the Taos Society of Artists.<sup>115</sup>

Hand-in-hand with TSA's cultivation of art within the region was its significant contribution to a burgeoning tourist industry in the Southwest. The artists were acutely aware of their role in this growth: as Blumenschein claimed in 1919, "The Taos school of painting is famous, and probably has done as much as any other publicity agent in booming New Mexico."<sup>116</sup> The pull of the artists was both encouraged and facilitated by the two southwest railroads, AT&SF and D&RG, which extensively used the work of TSA members to raise interest in the region's natural and cultural attractions to promote their lines. A 1930 AT&SF brochure proclaimed: "We are constantly reminded how far the fame of this isolated pueblo has been carried by camera, brush and the printed word. Those who have never been west of the Hudson River before... seem to have heard of Taos and to have marked it as a place that *some day must be seen.*"<sup>117</sup>

The artists themselves became tourist "must-sees": beginning in the mid-1920s, AT&SF offered "Indian Detours," one- to three-day motor-car excursions from railroad stops that included visits to pueblos, prehistoric ruins, natural wonders, and artists' studios. As a result, tourists arrived in Taos in greater numbers each year. Leavitt notes that "Many tourists found these personal contacts [of visiting an artist's studio] one of the great attractions of a trip to Taos."<sup>118</sup> Some artists found the crowds of visitors to their studios so disruptive—Sharp called them "a greater plague" than grasshoppers—that they occasionally discouraged them; for example, Walter Ufer would post a sign outside his studio reading "Dangerous, Keep out, High explosives within" to scare off uninvited callers.<sup>119</sup>

The Taos tourism industry also promoted the craftwork of Pueblo people: railroad advertising campaigns featured them and local curio shops—one of which was co-owned by TSA member Bert Phillips, who had become an "expert" in American Indian craftwork—sold them.<sup>120</sup> The Taos artists themselves indirectly promoted American Indian craftwork through the depiction of such objects in their works. Many scholars of the Taos colony have remarked upon how the artists considered these handmade, utilitarian objects as artistically valuable, noting that the painters and other Anglo cultural boosters in New Mexico often appointed themselves as custodians of American Indian craft culture.<sup>121</sup> Along with Phillips, Couse was a particularly prolific collector of American Indian objects, finding them innately

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<sup>115</sup> Kenneth M. Adams, "Los Ochos Pintores," *New Mexico Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1951): 147-48, <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3179&context=nmq>.

<sup>116</sup> "Blumenschein is Interviewed (Albuquerque Evening Herald)," *El Palacio* 6, no. 6 (March 1, 1919): 85. Quoted in Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 247.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Marta Weigle, "From Desert to Disney World: The Santa Fe Railway and the Fred Harvey Company Display the Indian Southwest," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 45, no. 1 (1989): 131, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3630174>.

<sup>118</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 305.

<sup>119</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 126; Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 305.

<sup>120</sup> Schimmel and White, *Bert Phillips*, 51.

<sup>121</sup> Truettner, "The Art of Pueblo Life," in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 72; John Ott, "Reform in Redface: The Taos Society of Artists Plays Indian," *American Art* 23, no. 2 (2009): 93, <https://doi.org/10.1086/605710>.

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beautiful and useful props in his paintings, which frequently explored the recurring theme of “Indian as Artist.”<sup>122</sup> (See below for further discussion of American Indian imagery in the Taos artists’ works.)

Whereas the Taos artists considered the tourism industry to be disruptive and a nuisance at times, the people of Taos Pueblo found it to be almost existentially threatening: visitors overcrowded Pueblo dances and felt emboldened to ask questions about the most sacred and private aspects of their culture.<sup>123</sup> As is commonly the case for tourism-driven economies, this experience for both artists and Pueblo people alike was a double-edged sword: tourism threatened to cheapen or degrade local cultures, yet simultaneously supported their continuance, a dynamic that continues in present-day Taos.

Anthropologist Rodríguez remarks that the intersection of art and tourism had a “deep and lasting effect upon the course and character of Indian-Anglo-Mexican relations in the region” and placed Anglos in the highest economic and cultural echelons. As such, the tourism industry’s dependence on local Hispano and Pueblo cultures remaining untouched obscured Taos’ social inequalities and harsh conditions, transforming them “into exotic, mysterious assets.”<sup>124</sup> She further notes that the artists’ pattern of hiring locals for both domestic labor and modelling created “patron-client, master-servant, artist-model relationships” that were described by the artists “in glowing, if paternalistic, terms, devoid of critical reference to the daily workings of pervasive inequality, their own privileged position within the local order, or their role in perpetuating it.”<sup>125</sup>

TSA scholar Van Deren Coke writes that the Taos artists “did not involve themselves with social conditions or aesthetic theory...and felt no compulsion to deal with puzzling or ugly forces.”<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, there were instances in which TSA artists and their colleagues in Taos’ artistic community attempted to sway US federal policy in regards to Pueblo Indians. Conflicts with American Indian tribes during the nineteenth century resulted in the removal of many tribes from their homelands and the rise of the reservation system. As concerns over the conditions of reservations grew, governmental policies sought to completely assimilate native people through “educational” programs like the boarding school system, or by pushing for private ownership over communal ownership through the Dawes Act (or General Allotment Act) of 1887. As art historian William Truettner notes, Plains Indians were greatly impacted by these policies for much of the nineteenth century, whereas “Pueblo culture had maintained itself through a long, relatively dormant period in the Southwest and was just coming under increasing public scrutiny around 1900.”<sup>127</sup> Whether this increased scrutiny arose from or was driven by the Pueblos’ new status as cultural attractions is difficult to determine.

Clearly, as art historian John Ott notes, the Taos artists had a stake in the preservation of American Indian cultures, and accordingly “often condemned attempts to acculturate Native Americans into modernity.”<sup>128</sup> Although their motives may have been less than fully altruistic, the artists expressed their condemnations with at least some understanding and admiration of American Indian culture. For example, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs compelled tribal men to cut their hair and wear Western

<sup>122</sup> E. Jane Burns, *The Couse Collection of Pueblo Pottery* (The Couse Foundation, 2017), 11.

<sup>123</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 308.

<sup>124</sup> Rodríguez, “Art, Tourism, and Race Relations,” 78-80.

<sup>125</sup> Rodríguez, “Art, Tourism, and Race Relations,” 83-85.

<sup>126</sup> Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe: The Artist’s Environment*, 108.

<sup>127</sup> Truettner, “Science and Sentiment,” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 29.

<sup>128</sup> Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 92.

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dress in 1902, Sharp wrote to the BIA commissioner explaining the religious implications of such a requirement, while Phillips extolled the virtues of the traditional blankets worn as outer garments in purely artistic terms, describing them as “draped in noble, flowing lines.”<sup>129</sup> Meanwhile, AT&SF officials betrayed far more overtly capitalistic motivations by complaining that the BIA agent was “meddling with the assets of the Santa Fe—turning its Indians into overall scarecrows.”<sup>130</sup>

Other policies further threatened Pueblo sovereignty and land control. Due to New Mexico’s history of Spanish land grants followed by US homesteading, a complicated series of conflicting titles on Pueblo lands had resulted. A notable instance of the artists’ compassion for the traditional culture of Taos Pueblo can be found in the case of Blue Lake, the headwaters of the Rio Pueblo and a sacred site for the Pueblo, where some of the community’s most important annual rituals are held. Apparently at the urging of TSA member Bert Phillips, who shared the Pueblo’s concern over settlers encroaching upon its watershed and threatening its water supply, the lake and surrounding land were designated in 1906 by the federal government as the Taos Forest Reserve (which later became part of Carson National Forest).<sup>131</sup>

Although this designation ostensibly protected the lake, it opened the area to recreation, grazing, and logging, and required permits to do so. As a result, Pueblo people lost access to their most sacred site as well as traditional hunting grounds. As the Forest’s first ranger, Phillips was sympathetic to the Puebloans’ plight and allowed them to continue as they had before. However, when Phillips left that post a few years later, the new ranger implemented a strict system of permits, and Puebloans were forced to hunt under cover of night.<sup>132</sup>

Seeking to resolve at least some of the conflict over Pueblo lands, in 1922 Senator Holm Bursum of New Mexico introduced a bill in the US Congress that endorsed any landowner claims showing continuous usage since 1900, even if previous Pueblo titles existed.<sup>133</sup> In response, the American Indian Defense Association (AIDA) was formed by Mabel Dodge Luhan, who enlisted several local writers, artists, philanthropists, and TSA members to sign an open letter of protest against the bill; likewise, representatives of New Mexico’s twenty Pueblos published a signed appeal in the *New York Times*, the “first such appeal written by Indian tribes in US history.”<sup>134</sup> At the same time, works by TSA members depicting Pueblo Indians farming and otherwise working their land were published in the social-work periodical *Survey* alongside an essay by AIDA leader John Collier devoted to the Pueblo cause, such as Sharp’s *Indian Irrigating His Corn* and Ufer’s *Me and Him*. Soon after, the Bursum Bill was defeated, which Ott credits in part to the TSA’s imagery, opining that their works “depart from long-held stereotypes of indelibly nomadic Indians and depict the Pueblo men as idealized farmers rooted to the natural environment” who had “legitimate property claims.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 92.

<sup>130</sup> Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” 305. Quoting C.F. Lummis to John J. Byrne, July 28, 1903, Lummis Papers, Southwest Museum.

<sup>131</sup> Schimmel and White, *Bert Geer Phillips*, 52.

<sup>132</sup> Ilona Spruce interview with E. Warzel, March 13, 2024. Transcript on file with National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office.

<sup>133</sup> Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 99.

<sup>134</sup> Rudnick, “A Real Creator of Creators’,” 55. The Pueblo tribes’ appeal included a signatory from the Pueblo of Pecos, which after years of disease, conflict, and decreased trade, lost its remaining inhabitants in 1838 when they joined Jemez Pueblo. As such, today, New Mexico claims nineteen Pueblo tribes.

<sup>135</sup> Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 101, 103.



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In 1924, AIDA and its proponents went on to help negotiate the Pueblo Lands Act, which, though considerably more friendly to Native land claims, required the Pueblo to relinquish its claim on Blue Lake. Taos Pueblo persisted, however, in arguing for its peoples' right to practice their religious and hunting traditions by having access to the lake. Though a series of governmental rulings in the intervening decades asserted that the land had been unjustly taken from the Pueblo, they only offered monetary compensation rather than the land itself. After generations had been deprived of their traditional practices, Taos Pueblo finally prevailed in 1970 and was granted the return of 48,000 acres, including Blue Lake, which "set a precedent for self-determination for all American Indian people, tribes and nations."<sup>136</sup>

It is befitting that these land control struggles, which arose at the height of the TSA's influence, were undertaken during a time when the American public's attitudes towards indigenous populations were shifting. Though political action and perseverance on the part of native peoples were the most impactful, some of this shift in public perception arose from the works of the TSA artists and their depictions of American Indians, which is further discussed below following discussion of Couse and Sharp's careers.

### **EANGER IRVING COUSE**

#### **Early Life and Education, 1866-98**

Eanger Irving Couse (variously referred to as E.I., E. Irving, or Irving) was born in 1866 in Saginaw, Michigan to parents Moses Snover Couse, a carpenter and cabinetmaker, and Mary Jane Price Couse, both of Ontario.<sup>137</sup> The couple had moved to Saginaw, near the southwestern shores of Lake Huron, a few years earlier to find opportunity in the area's thriving lumber industry. The middle of three children, Couse grew up fascinated by the local Ojibwe (Chippewa) people. The Ojibwe had been dispossessed of their land around Saginaw Bay and along the banks of Lake Huron in the early-nineteenth century to make way for logging, but were able to hold on to small pockets of territory despite efforts to relocate them west of the Mississippi. Couse's father owned farmland near an Ojibwe village, and Couse later recalled that "one of my earliest experiences was visiting the Chippewa near Saginaw and one of my first attempts at painting was of an Indian dance."<sup>138</sup>

As a child, Couse was drawn to the local art store and learned to appreciate craftsmanship from his father, who allowed him to help design a new house Moses was building for the family. In addition to teaching some of the building trade to his artistically inclined son, Moses acquiesced to Couse's request to decorate the ceilings of the house, the results of which ranged from the elaborately geometric to the religious, in keeping with the family's Baptist faith. A local house painter who admired the results often stopped by to teach Couse how to mix his paint colors.<sup>139</sup>

Couse's artistic education was limited in Saginaw, and he resolved to leave high school to study at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, an art school recently established in 1879. After earning money from painting houses, carriages, and railway coaches, Couse set off for Chicago in 1882, shortly after turning

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<sup>136</sup> "Blue Lake," Taos Pueblo, accessed June 10, 2024, <https://taospueblo.com/blue-lake/>.

<sup>137</sup> Couse is pronounced to rhyme with "house."

<sup>138</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 4. Quoting Blanche Grant, *When Old Trails Were New: The Story of Taos* (original edition Press of the Pioneers, 1934; reprint Rio Grande Press, 1963), 261.

<sup>139</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 5-7. The house is no longer standing but is described in some detail by Leavitt, who quotes the recollections of the son of later owners.

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sixteen. Couse spent one term at the newly renamed Art Institute of Chicago, performing exceptionally well in his studies before exhausting his savings. Despite an invitation to stay as an assistant to the Institute's manager and professor of the Perspective class, Couse chose to return to Saginaw to earn enough money to pay for another course of study at the National Academy of Design in New York, one of the country's first art schools (established in 1825). He arrived in New York in the fall of 1883, this time with some financial support from his father, who had been impressed with his son's work in Chicago and his commitment to an artistic career.<sup>140</sup>

Couse studied at the National Academy for two school years, returning to Michigan to work in the summer. His studies focused on proficiently drawing the human form under the tutelage of French-trained artists Edgar Melville Ward and Lemuel Wilmarth, attending lectures, and viewing exhibitions at other New York art institutions. At the end of his first year, Couse was awarded the first prize of his class for the school's annual competition; the next year he won his class's second prize.<sup>141</sup>

Exposed to a French ascendancy within the American art world, Couse later recalled that his aesthetic influences at this time, like those of his cohort, were the landscape and figure painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and the Barbizon school, which included artists such as Théodore Rousseau, Constant Troyon, and Jean-François Millet.<sup>142</sup> While at the Academy, Couse made friends with artists such as Louis Paul Dessar, who would go on to paint New York high society and then Connecticut farmers as a member of the Old Lyme art colony. He also first crossed paths with Bert Geer Phillips, who studied at the Academy from 1884-89 and would become a founder of the Taos art colony, where the two artists later became close friends.

As Couse pursued his studies and observed the work of established artists as well as fellow students, he came to understand that talent alone would not make his career as an artist, and that discipline and serious dedication would be paramount.<sup>143</sup> Like many young American artists at the time, he aspired to study abroad to achieve the next level of his career. At the close of his second year at the National Academy in spring 1885, Couse returned to Saginaw once more to finance his plans to study and live in Paris.

Couse's hometown had followed his rising career, and his growing reputation allowed him to earn money through teaching ladies' and private art classes rather than through hard labor, though he continued to decorate railroad coach carriages as a supplement.<sup>144</sup> That fall he submitted a painting, *A Great Bargain*, to the Autumn Exhibition at the National Academy in New York. In addition to the sale of the canvas, Couse also found patronage in members of a prominent Saginaw family whose patriarch, E.J. Merson, had established the town's first planing mill. Couse developed a friendship with one of Merson's grandchildren, Edward, who was seven years his senior and interested in art. The Mershons gifted Couse with some financial aid (amount unknown) as he prepared to leave for Europe.<sup>145</sup> In the

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<sup>140</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 11.

<sup>141</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 13-14.

<sup>142</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 15. Referring to Couse interview by DeWitt McClellan Lockman, Interviews of Artists and Architects Associated with the National Academy of Design, 1926-27, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 14.

<sup>143</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 18.

<sup>144</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 19.

<sup>145</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 20.

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Fall of September 1886, soon after his twentieth birthday, Couse departed for Europe with his Academy friend Dessar.

#### *Study at the Académie Julian*

Couse and Dessar arrived in Paris and secured a garret studio in the Latin Quarter near the city's numerous schools. After deliberating where to enroll, they both settled upon the Académie Julian, considered the largest and best of the private art academies, which were popular alternatives to the government-funded École des Beaux-Arts and its demanding entrance examinations.<sup>146</sup> Founded in 1868 by Rodolphe Julian, the Académie had grown from a modest place for artists to gather and work from a model into a rigorous academic program that employed major painters and sculptors of the day.

The Académie consisted of several ateliers run by various masters with a unified focus on mastery of practice and technique, rather than a required adherence to one specific artistic theory or style. This environment was in opposition to the strict confinement to classical tradition found at the École des Beaux-Arts. Free to choose among the Académie's instructors, Couse and Dessar enrolled at the atelier of William Bouguereau (1825-1905) and Tony Robert-Fleury (1837-1911). Bouguereau was an extremely successful artist, particularly in the US, where his realistic genre paintings were often found in the homes of wealthy buyers. Art historian James Peck notes that, according to one critic of the time, "no French painter was more popular in America."<sup>147</sup>

As a teacher, Bouguereau helped Couse to hone the technicalities of his craft and to develop a "lifelong love of figure painting."<sup>148</sup> As a mentor, rather than imparting his own personal style or strongly shaping Couse's artistic decisions, Bouguereau instead guided the younger man on the painting profession, advising him on the financials of art markets and, aware that Couse had no family money to rely upon, how to make a livelihood as an artist. Couse, in turn, looked up to the French master and valued his approval of both art and lifestyle. Indeed, Couse initially hid from Bouguereau that in 1889 he had married Virginia Walker, a fellow Académie art student from Oregon, because he was "afraid that [Bouguereau] will think his career is ruined if he finds out he has married a woman without money."<sup>149</sup>

Virginia Walker was born in Oregon in 1860 and raised on a ranch in south Washington while also receiving an education at an Episcopal girls' school in Portland. Like Irving Couse, she strove to achieve a career in the arts (as an illustrator) and studied at the National Academy in New York before arriving in Paris and enrolling at the Académie Julian. She met Couse when he and a friend called upon her in October 1887 at her Paris hotel at the request of a mutual friend from the National Academy. According to Leavitt, in addition to finding Couse "so sweet and nice" (as she described him to her sister), Virginia "quickly recognized his talent, and she introduced him to friends from Portland who were traveling abroad, hoping that they would buy some of his paintings."<sup>150</sup> This early promotion of Couse's career portended a lifelong dynamic of the couple's life together, in which the outgoing Virginia set her own ambitions aside to help further her husband's work, often by developing social connections, in addition

<sup>146</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 28.

<sup>147</sup> Peck, "Defining Moment," 80.

<sup>148</sup> Peck, "Defining Moment," 80.

<sup>149</sup> Peck, "Defining Moment," 88, note 16. Quoting 1891 letter from Virginia Walker Couse to her parents, Couse Family Papers.

<sup>150</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 41, 42. Quoting October 21, 1887 letter from Virginia Walker to sister Fan Kamm, Walker Correspondence, L66:5, CFA.

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to running a thrifty household that could make do on an artist's irregular income. Although she still enjoyed sketching and illustrating (which her recurring eyesight trouble often interfered with), Virginia participated in Couse's artistic process by serving as his primary (and unpaid) model while they lived on very little in France.

Couse excelled for the five years he studied at the Académie Julian. Within just a few months of arriving in France, he won the coveted schoolwide drawing competition, with a prize of a medal and one-hundred francs (which he quickly spent on a celebratory night out with friends, a rare extravagance).<sup>151</sup> He eventually won several other prizes while studying there, and his submissions to the annual Paris Salon, the large spring exhibition that "yearly marked both the climax and the conclusion of the Parisian art season," were frequently met with favorable critiques.<sup>152</sup>

Couse's subjects during his art school years inevitably focused on human figures, often set in genre paintings using the same subjects as his teachers, such as French peasants. Yet rather than relying on Bouguereau's sentimentalism, his paintings evoked a more dispassionate realism. They indicate the influence of Impressionism, which Couse later recalled as having begun during his years in Paris.<sup>153</sup> Couse's interest in the style during this time is seen more in his compositions, using cropping and dramatic angles, rather than overt brushstrokes, although he did occasionally employ looser brushwork to evoke the effects of light and color. Furthermore, although Bouguereau practiced in the academic tradition of preparing extensive, exacting studies of figures he intended to use in a painting, Couse used studies in a more sparing manner.<sup>154</sup>

Notable works from Couse's time in Paris include *Fleur de Prison* (1888), which was his first submission to the Salon. An allegorical painting of a young girl presenting a rose to a distraught elderly prisoner as a symbol of hope, *Fleur de Prison* was accepted by the Salon's jury and displayed at eye level, an honor most submissions did not receive.<sup>155</sup> The sale of this painting for one-thousand dollars to an American collector whom Virginia had met in Paris allowed Couse to continue his studies in France for another year.<sup>156</sup>

Couse chose to take the École entrance exams in the summer of 1888, passing the drawing section with high marks, and placing sixth (out of 400) in the history exam. Though he was accepted into the prestigious state school that July, he continued most of his studies at the Académie Julian. Leavitt maintains that a prominent influence upon Couse at this time was the French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-84), though he had died several years before Couse arrived in Paris. Bastien-Lepage's *juste-milieu* approach to painting provided a "viable alternative" for many young artists of Couse's generation, as a balance between the "excesses" of the conservative academy and the radical Impressionists.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 31.

<sup>152</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 35.

<sup>153</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 38.

<sup>154</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 45.

<sup>155</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 49.

<sup>156</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 51.

<sup>157</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 64. Quoting William S. Feldman, "Jules Bastien-Lepage: A New Perspective," *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 20 (1980): 9.

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Both of Couse's submissions to the 1889 Salon—*La Jeune Institutrice*, a sentimental scene of a young girl playing teacher with her dolls, and *La Première Étoile*, a moonlit portrait of Virginia—were accepted and received extensive interest, with *La Première Étoile* receiving the highest marks from the jury and the attention of a Philadelphia collector who quickly purchased it. That summer Couse lived at the French art colony at the fishing village of Concarneau, as did his friend, the American artist Robert Henri, and his work took an even greater turn toward realism. Although the younger artist of the two, Couse was more experienced and offered Henri guidance and mentorship.<sup>158</sup> Irving and Virginia were married the afternoon of his return from the Brittany coast in early September 1889.

Couse wrote to Virginia's sister that November that he hoped to have a painting at the 1892 World's Fair (which actually opened in 1893), stating that "I want it to be strictly American, and perhaps Indian. From what Virginia says the west seems just the place to study them. I want to get among them and do the studying seriously...So we shall possibly come west in a couple of years..."<sup>159</sup>

Couse's two 1890 Salon paintings, *Ma Première Née*, a scene of a Breton mother mourning the death of her first-born child, and *Un Soir D'Été (La Partie de Peche)*, a scene of two girls fishing in early evening, also received high honors and were prominently hung. Couse began to receive commissions from the U.S., and befriended Adolph Orbig, a New York collector who commissioned a few more paintings from Couse and resolved to help him find a dealer.<sup>160</sup> Couse won the Académie Julian's Prix de tête in 1890. He and Virginia spent the summer in Cernay-la-Ville, a village southwest of Paris, where the painter experimented with techniques and colors.<sup>161</sup> His painting *A L'Agonie* was begun and finished that summer. An intimate scene of a man on his deathbed, the painting received unmitigated praise from Bouguereau.<sup>162</sup> Peck maintains that "For Couse, his training in Paris was about becoming a financially successful artist, thus the overwhelmingly positive response of Bouguereau [for *L'Agonie*], a frequent salon juror, was a valuable measure of success."<sup>163</sup> Indeed, this painting and *Un rendez-vous* were well-received in the 1891 Salon.

#### *Walker Ranch, Washington*

As he had intimated to his sister-in-law a few years before, Irving and Virginia decided to return to the US for a year in 1891. Their goals for the trip ultimately resolved into the plan that Couse would focus on creating his next salon painting, rather than accepting commissions, which Bouguereau warned him would end his studies and the reputation he had begun to make for himself in Europe.<sup>164</sup> From 1891-92, the couple stayed at Virginia's family ranch in Washington, just north of the border with Oregon across the Columbia River. Virginia's father, Bolivar Walker, repurposed a granary for use as a studio for Couse, who expanded it and added skylights and large dormer windows to allow for more natural light. Couse's desire to paint American Indian models had a discouraging start, as the Klikitat tribe who lived in the area did not wish to be painted. Eventually, two Klikitat members who were well-known by the

<sup>158</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 75.

<sup>159</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 83. Quoting Eanger I. Couse to Fan Kamm, December 24, 1889, Walker Correspondence, RD118a, CFA.

<sup>160</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 91.

<sup>161</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 96.

<sup>162</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 99.

<sup>163</sup> Peck, "Defining Moment," 82.

<sup>164</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 105.

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Walker family, Emmie and Joe (last names unknown), were willing to sit for Couse.<sup>165</sup> Leavitt surmises that this difficulty in finding willing tribe models probably encouraged Couse to turn to photography as a way of making preparatory studies, a technique he would use throughout his career.<sup>166</sup>

During the summer and fall of 1891, Couse completed his first major work featuring an American Indian subject. This painting, *The Captive*, referenced the 1847 event known as the Whitman Massacre, in which Oregon Trail missionaries Dr. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and eleven others were killed by a small group of Liksiyu (Cayuse) men in what is now southeastern Washington.<sup>167</sup> Several other White settlers were taken captive. Couse's painting depicts the Cayuse chief Five Crows seated on the ground looking into the middle distance, with a captive White woman, Lorinda Bewley, lying prostrate and unconscious in the foreground. Leavitt notes that in preparation for his painting of the event, Couse experimented with depicting "a savage massacre scene," but since "this type of violent representation was against the grain of his character...he ultimately turned to the more psychologically provocative incident in the story, in which he could picture the Indian as a rational individual, not as a violent savage."<sup>168</sup> Leavitt further maintains that in *The Captive*, Couse "began to define the characteristics of the later Indian paintings for which he is best known. By posing his model in a contemplative attitude and carefully defining the cultural artifacts [which surround the model], [Couse] invites the observer to view life from the Indian's perspective."<sup>169</sup>

After staying the winter in Portland, during which Couse completed several portrait commissions and had his work featured in exhibits, with a few resulting sales, the couple stayed at Walker Ranch for the summer of 1892.<sup>170</sup> After a season of painting, they prepared to return to Paris for the new school year; although Couse's interest in American Indian subjects and culture had been encouraged by his time in the West, he agreed with his mentor Bouguereau that his European studies needed to continue.

#### *Return to Europe*

After briefly re-enrolling at Académie Julian, Couse turned back to painting fulltime in preparation for the year's exhibitions and salons. Except for the 1893 *Mourning the Chief of the Tribe*, depicting a dead American Indian chief and his mourning wife, Couse set American Indian subjects aside for the remainder of his time in Europe, returning to those popular with American and European artists at the time.<sup>171</sup> His 1892 painting, *Milking Time*, featured a likeness of Virginia as a milking maid, but with a background of the Columbia River gorge evoking the American frontier. The canvas was accepted for display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

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<sup>165</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 111.

<sup>166</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 119.

<sup>167</sup> The Whitman Mission is a National Historic Site near Walla Walla, Washington. As with many such events in the American West, the context for the Whitman Massacre is more complex than what had been accepted as truth by White Americans for decades and centuries afterward. For a fuller understanding of this event, especially from the perspective of the area's tribal peoples, see Blaine Harden, *Murder at the Mission: A Frontier Killing, Its Legacy of Lies, and the Taking of the American West* (Viking, 2021).

<sup>168</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 114.

<sup>169</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 116. For alternative perspectives on Couse's depictions of American Indians, see below.

<sup>170</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 116-19. One such exhibit featured works held by local collectors and included paintings by Rousseau, Corot, and others.

<sup>171</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 124.

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In the summer of 1893, the Couses traveled to Étapes, another French art colony known for its atmospheric light, where American and English painters predominated. The area offered ample subjects among its maritime and peasant cultures, and locals were often willing to set aside their hard labor to serve as paid models.<sup>172</sup> The town's inexpensiveness was another draw for the couple, and they remained in Étapes for three years.

Couse's works from his time in Étapes show his experimentation with brushwork, tonal harmony, and Impressionism's colorful palette. Working in both the studio and *en plein air*, he painted a variety of subjects set within landscapes and interiors. As Leavitt explains, "little by little he was exploring and developing his own aesthetic."<sup>173</sup> Couse's works from these years include *Maternité* (1893-94), depicting a seated young mother leaning over her infant in a wicker cradle, which diffuses the afternoon sun behind it into a warm glow, creating a tonal juxtaposition to the dark fireplace at the right. (Unbeknownst to Irving and Virginia at the time he began *Maternité*, the painting foreshadowed the arrival of their son, Kibbey Whitman, named after two of Couse's longtime patrons and friends, Bessie Kibbey and Crosby Whitman, in August 1894.)<sup>174</sup> Another canvas, *La Toussant À Enocq* (1895), depicts the local All Saints' Day customs at a small village churchyard, for which Couse hired five models and took several photographic studies to guide his work, resulting in a sophisticated composition using strong colors and broken brushwork. The 1895 *La Gardeuse de Vaches* is of a young woman in quarter-profile overlooking her cows in a pastoral landscape, all reflecting the purple and pink tones of dusk.

Though Couse's large Étapes paintings had been much admired by critics, very few sold, and by 1896 he and Virginia had depleted most of their savings. They returned to Walker Ranch in Washington, where for the next two years life was just as lean as in France due to the cost of art supplies and shipping Couse's works to exhibitions. During his second stay at the ranch, Couse resumed his interest in creating works with American Indian subjects, yet found it difficult to find buyers for them. Furthermore, the ranch's isolation proved to be a professional hindrance. At the advice of and financial help from patron Bessie Kibbey, in 1898 the family moved to New York City so that Couse could establish himself in a major urban art center.<sup>175</sup>

### Couse as Professional Artist, 1898-1928

#### *New York City*

In New York, the Couses found combined studio and living accommodations at the Van Dyck Studios at 939 Eighth Avenue. Couse immediately formed important contacts within the art world among both artists and collectors, particularly by joining men's art clubs such as the Salmagundi, Lotos, and National Arts clubs. Within just two years, he began to have solo exhibits of his work and have paintings included in major juried exhibitions at the National Academy of Design, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and Art Institute of Chicago. In 1900, Couse was elected to the American Water Color Society, which held circuit exhibitions of its members' works throughout the East, Midwest, and South. He was also honored with several awards, such as the National Academy of Design's Second Hallgarten Prize in 1900 for the Étapes maritime painting *Along the Quai*; honorable mention at the

<sup>172</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 131.

<sup>173</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 138.

<sup>174</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 134.

<sup>175</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 146.

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1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo for *The Forest Camp*; and the National Academy's First Hallgarten Prize in 1902 for *The Peace Pipe*, both depicting American Indian subjects.

Despite Couse's interest in American Indians as subject matter for his art, he found that the public had little interest in these works due to prevailing racist attitudes towards tribal people and the view that they were undesirable as subjects of great works of art (a prejudice members of the Ashcan School similarly faced when depicting the urban working class and poor).<sup>176</sup> The overwhelmingly positive public and critical reception of the 1901 *The Forest Camp* was a vital source of encouragement for Couse to continue with his interests. Although it did not sell when included in the National Academy's 1901 Winter Exhibition, it "had been more admired and praised by artists and connoisseurs alike than any other in the exhibition," and the Academy's sales representative advised Couse that "he would make a great mistake to give up painting Indians...and [that] in time they would be in demand."<sup>177</sup>

The busy life of a professional artist in New York, with its constant churn of social engagements and attending to the logistics of exhibitions, left little time for inspiration or the actual production of art, save for the summer painting season. For their first years in New York, the Couses retreated, along with other New York artists, to nearby seasonal rural enclaves in Connecticut so that Couse could paint and make studies for future works. In 1901, Virginia's mother, Catherine Walker, died, leaving Virginia distraught that she had not seen her mother for several years. Rather than spend that summer in Étapes as originally planned, the Couses returned to the Washington ranch so that Virginia might spend time with her father. There, Couse painted *The Peace Pipe*, a work well-received by the art world the following winter and which helped to mark "a breakthrough for Couse in establishing himself as a painter of American Indian subjects. One critic praised [the painting] as 'valuable historically,' noting that 'few men have given the picturesque Indian attention.'"<sup>178</sup> Due in part to the success of *The Peace Pipe*, Couse was elected in March 1902 as an associate of the National Academy, a high honor placing him among the best artists in the country.<sup>179</sup>

Despite the prize-winning picture undertaken at Walker Ranch, it had become clear to Couse that Washington was no longer a viable location to work; American Indian culture was quickly disappearing from the area thanks to continuing displacement and modernization, and he still struggled to find willing models. As he and Virginia considered places east of the Rocky Mountains for their 1902 summer location, Couse had a chance encounter with fellow artist Ernest Blumenschein on a New York street, in which Blumenschein encouraged him to consider Taos as the answer to his problems. Within two weeks, the Couses headed west for New Mexico.

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<sup>176</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 161; see also Edward Lucie-Smith, *American Realism* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 61.

<sup>177</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 161; quoting Virginia Walker to Fan Kamm, February 5, 1901, Walker Correspondence, L178:2, Couse Family Archives, Lunder Center.

<sup>178</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 162; quoting "National Academy of Design, the Seventy-Seventh Annual Exhibition," *Public Opinion*, January 16, 1902.

<sup>179</sup> Eanger Irving Couse, *The Peace Pipe*, 1901, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, 17.138.1, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/10555>.



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#### *Taos, New Mexico*

Taos would prove to be an unprecedented experience for the Couses: upon arriving in the small village after an arduous journey, Virginia wrote to her sister that “We can hardly believe we are in America.”<sup>180</sup> The family rented a three-room adobe house, one of which Couse used as his studio. Thanks in part to the friendships Bert Phillips had cultivated within the local community over the years, Couse found several willing models from Taos Pueblo, many of whom he would employ repeatedly for the rest of his career.

The first painting Couse executed in Taos was *The Historian* (or *Indian Brave Recording General McKensie’s Fight with the Cheyennes*, 1902), depicting, in rich dark tones that evoke the dimly lit interiors of a pueblo, a man seated before a stretched hide painting with a young boy watching him at work. Juan Concha served as the model for the man, while his ten-year-old nephew, Ben Lujan, served as the model for the boy.<sup>181</sup> Couse also undertook photographic and sketched studies in the nearby mountains, which he later combined with studies of models to create compositions of American Indians hunting, such as in *The Indian Hunter* (1902). Though he had finally found willing models, most of Couse’s paintings that first summer in Taos were pastoral landscapes, considered more desirable in the current art market. The Couses left Taos that fall unclear as to whether they would return, but once back in New York, Couse “reviewed his summer’s work and felt it was the best he had ever produced.”<sup>182</sup> *The Historian* was well received among the critics, and was exhibited in 1903 at the National Academy show and in 1904 at the St. Louis Universal Exposition.

Thanks to a travel pass he received from AT&SF, a common scheme by the railway to encourage artists to travel the American Southwest and depict its attractions for potential tourists, Couse was able to make an extensive trip through the area for the summer of 1903. He, Virginia, and Kibbey first stayed in Taos for several months, then traveled on to the Hopi mesas in Arizona, spending over five weeks sketching, painting, and photographing. There, Couse attended the annual Snake Dance, which, thanks to an 1898 illustrated booklet published by the AT&SF, had become one of the most photographed tribal ceremonies in the Southwest.<sup>183</sup> Though most of this nine-day event was conducted privately, on the last day the public was allowed to attend and Couse photographed the participants and observers. He used these photographs in New York later that year to paint *The Moki Snake Dance, A Prayer for Rain* (1903), considered one of his masterworks. The painting maintains the solemnity of this important religious ceremony, depicting the dance participants against a background of the pueblo, without sensationalizing its subject. The painting was acquired by AT&SF as one of the first artworks in its corporate collection. Photographs taken by Couse at other Hopi dances that summer informed large paintings a few decades later, such as the *Hopi Flute Dance* (1922).<sup>184</sup> In the ensuing years, Couse occasionally traveled by motor car throughout the greater American Southwest, making studies for future works.

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<sup>180</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 170; quoting V. Walker to Fan Kamm, June 1, 1902, L191:6.

<sup>181</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 172. Leavitt surmises that Couse planned this painting in advance of arriving in New Mexico: the referenced battle occurred in 1876 in Wyoming, and he apparently brought the depicted hide painting with him to Taos for the purpose of creating this composition.

<sup>182</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 178.

<sup>183</sup> Porter, et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 24. Porter goes on to note that “by 1913, the huge crowds of abusive photographers attending the dance resulted in severe restrictions on Snake Dance photography.”

<sup>184</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 186-87.

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Couse's career and reputation continued to grow in the early 1900s, with each year proving more successful financially. Though most of his sold works at this time were landscapes, his American Indian paintings were becoming more desirable. After spending one final summer at Walker Ranch in 1904, following the death of Virginia's father, the Couses returned to New York and relocated to a larger space. This more comfortable studio and living quarters, in the Sherwood Building at 58 West Fifty-Seventh Street, would be their annual winter home until they moved to Taos fulltime in 1928.<sup>185</sup>

As the first artist to devote his career to painting in Taos, Bert Phillips considered Couse to be the first "convert" to the area due in part to his purchasing a house in 1906.<sup>186</sup> Located in the center of town on Pueblo Road (119 Paseo del Pueblo Norte), the Couses' first home there made life in the still-frontier town far easier and more comfortable than their more isolated rentals from earlier summers, and Virginia transformed its interior placita into a lush garden with Virginia creeper, hop and grape vines, and roses. Within a few years, however, the Couses decided they needed accommodations for visiting guests and a larger studio for Irving, such that he could follow his mentor Bouguereau's advice to have enough space to "stand back and view one's work."<sup>187</sup>

In 1909, the Couses were able to secure an adobe house on Kit Carson Road immediately adjacent to Sharp's by trading their Pueblo Road home and five-hundred dollars with owner Filomena Martinez.<sup>188</sup> The Kit Carson Road property was ideal for the couple, with its large lot, scenic views, and close proximity to town and other artists. They dubbed their new home "La Lomita," in reference to its hilltop location. Couse quickly built a large studio at the south end of the house's north-south wing, completing it by mid-July that same year. With a 20'-high ceiling, large north-facing clerestory window, photographic darkroom, platform for posing models, and an adobe corner fireplace, Couse created the ideal set-up for his work. One of the first paintings he completed in this studio was the life-size *Elk-Foot of the Taos Tribe*, depicting Jerry Mirabel (Elk Foot) regally posed and wrapped in a red blanket, another of his masterpieces.<sup>189</sup>

As his fellow Taos artists had, Couse developed lasting relationships with models from Taos Pueblo, regularly hiring Juan Concha, Ben Lujan, and Jerry Mirabel. Lujan was a particularly favorite model and posed for Couse for thirty-four years until the painter's death in 1936. Lujan's wife, Antonita, their children, and several other relatives also modeled for Couse. The painting *The Yellow Shawl* (1910) depicts Antonita holding their first child, Santanita (Summer Dance). A reoccurring theme in Couse's paintings was that of a father teaching his son, as modeled by Ben and his eldest son Eliseo (Chiefa-wallee, or Swift Eagle Feather). Lujan was also hired to help Virginia with household chores and gardening; with his farming experience, Lujan was responsible for creating the irrigation system for her renowned garden. Over time he became close with the Couses, and according to Eliseo, considered Irving and Virginia his adopted parents.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 194.

<sup>186</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 168.

<sup>187</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 318.

<sup>188</sup> Martinez would go on to rent Couse's old studio on Pueblo Road to Oscar Berninghaus in 1909 and to Blumenschein in 1910.

<sup>189</sup> Eanger Irving Couse, *Elk-Foot of the Taos Tribe*, 1909, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, Gift of William T. Evans, 1910.9.5, <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/elk-foot-taos-tribe-5829>

<sup>190</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 200.

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Although Couse apparently treated his models with respect, one anecdote from longtime Taos Pueblo model Joseph (Sunhawk) Sandoval reveals that he may have prioritized capturing the composition he wanted over any cultural sensitivities. Sandoval recalled to the *Taos News* arts editor, while modeling for artist Julian Robles in 1970, that “When sitting as a young child for Couse, Joe remembers that he became frightened at the idea of the artists ‘catching’ his image in paint and ran out of the studio down the street. However, he was soon overtaken by Mrs. Couse who brought him back, chained him around the waist to a chair within easy reach of a great bowl of luscious fruit and a tempting mound of cookies. A blanket was draped over the chain, says Joe, and Couse, without further complications, completed the painting.”<sup>191</sup>

#### *Mature Style and Technique*

Within the first decade of the twentieth century, Couse had established a national reputation for himself and was included in most major exhibitions in the east and throughout the rest of the country. As Peck notes, the artist’s “mature work did not stray far from the classical composition, correct draftsmanship, and primacy of the human figure taught to him at Julian’s.”<sup>192</sup> However,

Couse incorporated many stylistic elements into his paint application to help define him as independent from French academic influence...In a mature painting such as *The Connoisseur* [1908], the influence of Impressionism is most evident in his handling of the flames and smoke in the fireplace. By placing large, flat areas of dramatic, saturated colors next to one another, Couse achieved a transitory effect that would have been impossible through strict academic practice.<sup>193</sup>

Furthermore, Couse’s choice of American Indians as his subject, Leavitt explains, “reflected his conviction that Indians were the one uniquely American subject available to this country’s figure painters.”<sup>194</sup> His paintings of American Indian subjects had grown in popularity and were featured in numerous solo exhibitions. Couse’s works from this period, which convey a gradual shift to a lighter, brighter color palette inspired in part by the New Mexico light, include *Mountain Hunter* (1905), *The Turkey Hunter* (1906), *The Weary Hunter* (1907), *The Mirror Signal* (1907), *The Connoisseur* (1908) and *Lovers* (1909). Leavitt notes that these “carefully modeled Indians in Arcadian settings” contrast starkly with the “loosely painted views of common people and urban life” displayed in contemporaneous works by Robert Henri and “The Eight” that had made a splash at the New York Macbeth Gallery in 1908.<sup>195</sup>

Photography continued to be an important component of Couse’s work as a memory aid and way to experiment with different compositions, a common practice among many nineteenth-century artists, particularly in France. (Many of Couse’s TSA colleagues, such as Victor Higgins, also frequently relied on photography as a “sketch pad,” though Walter Ufer publicly rejected the practice, claiming to “know nothing of photography.”)<sup>196</sup> Couse made numerous photographic studies of Taos Pueblo models in

<sup>191</sup> Regina Cooke, “Taos Arts,” *Taos News*, July 16, 1970, 8.

<sup>192</sup> Peck, “Defining Moment,” 80-81.

<sup>193</sup> Peck, “Defining Moment,” 86.

<sup>194</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 219.

<sup>195</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 206.

<sup>196</sup> Dean A. Porter, *Victor Higgins: An American Master* (Peregrine Smith Books, 1991), 61; and Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 92.

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different poses in both exterior and interior settings, then drew gridlines on selected prints to aid in replicating the composition on canvas. Using the darkroom off the studio at his Kit Carson Road home, he developed several thousand such prints and negatives over the course of his career.<sup>197</sup>

The critical reception for Couse's work was largely positive, with one critic noting that "it is the Indian's place in the landscape, his oneness with it, that seems to have been the motive of the artist's brush."<sup>198</sup> However, his studied compositions also evoked for some critics a "dryness of tone" and "immobility of his figures" that too readily revealed his method of using posed photo studies to block in compositions.<sup>199</sup> Leavitt maintains that such criticism failed to understand that Couse's intentions in his classical compositions were to depict the essence of what he envisioned as the archetype of the American Indian.<sup>200</sup> Leavitt further notes Couse shared stylistic similarities with George de Forest Brush (1855-1941), another painter known for his American Indian subjects: both were technically accomplished from their years of European academic training, conveyed the inner life of their subjects "through poetic, introspective images," and preferred to depict domestic or similar scenes that evoked empathy across cultures.<sup>201</sup>

While European modernism was making forays into the American art world at the same time as the height of Couse's career (as embodied in the highly controversial and influential New York Armory show of 1913), Couse maintained his adherence to realism, finding that modernist trends in art overlooked "the principles of good drawing."<sup>202</sup> Indeed, Couse's career remained steadfastly committed to the academy and its emphasis on the human form. As a National Academy associate, Couse served as a juror for several exhibitions at a time when the Academy found itself increasingly criticized by the press for its conservatism.

Couse himself continued to win prizes—*San Juan Pottery* (1911) and *Making Pottery* (1912) earned major awards from the Academy two years in a row, a first for any artist—and was made a full National Academician in 1911. As he had hoped, his artistic output was seen by many collectors as quintessentially American. For example, the 1909 *Elk-Foot of the Taos Tribe* was gifted by prominent American art collector William T. Evans as part of a collection of 150 works by American artists to the Smithsonian's National Gallery of Art (now known as the Smithsonian American Art Museum).<sup>203</sup>

Couse was a member of several artists' societies, such as the American Water Color Society (1900) and Painters of the Far West (1912). In 1915, Couse joined with five other artists who regularly painted in Taos to form the Taos Society of Artists. Though he had done well for himself thus far, it was clear that raising awareness of the Taos artists' work collectively would help strengthen and expand the market for American Indian and Western art, especially at a time when the world economy, and subsequently the art market, were in turmoil thanks to the beginning of the First World War. With his experience in

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<sup>197</sup> Couse's photographic prints and negatives are archived at the Couse-Sharp Historic Site's Lunder Research Center.

<sup>198</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 204; quoting "Exhibitions in Various Moods," *New York Herald*, March 3, 1907.

<sup>199</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 204; quoting *New York Tribune*, February 20, 1907.

<sup>200</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 204.

<sup>201</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 222.

<sup>202</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 227.

<sup>203</sup> The Smithsonian museum was given a series of new names starting in 1937 to avoid confusion with the newly established National Gallery of Art arising from Andrew Mellon's gift of his European art collection to the US government.

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similar organizations and as a juror for academy exhibitions, Couse proved to be an important member of the TSA and served as its president for the first five years, continually encouraging his colleagues to present their best works for circuit exhibitions. Even when not holding a TSA office, it appears that Couse did some administration work; for example, in 1924, Catharine Critcher shared the news of her election to the TSA with a friend by noting that the news came from Couse, though Sharp was the elected officer.<sup>204</sup> Indeed, Leavitt maintains that it was the sustained efforts of Couse, Berninghaus, and Ufer that were fundamental to the TSA's accomplishments.<sup>205</sup>

In addition to exhibiting with the TSA, Couse had several solo exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Cincinnati, and Nashville from 1915 through the 1920s. Each was an opportunity to affirm Couse's mastery of American Indian genre paintings and indelibly tie his oeuvre to the American Southwest. For example, a New York gallery displayed his 1914-15 works *The Medicine Water*, *The Pueblo Husetop*, and *Prayer to the Water God* among American Indian objects from Couse's collection. Other major works that received critical acclaim during this period include *Cliff Dwellers of the Rio Grande* (1912); *Two Hunters* (1914); *The Sun Worshippers* (1919); and *Hopi Flute Dance* (1922). The painting *Twilight, Taos Pueblo* (1913) portrays a mother and son looking out over a landscape from an adobe wall in rich, muted colors with open, impressionistic brushwork. *Moonlight, Pueblo de Taos* (1914) depicts Ben and Antonita Lujan and their children gathered around a fire with the moonlit pueblo behind them, demonstrating the "two effects" firelight and moonlight, "for which he was famous."<sup>206</sup> *Vision of the Past* (1916) is an allegorical painting depicting three American Indian men standing back-to-back on a ridge overlooking a valley, with a young boy sitting at their feet and visions of a buffalo hunt in the distant clouds.<sup>207</sup> In 1921, Couse's painting *Chant to the Rain God* won the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts' prestigious Lippincott Prize for the best figurative oil painting by an American artist, and his *Shrine to the Rain Gods* won the Ranger Fund Prize from the National Academy. Couse's contributions to the Missouri State Capitol mural campaign in 1924—*Osage Village*, *Osage Hunters*, and *Log Cabins*—were considered some of the most successful of the commissioned murals, which Porter et al. attribute to his study of decoration at the École des Beaux Arts and his understanding of the requirements of mural painting.<sup>208</sup>

Despite these successes, the uncertainty of an artist's finances was a constant undercurrent throughout Couse's career. For example, though his solo New York show in 1915 yielded only one sale of a small sketch, the following year he earned more than he had in any year before, only to see another downturn with the advent of World War I. To weather such fluctuations, Couse took seriously the business side of art that he had learned under Bouguereau, by finding ways to diversify his audience and clientele while maintaining his professionalism and growing reputation as a master. Although he would eventually command some of the highest prices for his works and remained committed to depicting American Indian subjects, he painted a variety of canvas sizes that could sell at different price points. Furthermore, in addition to serving as a member of several art organizations, co-founding the TSA, and exhibiting large works in critically attended exhibitions, he welcomed developing relationships with corporations.

<sup>204</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 47, quoting Critcher to C. Powell Minnigerode, July 19, 1924, Critcher Papers, Corcoran Art Museum (347, N 48).

<sup>205</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 247.

<sup>206</sup> Leavitt, *Image Maker for America*, 160.

<sup>207</sup> Eanger Irving Couse, *A Vision of the Past*, 1913, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH, 919-O-501, <https://couse-sharp.org/gallery/view/1>

<sup>208</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 213.

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#### *Corporate Patrons*

While finding increasing success with his solo exhibitions and the TSA's circuit exhibitions, Couse also embraced the reproduction of his paintings for wider public appreciation beyond the art world. As early as 1899, he authorized sepia and black-and-white reproductions by the print house Curtis & Cameron, followed by chromolithographs by the Campbell Art Company, which reproduced a total of ten Couse works from 1903-28. The Osborne Company reproduced *The Historian* in art prints and then as a calendar in 1902, the success of which led to a five-year contract with Couse in 1909 for exclusive rights to reproduce *The Master Workman* (1909), *The Conjurer* (1910), *Sacred Birds* (1911), and *San Juan Pottery* (1911), all of which had been shown at the National Academy of Design. Osborne retained the copyrights of these works, but Couse kept the originals for future sales.

As his contract with Osborne was ending in 1914, Couse entered into one of his most lucrative partnerships with the Santa Fe railway. Leavitt points out that Couse's works were ideal for AT&SF's advertising head William Simpson's purposes, with the railway official understanding "that not only was Couse recognized as a contemporary master in the genre painting of the Southwest, but also that this artist's portrayals of peaceful Indians engaged in domestic and artistic pursuits would inspire confidence as well as curiosity in potential travelers to the unfamiliar territory of the West."<sup>209</sup> Couse became one of Simpson's favorite artists, and the railway acquired twenty-seven of his paintings, representing the largest number of works by any one artist in the company's holdings and creating the largest private collection of Couse's artistic output.<sup>210</sup>

Although AT&SF purchased several Couse paintings for use in its facilities, such as the 1919 *Sun Worshipers* acquired in 1926 for display in the railway's Los Angeles terminal, the railway chose to use his works most frequently in its annual promotional calendar. Couse was the most prolific artist for the Santa Fe Railway calendar: over its nearly one-hundred-year run (from ca. 1899-1993), the series featured twenty-four of Couse's paintings for twenty-seven years: 1914, 1916-18, 1921-38, 1951, and 1962, with three earlier images reprinted for the years 1963-65.<sup>211</sup> In the early years, the canvases were selected from Couse's existing inventory. Over time, as Simpson and Couse developed a professional relationship, the paintings were created specifically for the railway based on subjects proposed by Couse, always one or two years in advance. The artist would submit compositional variations of the agreed-upon subject for selection, and then create a color sketch in oil of the approved composition, with input from an AT&SF committee consisting of Simpson and two other high-ranking officials. Simpson, who was also a published poet, had an artistic eye and corresponded with Couse about a chosen image in great detail. In discussing the 1925 calendar image *Grinding Corn*, Couse wrote, "I made this sketch light & snappy with a light background in order to depart somewhat from previous calendars nearly all of which have had a dark background. I would be pleased to know your views..." with Simpson

<sup>209</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 259.

<sup>210</sup> Bryant, "Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway," 449, and Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 270. Simpson and his wife became good friends with the Couses and often visited their Taos home. In 1972, AT&SF sold several paintings to collector and businessman Phillip Anschutz. In 1996, AT&SF merged with the Burlington Northern Railroad to form the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF); many Couses are still held in the BNSF collection today.

<sup>211</sup> Santa Fe Calendar History," Santa Fe Railway Calendars, accessed December 27, 2023, <http://dlbriscoe.com/santa-fe-railway-calendars.html>. The double 1915 calendars were "Two fares for One fare" promotions of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. No calendars were issued for 1919 and 1920 due to the railway industry being placed under U.S. government control as part of the First World War effort.

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replying, “It would seem that the olla, the metate, the buckskin leggins [sic] on the man and his head dress afford special opportunity for the brilliant white effect mentioned in previous correspondence. The strong white gives a sparkle to the picture, which is very attractive for calendar use.”<sup>212</sup> Leavitt maintains that Couse “viewed the Santa Fe paintings as equal in quality to any of his other work,” but that with his good business sense, he was also willing to work with his corporate clients to achieve the effect they desired.<sup>213</sup>

For his twenty-four artworks used by AT&SF in its calendar series, Couse nearly always employed an intimate interior scene, usually depicting one or two American Indians at work, such as basket or blanket weaving, arrow making, or grinding corn. (Although art historian Nicholas Woloschuk maintains that these scenes are of “some well-authenticated custom,” they are not truly documentary, in that the people are frequently in Plains Indian dress, and men are nearly always the artisan, despite the fact that much of the crafts work depicted was traditionally done by women.)<sup>214</sup> For his paintings set out-of-doors, Couse still achieved a sense of intimacy by placing his models in the foreground, framed and shaded by trees or rocks, creating a close-in setting that only opens to much brighter, wider vistas in the far background, a technique seen in such works as *Taos Turkey Hunters* (1917 calendar), *On the Canyon Rim* (1921 calendar), *Hopi Flute Ceremony* (1923 calendar) and *The Water Birds* (1937 calendar). As Woloschuk notes, Couse “frequently used side-lighting or the device of a camp fire to heighten the dramatic effect” of these types of paintings.<sup>215</sup>

The sole exception to these intimate calendar compositions is the 1928 painting, *The Chief*, in which a man in feathered war bonnet and blanket stands atop a high ridge in the immediate foreground, with an encampment in the valley behind him and open blue skies with dramatic clouds beyond. This painting was one of only two that were created for AT&SF with specific promotions in mind, advertising the new extra-fare train known as “The Chief.” Simpson proffered the general compositional concept of a standing chief figure, intended to symbolize the grandeur of the new train. Another “chief” painting, a profile portrait also suggested by Simpson, was created initially for the 1932 calendar, but was postponed until the 1936 edition to promote the “Super-Chief” train, the first all-diesel, all-sleeper car streamliner in the country, which made the journey from Chicago to Los Angeles fourteen hours faster than its steam predecessor.<sup>216</sup>

At the time of Couse’s death in 1936, the company had already acquired the painting for the 1937 calendar, *The Water Birds*, and was ready to begin the process for the 1938 edition; to meet the company’s immediate needs, Kibbey Couse offered one of the finished works from his father’s

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<sup>212</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 27, quoting Couse to Simpson, Feb. 20, 1925 (AT&SF archives) and Simpson to Couse, March 17, 1925, CFA. For an image of the *Grinding Corn* painting, see Stephen Manning, “Brush with History: BNSF’s Art Collection Tells the Story of a Railroad and a Country,” published October 23, 2019, <https://www.bnsf.com/news-media/railtalk/heritage/art-collection.html>

<sup>213</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 265.

<sup>214</sup> Nicholas Woloschuk, *E. Irving Couse, 1866-1936* (Santa Fe Village Art Museum, 1976), 83 and Ott, “Reform in Redface,” 83.

<sup>215</sup> Woloschuk, *E. Irving Couse*, 83-85.

<sup>216</sup> Thomas York, “A Step Ahead,” in *A History of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe*, ed. Pamela Berkman (Smithmark Publishers, Inc., 1988), 60. After Simpson’s death in 1933, AT&SF official C.J. Birchfield took over the calendar production and exerted far more control over Couse’s work than the sympathetic Simpson had. (Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 272.)

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inventory, *The Arrow Maker*. Due to its wide distribution across the country, the AT&SF annual calendar made Couse and the American Indian models and subjects he employed, “known to millions.”<sup>217</sup>

From 1939 onward, the railway continued to print calendars with paintings by other western artists, but departed from Couse’s intimate scenes of American Indians to employ sweeping western landscapes populated by cowboys, frontier settlers, and American Indians on horseback. Portraits of American Indians returned to the series in 1951 with a printing of Couse’s *Old War Bonnet*; Couse’s canvases clearly continued to be well-favored, with works reprinted decades after his death. Leavitt maintains that “the later calendars never had the same impact as the series envisioned and created by William Haskell Simpson” using Couse’s paintings.<sup>218</sup>

The majority of AT&SF’s calendars were produced by the printing conglomerate American Lithographic Company (ALCO), which in 1916 also began to feature Couse’s works for its own calendar. As with AT&SF, this arrangement lasted through 1936. Initially, ALCO purchased paintings from the artist’s existing inventory. ALCO’s “severely” horizontal format required cropping Couse’s paintings, until he began to create works specifically for the company in the late 1920s.<sup>219</sup> As a result, most were compositions of “single figures in a squatting position,” leading to the impression that Couse “was painting nothing else.”<sup>220</sup>

Correspondence between Couse and ALCO representatives reveal an easy working relationship, with Couse submitting several pencil sketches at a time, from which the company’s committee would select their favorite, giving Couse permission to proceed with a painting.<sup>221</sup> Couse’s last painting for the company, *The Image Maker*, was unfinished at the time of his death in 1936, and at Kibbey’s suggestion, was completed by fellow Taos artist E. Martin Hennings for the 1937 calendar. For the 1938 calendar, after considering some new sketches by Hennings, ALCO requested permission from Kibbey to use an earlier Couse sketch in their files as the basis for a painting to be executed by Hennings, explaining, “The committee believes that your father was so familiar with our calendar requirements, not only as to subject matter, but as to composition [sic], after so many years of painting these subjects...”<sup>222</sup>

At around the same time he began providing works for ALCO’s calendars, Couse was approached by the Beacon Manufacturing Company (originally of New Bedford, Massachusetts) for an unambiguously commercial venture that would help secure him financially. Commissioned to paint figures of American Indians for use in promotions of Beacon’s new line of “Indian” blankets, Couse was paid generously for fourteen paintings between 1916 and 1925. The paintings prominently featured blankets with American-Indian motifs that were either wrapped, held, or otherwise arranged by the depicted figures, and were reproduced as cardboard cut-outs to be used as dioramas in store displays, with the option to drape actual Beacon blankets over their painted counterparts. For example, *The New Rug* (1917), is composed

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<sup>217</sup> Bryant, “Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway,” 446. Quoting Frank Waters, “Indian Influence on Taos Art,” *New Mexico Quarterly* XXI (1951): 176.

<sup>218</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 273.

<sup>219</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 26.

<sup>220</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 275.

<sup>221</sup> Couse correspondence files, Box 1, Folder 2, Lunder Research Center.

<sup>222</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 277, quoting A. Robert Nelson to Kibbey Couse, August 28, 1937, American Lithographic Company File, CFA.



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of a portrait of Taos Pueblo-model Antonio Lujan crouching and looking directly at the viewer while proffering a folded blanket before him. As he had with his other corporate patrons, Couse successfully navigated the requirements of the program (such as eliminating any protrusions in a composition that could break off as a cut-out) while still “creating works that far out-lived their original [commercial] use;” as such, Leavitt maintains that some of the Beacon paintings “rank among the artist’s best work,” such as *The Wedding* (1924), in which a male figure drapes a richly colored blanket around his bride, in a nod to Pueblo marriage traditions.<sup>223</sup>

Although he never worked as an illustrator, and strove to create a reputation for himself within the European academic tradition of fine art, Couse’s career nevertheless came to be defined in large part by these corporate ventures. As Porter et al. note, they “provided him with steady, secure income for more than two decades, an enviable position not enjoyed by other Taos artists.”<sup>224</sup> Above all, Couse’s corporate patrons exponentially increased the public’s awareness of his work. Indeed, many would-be art collectors turned their copies of the annual AT&SF calendar into more permanent artworks for their homes. As a tribute to Couse soon after his death in 1936 noted, “While many of his pictures have won international award, he was widely known as the artist doing the work on the Santa Fe calendars. So popular were his calendar paintings, that today, many homes have them framed and [for] many years back.”<sup>225</sup> A few enterprising business owners in Raton, New Mexico and Trinidad, Colorado, were so bold to even sell the calendar prints in their shops, “using shellac and mounting them in frames or on boards and otherwise decorating them.”<sup>226</sup>

#### Late Career, 1928-1936

Irving and Virginia expanded and improved their property on Kit Carson Road over the years by adding rooms, creating flourishing gardens, and turning it into a beloved home that they found increasingly difficult to depart each autumn for New York.<sup>227</sup> Their annual summer in Taos had evolved from a secluded period of production for Couse into an important avenue for selling to clients, as tourists came in larger and larger numbers to the formerly secluded village. Though his colleagues struggled with the disruption, Couse found he could successfully balance his work and the need to engage with potential clients by receiving visitors in the late afternoons, when the sunlight in his studio had begun to fade.<sup>228</sup> He and Virginia were always found to be gracious hosts, and frequently received thank you letters from tourists, many of whom also expressed immense satisfaction with a Couse painting they had brought home with them.<sup>229</sup> One such visitor in 1926 was John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his wife Abigail, who purchased seventeen Couse paintings (and a few others from Sharp and Phillips) for their summer home in Maine.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 278.

<sup>224</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 346, n. 25.

<sup>225</sup> “Tribute to Couse,” *Santa Fe Ne Mexican*, April 29, 1936.

<sup>226</sup> Couse’s copy of letter from E.L. Goff (AT&SF agent) to W.H. Simpson, September 26, 1930. In a follow-up letter on October 7, Simpson assured Couse that “this ‘bootlegging doesn’t amount to much, and don’t think there is any need for worry for either of us—unless it develops later that it is being done on a wholesale scale. Am disposed to let the matter drop for the time being.” Couse correspondence files, Box 1, Folder 3, Lunder Research Center.

<sup>227</sup> Virginia’s garden was so successful that it became known as the “mother garden” to other Taos artists’ gardens, due to her frequent gifts of seeds and plant slips. Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 324.

<sup>228</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 126; Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 305.

<sup>229</sup> Couse kept this correspondence, which can be seen in the Couse Family Archives at the Lunder Research Center.

<sup>230</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 127. The Rockefellers had visited Taos in 1924 as well, but despite the artists’ hope they would become regular Taos patrons, the Rockefellers did not return after 1926.

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By the end of the 1927 season, the Couses were especially downcast upon returning to New York; in addition to missing Taos, Couse's studio at the Sherwood had very little natural light by this time due to the boom in skyscraper construction around it. They resolved to move to Taos fulltime by the 1928 season, and Couse gave up nearly all his ties to New York galleries, having found that selling directly to visitors in New Mexico was just as profitable. Their first full year in Taos in 1928 was a bit of a surprise, however, as they discovered how cold their house was in the winter time, prompting Couse to construct a south-facing sunroom behind his studio the following year.

Couse's last solo exhibition would be held in the spring of 1929 in Amarillo, Texas, organized by the local public school system there. In early December, 1929, Virginia became ill and passed away a few weeks later, leaving Couse devastated. Her funeral was described by one attendee as the "largest in Taos ever."<sup>231</sup> Son Kibbey, his wife Lucille (née Wrenn), and their first-born child Elizabeth moved to Taos from New York to provide Couse with companionship and support. Kibbey, a gifted engineer, soon converted the garage and south sunroom into workshops and a laboratory where he could continue to pursue his business interests.<sup>232</sup> Lucille, the niece of fellow artist Julius Rolshoven's wife Harriette, took over running the household.

Eventually, Couse began to recover from the loss of Virginia and returned to work, only to realize that the recent stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression had greatly curtailed the demand for artwork. Until his death in 1936, the patronage of AT&SF and ALCO proved extremely helpful in keeping him afloat financially and sustaining his public exposure. He continued to receive inquiries from the public on his work, but finding that most of his correspondents balked at the price of a moderate-sized painting, he turned to smaller canvases as a way to meet demand. Couse also used this time to return to larger, unfinished paintings that he had put aside years earlier. As he explained in a letter to one of his few remaining dealers, "I often have pictures in many stages of work for many years, taking them up as the mood seizes me. This in my opinion produces better results."<sup>233</sup> Some of Couse's larger, well-known canvases from these later years include *Watching* (ca. 1934) and *The Cacique* (1932), of model Juan Concha.

Couse lived the last several years of his life quietly, although he did host a reunion of the TSA in 1932, during which several photos of the original six members along with Ufer, Higgins, Adams, and Hennings were taken in Virginia's garden.<sup>234</sup> In early 1936, Couse broke his arm in a fall, and though was optimistic that he could return to work, within a few months died of pneumonia in an Albuquerque hospital on April 24 at the age of 70. Newspapers across the country reported of his death, remarking that "His Pictures of Indians and Southwestern Subjects were Noted in Art Circles."<sup>235</sup> A memorial was held in the Couse garden, with pallbearers accompanying the coffin to Sierra Vista Cemetery on foot.

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<sup>231</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 327, quoting Ralph Meyers to Harold Bugbee, undated, Correspondence of Meyers to Bugbee, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

<sup>232</sup> Kibbey Couse's career as a successful inventor and mechanical engineer may warrant further analysis of the significance of his productive life and work, but is considered beyond the scope of this nomination.

<sup>233</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 333, quoting Couse to W.A. Schneider, March 8, 1936, Misc. correspondence, CFA.

<sup>234</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 53-54.

<sup>235</sup> "E. Irving Couse, 70, Painter, Is Dead" *New York Times*, April 26, 1936.

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That June, a retrospective of Couse and fellow TSA member Dunton (who had died on March 19) was held at the MNM Art Museum in Santa Fe.

In addition to the numerous awards Couse received from the preeminent art institutions of his time, he was featured in a 1921 film by the French film company Pathé as part of a series titled *Masters of American Art*, had work included in the 1924 Venice Biennale, and had paintings compete in the art contests at the 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games.<sup>236</sup> Today, Couse's works are represented in many prominent collections of American and Western American art, such as the Anschutz Collection, Denver; BNSF Corporate Art Collection, Fort Worth, Texas; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Detroit Institute of Arts; Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; Rockwell Museum, Corning, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa; New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe; and the Harwood Museum of Art, Taos.

### JOSEPH HENRY SHARP

#### Education and Early Career, 1859-1899

Born on September 27, 1859, in Bridgeport, Ohio, to Elizabeth Ann Raynes and William Henry Sharp, Joseph Henry Sharp spent the majority of his childhood in Ironton, Ohio, a small rural town on the Ohio River near the Kentucky border. An indifferent student with clear artistic talent, Sharp developed a fascination with American Indian culture as a young child, inspired in part by *The Last of the Mohicans* and other novels by James Fenimore Cooper.<sup>237</sup>

Sharp's interest in American Indians continued to grow, moving beyond a passing curiosity. In a 1939 interview, Sharp recalled participating in an Ironton parade with four friends, playacting as "Indians on ponies, stripped to G-string & all painted up by [the] local druggist with ochre."<sup>238</sup> An adventurous child, Sharp nearly drowned as a boy, an accident that eventually led to permanent hearing loss. As a result of his increasing deafness, Sharp left public school in his early teens.<sup>239</sup> Able to speak but preferring to communicate in writing, Sharp carried a small notepad with him that doubled as a sketch pad throughout his life.<sup>240</sup> Encouraged by his mother and Ironton philanthropist Nancy Norton to formally develop his skills as an artist, the prospect of an art career offered Sharp the opportunity to earn a good living largely unhindered by his deafness.<sup>241</sup>

Sharp's profound hearing loss did not affect his ability to effectively communicate with others, and does not appear to have factored significantly in his artistic process or his self-perception. Carolyn Reynolds Riebeth, daughter of Crow Indian Reservation agent Samuel Guilford Reynolds, met Sharp in 1902 when she was a child and grew to know him well. She remembered Sharp as speaking "in a soft careful

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<sup>236</sup> "Irving Couse," 'Athlete' Biography, Olympedia, accessed February 21, 2024, <https://www.olympedia.org/athletes/921478>.

<sup>237</sup> Ina Sizer Cassidy, "Art and Artists in New Mexico: The First Four Artists in Taos," *New Mexico*, June 1932; Forrest Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance* (Fenn Publishing Co., 1983), 32.

<sup>238</sup> Robert Taft, "The Pictorial Record of the Old West: XIII. The End of a Century," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 19: no. 3 (1951), 250.

<sup>239</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 29, 34.

<sup>240</sup> Carolyn Reynolds Riebeth, *J.H. Sharp among the Crow Indians, 1902-1910* (Upton and Sons, 1985), 19-20.

<sup>241</sup> Marie Watkins, "The Call of the West: The Art of Joseph Henry Sharp," in *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, ed. Peter H. Hassrick (Buffalo Bill Center of the West, 2018), 4.

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monotone” and able to experience the beat of the drums at American Indian dances through physical sensation. He did not read lips (except when communicating with his first wife, Addie) and to the best of Riebeth’s knowledge, did not use formal sign language, though she recalled him using “finger motions” when interacting with an indigenous person on one occasion. “He was not self-conscious; he was never embarrassed; he plainly did not feel left out. When he sat in a group, he was alert, glancing discreetly about him,” recalled Riebeth, “When his heart was in it, he could speak emphatically.”<sup>242</sup>

At age fourteen, Sharp gained admission to the McMicken School of Drawing and Design in Cincinnati.<sup>243</sup> At the time Sharp arrived, a formidable group of contemporary painters contributed to the city’s developing reputation as a regional center for art and culture. Led by Frank Duveneck (1848-1919), the group included Robert Frederick Blum (1857-1903), Kenyon Cox (1856-1919), Edward Potthast (1857-1927), and Henry Farny (1847-1916), who would gain fame as a painter of American Indians.<sup>244</sup> Duveneck had recently returned to Cincinnati after studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and his figure paintings and portraiture, characterized by dark colors and expressive brushwork, reflected the influence of European realists Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and Wilhelm Leibl (1844-1900).<sup>245</sup> Duveneck exerted considerable influence among the Cincinnati artists and would become Sharp’s mentor and friend.<sup>246</sup>

Sharp was a diligent student, taking day and night classes and earning an income painting portraits.<sup>247</sup> Most aspiring American artists of the day understood that to refine their skills and build a reputation among potential patrons, it was necessary to study abroad. In Europe, they could experience the work of the great masters firsthand, study with leading contemporary artists, and benefit from rigorous academic training. Between 1881 and 1896, Sharp split his time between Cincinnati and Europe, honing his technique and experimenting with different styles and media.<sup>248</sup>

Beginning in 1881, Sharp studied with prominent Belgian portraitist Charles Verlat (1824-1890) at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp.<sup>249</sup> Sharp remained in Antwerp for a year, returning to Cincinnati in 1882, where he continued his studies at McMicken, renewed his relationship with Duveneck and befriended Henry Farny.<sup>250</sup>

In response to a developing market for paintings depicting American Indian life, Farny left Ohio in 1881 to travel among the indigenous people of the Missouri River valley, sketching, taking photographs, and gathering artifacts.<sup>251</sup> When Sharp returned from Antwerp with a desire to paint American Indians,

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<sup>242</sup> Riebeth, *J.H. Sharp among the Crow Indians, 1902-1910*, 19-21.

<sup>243</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 4.

<sup>244</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 5; Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 77; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 35.

<sup>245</sup> Kelin Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter: Joseph Henry Sharp and the Influence of European Artistic Training,” in *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 100; “Frank Duveneck,” National Gallery of Art, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/artist-info.1258.html>; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 35.

<sup>246</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 5; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 35.

<sup>247</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 100, 103.

<sup>248</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 5.

<sup>249</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 103.

<sup>250</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 106.

<sup>251</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 106.

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Farny attempted to divert his interest away from the Great Plains tribes to presumably avoid competition:

...I wanted to paint Indians—Farny was doing it then, & dissuaded me by telling of hardships, danger and made me feel I didn't exactly have a right to paint Indians—after a couple of years or so when he saw I was determined to go west, he gave me books on Pueblo Indians & particularly the Penitentes of New Mexico & wanted me to take that up!<sup>252</sup>

A Catholic confraternity of lay men, *La Fraternidad Piadosa de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno*, also known as Los Penitentes, Los Hermanos, and the Penitente Brotherhood, emerged in Northern New Mexico and southern Colorado in the late eighteenth-century. Members referred to each other as *hermano* and conducted their private meetings and rituals in the local *morada*, typically a small adobe building on the outskirts of the village. Beyond its religious practices, the Penitentes played a powerful role in Hispano villages, performing acts of charity and providing mutual aid. The society's secretive nature and painful public rituals involving self-flagellation, reenactment of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and other acts of bodily penance intrigued Sharp throughout his life.

In 1883, Sharp traveled to the American West for the first time, a transformational experience that gave him an opportunity to exercise his lifelong interest in indigenous peoples and apply his European training to a distinctly American subject matter.<sup>253</sup> Sharp began his journey in Santa Fe before heading to Albuquerque, Tucson, Los Angeles, and the Pacific Northwest.<sup>254</sup> The trip resulted in sketches but no paintings, and back in Cincinnati Sharp returned to painting portraits on commission, which provided a steady income but left him somewhat bored and unchallenged creatively.<sup>255</sup> Sharp's portraits from this period, such as *La Neophyte*, completed in 1883, have been described as technically impressive but lacking evidence of personal style and composition.<sup>256</sup>

Restless and feeling restricted by the educational opportunities available to him at McMicken, Sharp returned to Europe with friend and artist John Hauser (1859-1913) in 1885.<sup>257</sup> The pair spent time touring Antwerp, Brussels, and parts of Germany before arriving in Munich where they enrolled in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1886.<sup>258</sup> Instruction at the Munich academy emphasized the importance of realism and painting from everyday life while promoting a distinctive style, sometimes referred to as the Munich Style or Munich School, characterized by a dark palette, chiaroscuro, fluid brushwork, impasto, and unsentimental realism.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Taft, "The Pictorial Record of the Old West," 250.

<sup>253</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 107.

<sup>254</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 6.

<sup>255</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 43-49; Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 107.

<sup>256</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 107. *The Neophyte* is reproduced in Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 38.

<sup>257</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 107-108; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 49.

<sup>258</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 5; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 56.

<sup>259</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 100, 108.

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Sharp initially studied pastels with Greek painter Nikolaos Gyzis (1842-1901), developing his classical technique while mastering the medium and focusing on genre and still-life painting. Sharp and Hauser, however, soon found the Munich curriculum too restrictive and left the academy for Paris and the city's vibrant art scene.<sup>260</sup> While it is clear that Sharp and Hauser "studied" while in Paris, it is uncertain if they enrolled at the Académie Julian, an alternative to the famously rigorous Ecole des Beaux Arts, or if their educational experiences were self-directed.<sup>261</sup>

After a brief visit to Cincinnati in fall 1887, Sharp returned to the Royal Academy in Munich to study with Wisconsin native Carl von Marr (1858-1936).<sup>262</sup> That he chose to return to an academy that he had previously found lacking, suggests that the opportunity to study with von Marr was important for Sharp. A painter of historical subjects and genre scenes, von Marr advocated keen observation, attention to detail, and perhaps most importantly, painting *en plein air* to create a sense of immediacy and ensure accurate color, a practice that Sharp readily adopted and continued throughout his life.<sup>263</sup>

In fall 1889, Sharp returned to a lively art scene in Cincinnati. Working from his studio in the Ogden Building at 30 West 4th Street (no longer extant), Sharp further developed his reputation, helping form the Cincinnati Art Club in 1890 and exhibiting in Cincinnati, New York, and Boston.<sup>264</sup> Sharp's 1892 large scale painting, *Fountain Square Pantomime*, depicting more than seventy-five figures, many based on local dignitaries and artists, garnered particular attention.<sup>265</sup> Applying characteristics associated with the Munich academy to an American subject, the painting represents the culmination of his American and European training at that point.<sup>266</sup>

During this period Sharp met music student Addie Byram, and the two married in June 1892. After honeymooning in Annisquam, Massachusetts, where Sharp sketched and painted watercolor marines, the young couple returned to Cincinnati, where Sharp joined the faculty of the Art Academy and became a popular instructor.<sup>267</sup> Addie Sharp was very supportive of her husband's work, helping manage his business dealings and often acting as his spokesperson.<sup>268</sup>

The following summer the Sharps traveled to the New Mexico Territory where they joined John Hauser. Addie remained in Santa Fe while the two men embarked on an ambitious itinerary that included visits to several Pueblo communities. According to art historian Marie Watkins, Sharp "left Cincinnati as an emerging artist searching for his way and returned with a clear purpose, having found his niche. Much

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<sup>260</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 60; Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 111.

<sup>261</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 112; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 60-61.

<sup>262</sup> "Treasure Troves from an Artist's Studio," *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, September 18, 1887.

<sup>263</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 112; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 61.

<sup>264</sup> Peter H. Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," in *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 48; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 63-64.

<sup>265</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 64-67; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 15, 1892; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Fountain Square Pantomime*, 1892, Cincinnati Art Museum, 2000.68, [https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/fountain-square-pantomime/pwG-xPqKG\\_-G6w?hl=en](https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/fountain-square-pantomime/pwG-xPqKG_-G6w?hl=en).

<sup>266</sup> Michael, "Style, Composition, and Subject Matter," 100.

<sup>267</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 65.

<sup>268</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 65; Watkins, "The Call of the West," 7.

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of what he saw and learned on this initial tour of Pueblo life and Penitente practices would be recalled in later compositions throughout his career and would lead to individual and institutional patronage.”<sup>269</sup>

Throughout the trip, Sharp sketched, took photographs, and collected artifacts that could be used to inform future paintings. In exchange for posing, Sharp offered Pueblo men, women, and children cigarettes, small sums of money, colored cloth, and candy.<sup>270</sup> Sharp described the Pueblo people as “extremely superstitious as regards to the camera” and in his experience somewhat difficult to work with:

It takes a great deal of patience, persuasion and money to get him to sit for a painting. After a deal of trouble and bargaining I got my first one to pose. In five minutes he came over and sat down where I was working. I got him in position again, and in five minutes more he quit, and I had to make a new bargain to finish. I am inclined to think a great deal of it was native shrewdness. After getting one or two in a village [though] it is not so difficult.<sup>271</sup>

To effectively capture his American Indian subjects, Sharp was forced to paint quickly or take photographs that he could refer to as he painted in his studio. In Europe, where photography had a complicated relationship with painting, working from preparatory sketches was preferred. In the American West, photography was viewed with less concern and artists such as Henry Farny embraced the camera as a means of enhancing their painting practice.<sup>272</sup> Sharp would use the camera as both a compositional aid and promotional tool throughout his life.<sup>273</sup>

Believing that the Southwest he experienced would soon disappear, Sharp returned to Cincinnati laden with Indian artifacts, many of which appeared in subsequent paintings. Watkins points out, “Sharp’s collection of authentic Southwestern Indian objects evoked a whole and complete culture for the eastern audience while masking the complexities of contemporary Native life....Many objects that he put to practical use became signature features in his repertoire, but such use inevitably provided misleading information when they were deployed as studio props in fabricated pictorial settings.”<sup>274</sup>

In April 1894, Sharp exhibited between twenty-five and thirty paintings resulting from his Southwest trip at a one-man show at Cincinnati’s Traxel & Maas Gallery, with which he would enjoy a long and fruitful association.<sup>275</sup> While the show included paintings depicting other subject matter, it was Sharp’s paintings of Indian subjects, accompanied by artifacts collected during his travels, that received the most attention. In a review of the show, the *Cincinnati Tribune* declared, “Mr. Sharp’s favorite work is of Indian life and character. Here he undoubtedly finds the freest play of his genius....”<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 7.

<sup>270</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 74.

<sup>271</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, “At the Pueblo Games,” *Cincinnati Tribune*, July 14, 1893.

<sup>272</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 119.

<sup>273</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 119.

<sup>274</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 9.

<sup>275</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 82-85.

<sup>276</sup> E.H. Wade, “Four Walls of Pictures,” *Cincinnati Tribune*, April 22, 1894.

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Sharp used reference photographs to produce his first major artistic triumph, *The Harvest Dance*, completed in 1894.<sup>277</sup> Described as more pastiche than ethnological record, the multigure painting sought to convey the spirit of the dance, “valuing emotional impact more than detailed accuracy.”<sup>278</sup> First exhibited at Sharp’s one-man show and the following month at the Cincinnati Art Club’s Fourth Annual Exhibition, the painting was lauded by critics and purchased by the Cincinnati Art Museum.<sup>279</sup> Throughout his lifetime, Sharp would enjoy a close and supportive relationship with the museum and its director Joseph H. Gest.<sup>280</sup>

Gest was instrumental in granting Sharp a leave of absence from his faculty position to pursue additional training in Europe in 1894. According to art collector and Sharp biographer Forrest Fenn, the artist felt that to paint Indian models with greater accuracy, he needed to work more quickly and returning to Europe could help him develop those skills.<sup>281</sup> Joseph and Addie Sharp and Addie’s younger sister, Louise, sailed for Europe in June. Over the next two years, Sharp split his time between the Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi in Paris, studying with a succession of French academic painters that included Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921), Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant (1845-1902), Gustave-Claude-Etienne Courtois (1852-1923), J. Andre Castaigne (1861-1929), and Louis-Auguste Girardot (1856-1933). Best known as Orientalists, Constant and Girardot created portraits and genre paintings inspired by trips to North Africa and the Middle East, an approach that likely resonated with Sharp.<sup>282</sup>

Sharp’s time in Europe included a trip to Spain and the Moorish palace of Alhambra in spring 1895 accompanied by Addie and Frank Duveneck, who was living in Italy at the time. In Madrid, the two artists made “a pilgrimage to the shrine of Velázquez,” producing copies of the artist’s works on display at the Museo del Prado.<sup>283</sup> That year Sharp received a silver medal at the Académie Colarossi and three of his paintings were exhibited at the Paris Salon, most notably *Devant St. Antione*, completed in 1896.<sup>284</sup> The life-size nude received attention in the Cincinnati press and according to Watkins was proof of Sharp’s international critical acceptance, unequivocally demonstrating his devotion to craft, technical virtuosity, and mastery of the human figure.<sup>285</sup> While in Paris, Sharp made the acquaintance of Ernest Blumenschein, a young American artist from Ohio studying at the Académie Julien. According to Blumenschein, Sharp “told me of his visits to different tribes when I met him in Paris in ’96, saying, that, as I was interested in Indians I should be sure to visit the Taos Pueblo.”<sup>286</sup> Both Blumenschein and Bert Phillips, who also studied at the Académie and shared a studio in New York with Blumenschein, would later play an important role in Sharp’s career.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 7; See also Joseph Henry Sharp, “The Pueblo Indian Dance,” *Harper’s Weekly* 37 (October 14, 1893): 981-83.

<sup>278</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 10.

<sup>279</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 85-88.

<sup>280</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 78-79.

<sup>281</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 88.

<sup>282</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 88; Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 113-115.

<sup>283</sup> Michael, “Style, Composition, and Subject Matter,” 116.

<sup>284</sup> Peter H. Hassrick, ed., *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 128; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 93-94.

<sup>285</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 12.

<sup>286</sup> Ernest L. Blumenschein, “Origin of the Taos Art Colony,” *El Palacio* 20, no. 10 (May 15, 1926): 190. Sharp’s *The Tobacco Dance of the Plains Indians* (1910) appeared on the cover of this issue.

<sup>287</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, xiv.



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In 1896, Sharp returned to Cincinnati with Addie and more than one hundred paintings and sketches and numerous souvenirs, many of which were proudly displayed in his studio. He returned to teaching at the Cincinnati Art Academy, held a well-received show of his European work at his studio, and augmented his income by accepting portrait commissions. Late that year, two paintings shown at the Paris Salon, *Devant St. Antione* and a portrait of Addie, were included in the first annual exhibition sponsored by the newly formed Society of Western Artists. Organized by Frank Duveneck, Henry Farny, Lewis H. Meakin (1850-1917), and Charles H. Ault (1862-1929), the show opened on December 15, 1896, at the Art Institute of Chicago and subsequently traveled to Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis.<sup>288</sup>

At the end of the 1896-97 school year, the Sharps decamped for Santa Fe and Taos, returning in the fall with “a great number of studies of Indian portraiture and Western mountain scenery” and an invigorated commitment to portraying American Indian life in his work.<sup>289</sup> Sharp also began experimenting with monotypes, producing portraits of American Indian people that according to one Cincinnati critic were “remarkable for their strength” and constituted “the nearest approach to painting of anything in the black and white line ever seen here.”<sup>290</sup> His interest in the medium was relatively fleeting, however, and Sharp did not exhibit monotypes after 1902.<sup>291</sup>

In early 1898, four of Sharp’s paintings were selected for inclusion in the Second Annual Exhibition of the Society of Western Artists. All depicted Pueblo subjects. *The Lament for the Dead* (1897), a moody moonlit scene of a mourning Indian woman, arms uplifted in grief, received considerable attention and marked the beginning of Sharp’s exploration of American Indian mourning and burial practices.<sup>292</sup> *Do-Ree-Tah, A Pueblo Squaw*, a compelling portrait of a young Pueblo woman included in the exhibition, presaged the frank portraits of American Indian people executed with great technical skill and compassion, work that would eventually form a large portion of Sharp’s oeuvre and garner significant critical acclaim.<sup>293</sup>

In April 1899, *Brush and Pencil* published Sharp’s article “An Artist among the Indians,” accompanied by eleven images of the artist’s New Mexico work, mostly portraits. *The Mesa, From Kit Carson’s Tomb*, an impressionistic landscape, appeared in color as a frontispiece to the article. In the piece Sharp declared, “The Indian is becoming a factor for distinctly American pictures, and Western artists in particular seem to be grasping his importance as a picturesque motif.”<sup>294</sup>

<sup>288</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 95-96; *First Annual Exhibition of the Society of Western Artists: December 15-27, 1896* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1896), William Forsyth Papers, Indiana Historical Society, <https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/p16797coll51/id/33>; “Gems of the Palette [sic],” *Chicago Tribune*, December 11, 1896; The portrait of Addie Sharp, completed in 1895, is now part of the Gilcrease Museum collection, see Joseph Henry Sharp, Mrs. JH Sharp (Addie Byram Sharp), 1895, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.2549, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/012549>.

<sup>289</sup> *Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 19, 1897, 20.

<sup>290</sup> “Sharp’s Monotypes of Indian Life and Character,” *Commercial Tribune*, December 5, 1897.

<sup>291</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 14.

<sup>292</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 12-13.

<sup>293</sup> Sharp would produce a second portrait of *Do-Ree-Tah* in 1900 that was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution in 1901. For the earlier painting see Joseph Henry Sharp, “An Artist among the Indians,” *Brush and Pencil* 4, no. 1 (April 1899), 5.

<sup>294</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, “An Artist among the Indians,” 1.

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Written six years after his first contact with the Pueblo people, the piece suggests Sharp was primarily concerned with the picturesque or aesthetic qualities of his subjects at the time, as opposed to their cultural or personal lives. Voicing his worry that the “real, picturesque Indian is fast disappearing,” Sharp wrote of his experience working with Pueblo models in a condescending tone, expressing a racially insensitive, stereotypical view of his models as unreliable, childlike, and prone to alcoholism. Describing Pueblo models in general, he stated:

As a model the Indian is not a great success. After various tribulations to get him to pose, it is impossible to make him unbend. If it is his first attempt he will invariably take a pose of majestic and often ludicrous stiffness. Having used much persuasion, time, and patience in breaking one in, he soon becomes indifferent, often gets too familiar, goes on strike for more pay, or stays away altogether; so at times one is tempted to take Dooley’s advice, “give him ten dollars, and let him go off and drink himself to death.”<sup>295</sup>

After spending another productive summer in Taos, Sharp completed *The Evening Chant*, which was exhibited widely and appeared as a color frontispiece to the March 1900 issue of *Brush and Pencil*. In the accompanying text, Sharp conveys a more respectful tone toward the Pueblo people and an interest in traditional cultural practices: “There is a hidden meaning to all his movements, and he sacredly obeys the ceremonial teachings of war, the chase, visits, prayers, and feasts. I have witnessed these chants and dances of the Pueblo Indians many times, and they always display a deep religious sentiment and are characterized by great dignity and seriousness.”<sup>296</sup>

#### Sharp Matures as an Artist in the American West, 1899-1926

##### *Crow Agency, Montana*

The trajectory of Sharp’s career took a life-changing turn when he and Addie choose to spend the summer of 1899 among the northern tribes of the Great Plains, documenting what he believed to be a vanishing culture. Explaining his decision in a 1913 interview, Sharp said, “I went north because I realized that Taos would last longer.”<sup>297</sup> Spending time in Montana and the Dakotas, Sharp produced numerous portraits and “painted Plains Indians customs, ceremonies, and costumes in ways that met with anthropological approval....”<sup>298</sup>

Sharp’s work in the north attracted interest from influential patrons that enhanced his reputation and played a significant role in his burgeoning success. Youngstown, Ohio, industrialist and philanthropist Joseph G. Butler Jr., who later founded the Butler Institute of American Art, began collecting Sharp’s work, reportedly for its historic value.<sup>299</sup> As the authors of *The Taos Society and Its Patrons* point out, “Sharp was extraordinarily successful in attracting important patrons, largely due to his virtuoso treatment of western themes and his engaging personality.”<sup>300</sup> He soon attracted other patrons, both private and institutional.

<sup>295</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, “An Artist among the Indians,” 6.

<sup>296</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, “The Chant,” *Brush and Pencil* 5, no. 6 (March 1900): 284-285.

<sup>297</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 16.

<sup>298</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 16.

<sup>299</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 16.

<sup>300</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 122.

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At the turn of the twentieth century, Gest and the Cincinnati Art Museum held an exhibition of eighty-five Indian paintings by Sharp, which traveled to Detroit and St. Louis. His work entered the collection of Andrew Carnegie, and was shown in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C., the Paris World's Fair, and the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. His show at the Cosmos Club, then a private social club for men interested in science, introduced Sharp to a network of anthropologists including William Henry Holmes, head curator of the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Museum. In 1900, Holmes purchased eleven portraits of Cheyenne, Sioux, Crow, and Pueblo individuals for the museum, thus bestowing authority on Sharp's paintings as ethnological documents.<sup>301</sup> The *Washington Post* lauded the humanity of Sharp's portraits, finding his work "notable for the character in his faces, not necessarily noble, but full of strength and individuality."<sup>302</sup> The following year, the *Cincinnati Observer* expressed a similar opinion, stating "In his work Mr. Sharp occupies a field alone. He went out among the Indians themselves, and painted not incidents or types, but individuals."<sup>303</sup>

Holmes regarded Sharp "as among the first, if not the very first painters of Indian portraits in the country" and the artist considered the Smithsonian acquisition a major turning point in his career, later writing, "That purchase started my reputation."<sup>304</sup> Soon afterward, philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst, mother of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, purchased all fifty-six of Sharp's paintings exhibited at the Pan-American Exposition, including *Evening Chant*, and a number of other paintings from his Cincinnati studio.<sup>305</sup> Hearst had recently endowed a Chair of Indian Research at the University of California Berkeley and donated the bulk of the Sharp paintings she acquired to the school.<sup>306</sup> In 1903, she commissioned Sharp to produce fifteen portraits a year for the next five years, asking him "to represent noted figures of Indian tribes."<sup>307</sup> The arrangement transformed Sharp's financial situation, allowing him to cease teaching and devote himself full-time to painting.<sup>308</sup> Furthermore, Hearst's patronage secured Sharp's reputation as the principal turn-of-the-century painter of American Indians.<sup>309</sup> Though Hearst ended their agreement early in 1904 for unknown reasons, the two remained friends and she continued to purchase Sharp paintings until her death in 1919.<sup>310</sup>

Leaving Cincinnati for good in spring 1903, the Sharps relocated to Crow Agency, Montana, sixty miles southeast of Billings on the Crow Reservation and the Little Bighorn River. Completed in November 1905, the Sharps' cabin, Absarokee Hut, was built on government land three miles from the site of the

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<sup>301</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 17.

<sup>302</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 17-18; "Portraits of Indians: Notable Works of J.H. Sharp on Exhibition at Cosmos Club," *Washington Post*, December 18, 1900; "Art Notes," *Washington Star*, December 22, 1900.

<sup>303</sup> *Cincinnati Observer*, November 9, 1901.

<sup>304</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 18, quoting W.H. Holmes to Joseph Henry Sharp, January 3, 1911, and Joseph Henry Sharp to Dr. John Ewers, August 8, 1948, Joseph Henry Sharp, Curatorial Files, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

<sup>305</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 18; Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 124.

<sup>306</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 124.

<sup>307</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 124.

<sup>308</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 18; Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 124-125.

<sup>309</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 18.

<sup>310</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 125; Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 62.

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1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn.<sup>311</sup> Sharp preferred to work in Montana during the fall and winter, finding that the northern tribes had more time to sit for him during the winter months. In late winter and early spring, the Sharps spent time with family in Pasadena, California, and summered in Taos, a routine they maintained for several years.

From Crow Agency and Absarokee Hut, Sharp traveled the region seeking out the “old fighters,” the surviving warriors of the Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyenne, Shoshone and Arapaho tribes.<sup>312</sup> Over time, more than two hundred American Indian men who fought in the Battle of the Little Big Horn sat for Sharp. Many of the resulting half-length portraits, designed to emphasize the subject’s physiognomy and dress, include biographical anecdotes on the back of the canvas.<sup>313</sup> Individually and as a whole, the portraits created an invaluable historical record. As Watkins points out, “these portraits and others, of women and children, remain an outstanding achievement in that they link individuals with future generations and provide a rich history of actual personalities Sharp encountered in the Indian communities.”<sup>314</sup>

Since first arriving in 1899, Sharp found inspiration in Montana’s winter landscape, overcoming the technical challenge of painting *en plein air* in the freezing cold. Traveling in a sheepherder’s wagon dubbed the “Prairie Dog,” which functioned as a mobile studio, Sharp produced landscapes with Impressionistic qualities that revealed the influence of his time in Paris. As finding models for his paintings grew more difficult during the early 1900s, Sharp “turned a great deal to landscapes,” which he found “very interesting, & very *difficult* too.”<sup>315</sup> In 1912, Sharp’s winter landscapes would be lauded for displaying “a subtle delicacy of color and tone” and presenting a “true view of the West.”<sup>316</sup>

Fra Dinwiddie Dana, a student at the Cincinnati Art Academy during Sharp’s tenure in the early 1890s, occasionally joined him, the two painting *en plein air* side-by-side in the Western landscape. Dana had married rancher Edwin Lester Dana in 1896 and lived at the 2A Ranch, about sixty-five miles from Absarokee Hut near Parkman, Wyoming. She split her time between the ranch and New York, studying with influential painter and educator William Merritt Chase, who served as a mentor for several years, and traveled widely, frequently to Paris.<sup>317</sup> Though she did not share Sharp’s interest in American Indian subjects, the two maintained a warm relationship, with Dana offering Sharp informed criticism as well

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<sup>311</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 19. For a full discussion of Absarokee Hut, see Sarah E. Boehme, “Absarokee Hut: The Joseph Henry Sharp Cabin,” in *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Center of the West, 2018), 77-97.

<sup>312</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 19.

<sup>313</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 19.

<sup>314</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 20.

<sup>315</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 22.

<sup>316</sup> “Sharp’s Paintings: A Notable Exhibition,” *Cincinnati Times-Star*, November 19, 1912.

<sup>317</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 22. Art historian Valerie Hedquist states that Dana was never enrolled in a course with Sharp at the Cincinnati Art Academy and cites William Merritt Chase as the primary influence on her painting. For more on Dana, see Valerie Hedquist and Sue Hart, *Fra Dana: American Impressionist in the Rockies* (Missoula, Montana: Montana Museum of Art & Culture, 2011). The location of the 2A Ranch and whether or not it remains extant is unclear. Around 1913, Edwin and Fra Dana began developing the Dana Ranch near Adel, Montana, which remains extant today. See Murk Studio, *The Dana Ranch by Hall and Hall, April 4, 2013*, [https://issuu.com/murk-studio/docs/the\\_dana\\_ranch-v1](https://issuu.com/murk-studio/docs/the_dana_ranch-v1) and “Historic 60,000 Acre Montana Ranch Sells,” *Prairie Star*, March 2, 2013, [https://agupdate.com/theprairiestar/news/livestock/historic-60-000-acre-montana-ranch-sells/article\\_99c11f76-d48c-5b23-9eb6-c0a8fc7cbb8e.html](https://agupdate.com/theprairiestar/news/livestock/historic-60-000-acre-montana-ranch-sells/article_99c11f76-d48c-5b23-9eb6-c0a8fc7cbb8e.html).

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as respite from the mainstay of his work. Sharp's undated painting, *Winter Landscape with Haystacks*, painted at the 2A Ranch, is a fine example of the work resulting in part from their friendship.<sup>318</sup>

He also found opportunities to exercise his preoccupation with indigenous burial and mourning practices, producing paintings like *The Great Sleep* (1900), a somber depiction of a Crow scaffold grave in winter, *The Funeral* (1900), where Sharp employs a subject he returned to often, the body awaiting transport to the gravesite via travois as the funeral procession assembles, and *After the Funeral* (1900), which portrays the ritual of distributing the deceased's property after death.<sup>319</sup> Sharp returned frequently to the subject of illness, death, and mourning in his work, which, as biographer Fenn suggests, served as "a metaphor for the passing of the Indian way of life."<sup>320</sup>

Photography continued to play a critical role in Sharp's work. He often used the camera to capture images of individuals for his portrait work and photographed scenes that could be incorporated in his genre paintings.<sup>321</sup> Sharp clearly used reference photographs, now in the collection of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, to complete his 1908 painting, *Encampment of Crow Indians*, which portrays a group of Crow men crossing the Little Big Horn River on horseback leaving an encampment of tipis behind.<sup>322</sup> It is unclear if Sharp asked permission to produce photographs of sacred sites and rituals such as tree burials, which he used to inform paintings such as *Tree Grave* and *Mourning Her Brave*, both completed in 1904. He did, however, display an understanding and respect for Indian culture in other ways. Writing to the Office of Indian Affairs in 1902 to protest a new restriction that prohibited Indian people from wearing their hair long, Sharp argued "It would be the greatest sacrifice you could have them make... It is too much as tho you yourself were *forced* to renounce your religion and love, and hopes for the future..."<sup>323</sup>

While in Crow Agency, Sharp began experimenting with interior scenes, writing "I am interested in firelight things now & have a little teepee interior rigged up in studio, where I can pose a model by lamplight & work by daylight. Awfully hard but lots of fun & interesting."<sup>324</sup> In *A Gift for Her Brave* (1900), Sharp portrays a young Crow woman seated within her tipi and cradling her infant child, bathed in the soft glow from an unseen fire.<sup>325</sup> Many of his "firelight" genre paintings portray men, women, and

<sup>318</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 22; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Winter Landscape with Haystacks*, undated, gift of Fra Dana, Montana Museum of Art and Culture, 49-532; <https://montanamuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/D8E2D015-E785-412C-860F-152144945240>.

<sup>319</sup> Riebeth, *J.H. Sharp among the Crow Indians, 1902-1910*, 89-92; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Great Sleep*, 1900, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 17-204, <https://portal.hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/catalog/3d267e71-65a9-400a-8ccd-e0ab7cd7ece6>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Funeral*, 1900, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.313, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01313>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *After the Funeral*, 1900, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.315, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01315>. Sharp exhibited *The Great Sleep* at the Pan-American Exposition along with three paintings of tree burials from Crow Agency.

<sup>320</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 182.

<sup>321</sup> See Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, for numerous examples of Sharp's photography.

<sup>322</sup> Fenn demonstrates that this was the case in *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 146-147, presenting reference photos taken by Sharp alongside the painting.

<sup>323</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 159, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, January 18, 1902.

<sup>324</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 23, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Henry J. Koch, Cincinnati Art Museum cashier, January 1, 1905, Cincinnati Art Museum Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

<sup>325</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *A Gift for Her Brave*, 1900, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.331, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01331>.

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children in quiet moments of contemplation, while others, such as *The Drummers–Crow–A Pause in the Dance* (1906), depict groups engaged in ceremony and ritual.<sup>326</sup> When staging such paintings, Sharp often utilized objects from his artifact collection, including pipes, warbonnets, and drums to lend a sense of authenticity to the scene. The paintings allow the viewer to “gaze covertly inside these private interiors” and convey a profound sense of intimacy.<sup>327</sup>

His paintings were selling well, but to further support his work and extensive travel, Sharp relied on the patronage of Butler and Hearst, and in 1904 began a lucrative relationship with the Fishel, Adler & Swartz gallery in New York City, which held an annual exhibition of Sharp’s work from 1904 through 1910.<sup>328</sup> Meanwhile, Sharp grew increasingly concerned over the disappearance of “authentic” Plains Indian culture and the potential impact on his art. As Watkins states:

From Sharp’s aesthetic standpoint, like the views of many anthropologists of his day, the contemporary Plains Indians provided little visual interest unless wearing old-styled clothing and performing traditional rituals. Sharp believed he was painting and preserving the “real Indian” in his art...<sup>329</sup>

Taos, which Sharp described in a 1906 letter to Joseph Gest as “our first love and stomping ground,” grew increasingly attractive as a year-round home for the Sharps as other artists including Bert Phillips, Ernest Blumenschein, Oscar Berninghaus, and Eanger Irving Couse took up permanent or part-time residence in the New Mexico town.<sup>330</sup> Sharp expressed conflicting feelings about working in Taos, informing Gest in 1906 that Pueblo models were “Fine for figure composition but very few have the interesting faces and history of the old plains fighters, so me for the north and snow!”<sup>331</sup> Sharp’s initial attempts at producing firelight paintings in Taos yielded unsatisfactory results and he bemoaned his lack of “a studio & decent place & light to work in.”<sup>332</sup>

In August 1908, Sharp purchased an existing adobe building, reportedly a former dance hall, on Camino del Cañon (now Kit Carson Road) for use as a residence. By October, he had “started an entire new note in my work...finally tried sunlight, nude studies, heads [portraits] under trees & in the sun...found them very interesting that way, & by firelight.”<sup>333</sup>

Returning to Montana, the Sharps spent the 1908-1909 winter season at Absarokee Hut, their last there together. Addie Sharp’s health, a concern for several years, continued to rapidly decline and Sharp was

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<sup>326</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Drummers–Crow–A Pause in the Dance*, 1906, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.322, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01322>.

<sup>327</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 24.

<sup>328</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 199.

<sup>329</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 27.

<sup>330</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 201, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joseph H. Gest, June 15, 1906, Joseph Henry Sharp Collection, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY; Hassrick, “The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp,” 62.

<sup>331</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 202, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joseph H. Gest, June 15, 1906.

<sup>332</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 23, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joseph H. Gest, August 7, 1908, Cincinnati Art Museum Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

<sup>333</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 23-24, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joe Scheuerle, October 20, 1908, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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experiencing his own significant health troubles.<sup>334</sup> Then, in December 1908, while breaking up a block of coal, a shard flew into his left eye, causing substantial damage and prompting expensive visits to various medical specialists across the United States. The injury prevented him from actively painting for two years and had lingering effects for the rest of his life.<sup>335</sup>

#### *Taos, New Mexico*

In August 1909, Sharp signaled his increasing commitment to Taos by acquiring the Juan de Luna family chapel, intrigued by its occasional use by the Penitente Brotherhood prior to 1863.<sup>336</sup> Located just east of his adobe residence, Sharp converted the adobe chapel into a studio, installing a large north-facing shingle-glass window and a corner adobe fireplace to aid in composing his paintings. By 1910, the Sharps were spending the majority of their time in Taos.

His eyesight sufficiently restored, Sharp returned to painting by 1911, producing *The Stoic* (1912), a moving “narrative history painting in the academic tradition,” depicting a personal sacrifice ceremony carried out by a young Crow man, and *The Broken Bow* (ca. 1912), an intimate portrayal of a teaching moment between father and son that Sharp considered “*better than any former work.*”<sup>337</sup>

For Sharp, the time spent healing his eye injury “was not altogether lost, for it gave him time to think and to turn his mind to solving some of the difficult problems of light, color, and technical expression...”<sup>338</sup> Reviewing a show of Sharp’s work at the Aeolian Hall in Cincinnati in 1912, which included *The Stoic* and *The Broken Bow*, *Cincinnati Times-Star* critic J.F. Earhart wrote:

His work is now matured and possesses great dignity and depth of purpose....His twenty years of close association and living among the Indians has given him a clear understanding of their character. In truth, it is humanity that he treats of and aims to paint as his mental vision sees them—‘as people who have hearts and souls—that love and laugh—and are as close to nature and nature’s God as any people on earth.’<sup>339</sup>

Speaking specifically of Sharp’s interior paintings, which included *The Broken Bow*, Earhart continued, “...Mr. Sharp has attained an excellence of drawing, a truth of light and coloring, an atmospheric transparency of shadows, which leads the observer to feel the absolute truth-of-space between the different figures.”<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 28.

<sup>335</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 27; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 214; Thomas Minckler, *In Poetic Silence: The Floral Paintings of Joseph Henry Sharp* (Tucson, Arizona: Settlers West Galleries, 2010), 38;

<sup>336</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 314.

<sup>337</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 28; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Stoic*, 1914, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 395.23P, <https://sam.nmartmuseum.org/objects/899/the-stoic>; Hassrick, “The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp,” 63, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joseph H. Gest, October 3, 1912, Joseph Henry Sharp Collection, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY.

<sup>338</sup> J.F. Earhart, “Sharp’s Paintings: A Notable Exhibition,” *Cincinnati Times-Star*, November 19, 1912.

<sup>339</sup> Earhart, “Sharp’s Paintings: A Notable Exhibition.”

<sup>340</sup> Earhart, “Sharp’s Paintings: A Notable Exhibition.”

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Sharp's creative burst was interrupted when Addie's health worsened, leading to her death in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on April 4, 1913.<sup>341</sup> After a period of grieving, Sharp threw himself into his work and embarked on a full schedule of exhibitions, most notably at the Palace of Governors in Santa Fe in 1914 and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego and Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, both held in 1915.<sup>342</sup>

The year 1915 was pivotal for Sharp. On March 12, 1915, he married Addie's younger sister, Louise, who had traveled to Europe with the Sharps in the 1890s and remained close to the couple, caring for them through their health struggles.<sup>343</sup> He also deepened his commitment to Taos. A lack of models in Montana and the retirement of Samuel Guilford Reynolds, the Crow Reservation agent who facilitated construction of Absarokee Hut and remained a close and supportive friend, diminished Sharp's interest in traveling north to paint.<sup>344</sup> Finding his chapel studio lacking, he remodeled and expanded an old adobe residence behind his home to function as his new studio.

Considerably larger than the chapel studio, the new workspace featured a large north-facing shingle-glass window that flooded the interior with light and a loft for storing his large collection of Indian artifacts, which he referred to as his "curios."<sup>345</sup> In the southwest corner of the studio, Sharp installed an adobe fireplace and adjacent porthole window. The arrangement allowed Sharp to pose models near the fireplace or the window, depending on the light source he desired, or to mix light sources as he did in *At a Pueblo Window* (ca. 1919).<sup>346</sup> By Fenn's estimation, hundreds of Sharp's paintings depict models posed within this four-square-foot area of his studio.<sup>347</sup>

The two-story adobe studio incorporated exterior design features inspired by the buildings at Taos Pueblo. Functioning as both a workspace and commercial space, the studio's design arguably served as advertising for the work contained within. Sharp skillfully marketed his work through his Cincinnati studio, hosting large exhibitions there in the 1890s, but does not appear to have done so in Taos.<sup>348</sup> Taos had no galleries at the time—artists relied on sales from their studios—and Sharp received potential buyers and tourists at his studio, though somewhat grudgingly.<sup>349</sup> According to the authors of *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, Sharp's studio was a favorite among visitors to Taos and "provided Sharp the salesman with an exotic setting."<sup>350</sup>

Sharp's career reached new heights after he and fellow Taos artists E. Irving Couse, Ernest Blumenschein, Bert Phillips, Oscar E. Berninghaus, and W. Herbert Dunton founded the Taos Society of Artists on July 15, 1915. Sharp's 1906 prediction that "there may be a Taos Colony a la Barbizon yet!"

<sup>341</sup> "Addie Byram Sharp," New Mexico Deaths, 1889-1945, accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>342</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 38; Watkins, "The Call of the West," 28.

<sup>343</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 28; "Louise B. Sharp," Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925, accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>344</sup> Boehme, "Absarokee Hut," 83-84; Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 40.

<sup>345</sup> See Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 228-229, for a photograph of the studio loft.

<sup>346</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 225; see Hassrick, *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 140, for a reproduction of *At a Pueblo Window*, and Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 239 and 258, for other examples.

<sup>347</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 225, 231.

<sup>348</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 50.

<sup>349</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 126.

<sup>350</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 126.



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was now a reality.<sup>351</sup> Sharp's association with the collective and its traveling exhibitions raised his profile nationally and expanded the audience for his work.

Diverse in stylistic and philosophical approach, the artists "challenged, motivated, and supported one another and as a result produced some of their best work."<sup>352</sup> The group also experienced its share of internal conflict, and Sharp refused to accept the presidency in 1923 after a particularly difficult meeting.<sup>353</sup> He did, however, serve as officer/secretary of the Society in 1924, organizing that year's traveling exhibition. Sharp's instructions for members prior to the show and his post mortem report demonstrated the importance he placed on marketing.<sup>354</sup> After the show, he passed along complaints voiced by dealers over high prices, and advised his fellow Society members:

If sales are desired, I would advise new pictures, modest in size & price, attractively framed...If publicity is desired I would suggest going back to the museums and art associations and make a larger & more worthwhile show....[with] So many 'one man' and dealer shows throughout the country, the Society will have hard work to hold the interest of the public and the enviable position and reputation they have....Only trouble "happens"—we've got to get out & hustle to make things go.<sup>355</sup>

Sharp's association with the Society coincided with a new and exciting phase in his career. In Taos, Sharp continued to produce his popular firelight and genre paintings, while experimenting with new subject matter and adopting a more colorful palette. Death and mourning seemed to interest him less, and the somber moodiness that characterized many of his early paintings appeared less frequently, and his work took on a lighter, more optimistic tone.

Sharp's interest in Great Plains Indian culture did not cease after his relocation to Taos, however, and he "continued to paint a remarkable number of Plains narratives from his early studies, sketches, photographs, artifacts, and perhaps above all his cherished memories, though now primarily using Taos models."<sup>356</sup> Sharp saw no issues or conflict with dressing Pueblo models in Plains Indian clothing and asking them to engage with artifacts outside their culture, even though he was aware that some models chafed at the practice. When Sharp insisted that White Weasel, a Taos Pueblo man who sat for the artist multiple times, wear a Plains hat, the model initially refused "asserting it was 'bad medicine' for him because Taos Indians never wear hats, and because the hat was a Crow Indian hat."<sup>357</sup> Sharp insisted, however, and the result, according to Cincinnati art critic Mary Alexander, was a portrait of "a real angry Indian wearing a hat that looks distinctly uncomfortable."<sup>358</sup> When one of his older American Indian portraits was exhibited in 1946, Sharp appears to have retold the same story with different details,

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<sup>351</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 33, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joseph H. Gest, June 15, 1906, Cincinnati Art Museum Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

<sup>352</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 33.

<sup>353</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 11, 86.

<sup>354</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 94-95, 98-99.

<sup>355</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 98-99.

<sup>356</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 27.

<sup>357</sup> Mary L. Alexander, "Sureness and Snap to Indian Pictures That Sharp Paints," *Cincinnati Times-Star*, November 25, 1919.

<sup>358</sup> Alexander, "Sureness and Snap to Indian Pictures That Sharp Paints."

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explaining “with considerable satisfaction that his model, a Blackfoot Indian, became suitably angry for the portrait because he made him pose in a Crow Indian’s hat.”<sup>359</sup>

Sharp developed long-term relationships with several local models. Crucita, a young Taos Pueblo woman, began posing for Sharp in 1913 and became a favorite of the artist, appearing in as many as sixty-five paintings, including highly regarded works such as *Crucita* (ca. 1913) and *The Red Olla* (1916).<sup>360</sup> Crucita’s daughter, Leaf Down, appears in many Sharp paintings as well including *Leaf Down at Studio Door* (ca. 1928), depicting the young model amidst the lushness of the Sharp gardens.<sup>361</sup> John Gomez (Hunting Son), son of Soaring Eagle, one of Sharp’s first Southwestern models, posed frequently for the artist, as did Alberto, a young Pueblo child; Frank Martinez (Bawling Deer), Jerry Mirabal (Elk Foot), Antonio Gomez (Standing Buffalo), Ben Lujan, and Ben’s eldest son, Eliseo Lujan (Flying Feather).<sup>362</sup>

In Taos, Sharp explored portraiture that countered his labeling as an ethnographic artist, drawing upon his academic training in Europe. Many of these portraits featured Crucita. Of these, *Crucita—A Taos Indian* (ca. 1913) is considered one of his finest works.<sup>363</sup> Exhibited at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, the painting depicts Crucita in a Pueblo dance costume, her back to the viewer, posed before a ceramic pot brimming with an arrangement of zinnias and dried flowers. Flowers arranging was not a typical Pueblo activity, and the painting has been interpreted as a blending of Anglo and Pueblo cultural motifs.<sup>364</sup>

Sharp embraced Taos’s sun-drenched landscape, exploring the surrounding natural landscape and painting *en plein air*. Reviewing his annual exhibition at the Traxel gallery in 1922, *Cincinnati Time-Star* critic Mary L. Alexander declared Sharp’s recent landscapes representative of a new stage in his career, writing:

To have flashed before our eyes the glories of the Taos landscape and its mountain valleys makes one feel that there has been submerged, for a long time, a passionate love of nature which has striven to show itself through all of his work....Here you feel the glories of the autumn in the Cottonwood valley, you see the poetic beauty of the aspen trees....Do not think that Mr. Sharp has given up on painting Indian, for he has not...but

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<sup>359</sup> “Week in Art Circles,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 23, 1946.

<sup>360</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 31; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Crucita*, ca. 1913, TIA Collection, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Red Olla*, ca. 1925, Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado, 1989.148, <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/1989.148>.

<sup>361</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Leaf Down at Studio Door*, ca. 1928, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.349, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01349>.

<sup>362</sup> Virginia Couse Leavitt, “Artists and Models,” presentation to The Douglas Society, June 2004, on file at the Lunder Research Center, Taos, New Mexico; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 235-236.

<sup>363</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Crucita—Taos Indian Girl in Old Hopi Wedding Dress and Dry Flowers (winter bouquet)*, ca. 1913, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.2194, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/012194>. The museum erroneously identifies the painting’s date as ca. 1926. See Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 30.

<sup>364</sup> Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 29-30.. Sharp identified the dress worn by Crucita as an “Old Hopi Wedding Dress;” however, Watkins notes that the dress is actually a dance costume “ubiquitous in the Tewa and Keres Pueblos, at Zuñi and possibly at Hopi.” See Watkins, “The Call of the West,” 29: fn 105.

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the landscapes are so dazzling that one is impressed by a distinct voicing of an overpowering emotion on the part of this great Indian painter.<sup>365</sup>

The artist engaged with the landscape inside the Sharps' residential compound as well, depicting the gardens Louise Sharp developed on their property, recognizable by abundant presence of hollyhocks. Some, such as *Crucita and Hunting Son* (ca. 1923), include figures posed within the compound, and several document the adobe walls, parapeted flat roofs, and bright blue doors and trim of the Sharp compound.<sup>366</sup> In *Sunning*, an Indian figure is seated in front of Sharp's buffalo-hide Crow tipi, within what is clearly the Sharps' Taos garden, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains visible in the distance. The painting once again demonstrates Sharp's comfort with producing incongruous images that portrayed artifacts associated with a particular tribal culture out of context.<sup>367</sup>

According to Watkins, Sharp generally avoided sociopolitical themes, but briefly explored issues of assimilation and the impact of federal governmental policies on the Great Plains people between 1915 and the early 1920s.<sup>368</sup> In *Ration Day at the Reservation* (1919), the distinctive front door of Sharp's second studio stands in for the entrance to an Indian agency where Crow women are queued waiting to receive their government rations, an evocative scene that Sharp depicts with sadness and melancholy.<sup>369</sup>

Beginning around 1920, Sharp increasingly placed his models within the context of contemporary Taos, producing street scenes such as *Kit Carson Road and House* (ca. 1925), images of Taos Pueblo such as *Sunset Dance—Ceremony to the Evening Sun* (1924), and other notable works such as *Three Taos Indians* (ca. 1925) and *Studio Visitors* (ca. 1926).<sup>370</sup> In *Studio Visitors*, Sharp openly reveals the process behind his work, depicting the occasion when three Apache men visited Sharp's studio to see their friend Frank Martinez (Bawling Deer), who was modeling for the artist. In the painting, three American Indian men, dressed in clothing from Sharp's collection, view an unfinished painting of Martinez as the model sits nearby, wearing a look of amusement and the same indigenous costume depicted in the painting.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Mary L. Alexander, "Work of Great Indian Painter Has Passed into a New Stage," *Cincinnati Times-Star*, December 1, 1922.

<sup>366</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Crucita and Hunting Son*, ca. 1923, Forsyth Galleries, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 988.0010197. For several examples of paintings depicting the Sharp compound, see Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 64-76.

<sup>367</sup> *Sunning* (n.d) is reproduced in Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 72, courtesy of Gerald Peters Gallery.

<sup>368</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 33.

<sup>369</sup> Joseph H. Sharp, *Ration Day at the Reservation*, 1919, Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio. Reprinted in Ernest E. Leavitt, "The Eager Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004) <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847685>.

<sup>370</sup> Watkins, 36-38; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Kit Carson Road and House*, ca. 1925, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.386, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01386>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Sunset Dance—Ceremony to the Evening Sun*, 1924, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 1991.205.15, <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/sunset-dance-ceremony-evening-sun-32649>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Three Taos Indians*, ca. 1925, American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection, Denver, Colorado, 0312. For more on *Three Taos Indians*, see Joan Carpenter Troccoli, *Painters and the American West: Volume II* (Denver: American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection, 2013), 238-239.

<sup>371</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 36-38; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Studio Visitors*, ca. 1926, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.509, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01509>. The unfinished painting depicted in *Studio Visitors* bears a strong resemblance to Sharp's *Chant to the War Bonnet*, completed in 1900. See Joseph Henry Sharp, *Chant to the War Bonnet*, 1900, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.326, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01326>.

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After a visit to France and Spain in 1922, Sharp experimented with self-portraiture, inserting himself into paintings of his models through the use of mirrors and once again revealing the process behind his art.<sup>372</sup> Perhaps in a nod to the European masters, Sharp explored a long-standing tradition exemplified by Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) and Charles Le Brun's *The Jabach Family* (ca. 1660) in *The Artist in the Studio Mirror* (undated) and *Studio Interior [A Corner of My Studio]* (ca. 1925). In *Studio Interior*, Crucita and her son, Francisco, pose in the northwest corner of the studio, with Sharp, palette in hand, reflected in a mirror set above the artist's desk to their right.<sup>373</sup> In another departure from his typical work he engaged with Hispano subjects, though not extensively. In *The Santos Mender* (1925) and *The Chemayo Weaver* (1925), exhibited at Sharp's annual exhibition in Cincinnati in 1925, the artist depicted an "old penitente" artisan at work.<sup>374</sup>

The Taos Society's traveling exhibitions received critical acclaim, as did Sharp's annual exhibitions at the Traxel Gallery in Cincinnati, with critic Mary Alexander consistently championing Sharp in that city. Though paintings such as *His Record—Pointing with Pride* (1924) received praise when they toured the United States, the accolades did not necessarily translate into sales.<sup>375</sup> "We sent exhibitions all over the country for a number of years," said Sharp, "and got plenty of propaganda—and not much else."<sup>376</sup>

Though sales via Taos Society exhibitions were limited, Sharp was a savvy marketer and continued to sell paintings to his patrons, visitors to his studio, and through solo shows. By 1920, longtime patron Joseph Butler had acquired nearly fifty Sharp paintings for the Butler Institute of American Art, including important works such as *Ration Day on the Reservation* and *Young Chief's Mission* (1919).<sup>377</sup> The following year Sharp's finances received a boost when philanthropist, and art collector John D. Rockefeller Jr. acquired four paintings for his summer home in Seal Harbor, Maine.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 70-71; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 260.

<sup>373</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Studio Interior (A Corner of My Studio)*, ca. 1925, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona. Gift of the Carl S. Dentzel Family Collection, 1985.136.

<sup>374</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 35; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Santos Mender*, 1925, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK. Gift of the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation, 1955, 01.2088, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/012088>. The date and current location of *The Chemayo Weaver* is unknown. See also Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Santero*, 1919, American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection, Denver, Colorado, and Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Village Lamplighter*, ca. 1925, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 4.23P, <https://online.nmartmuseum.org/nmhistory/art/the-village-lamplighter.html>.

<sup>375</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Pointing with Pride to His Record*, 1924, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, <https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/pointing-pride-his-record>; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 259.

<sup>376</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 269, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Sadakichi Hartman, November 7, 1931.

<sup>377</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 122; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Young Chief's Mission*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Butler Institute of American Art; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Ration Day at the Reservation*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Butler Institute of American Art.

<sup>378</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 72-73; Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 127; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 261. Hassrick and Porter state that Rockefeller purchased four paintings. According to Fenn, Rockefeller purchased five paintings—*Sage and Wild Oysters*, *Storm Clouds*, *Studio Yard*, *Feather Arrows*, and *Jerry and Little Girl*—for \$975.

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By the time the Taos Society ceased functions in 1927, critics began to notice a shift in Sharp's work. "Sharp seems at present less interested in painting Indians," opined a Cincinnati critic in December of that year, "and more interested in painting flowers."<sup>379</sup> Perhaps symbolic of his waning interest, Sharp sold twenty-seven of his older American Indian portraits to Brooklyn collector Phillip G. Cole and parted with much of his artifact collection.<sup>380</sup> He hadn't visited Montana since 1923, and depended on his Pueblo models less frequently as he grew more focused on landscape and floral painting.<sup>381</sup>

The Sharps were also spending more time at their home in Pasadena, much to the artist's chagrin, as he found the area generally uninspiring in comparison to Montana and Taos.<sup>382</sup> Though Sharp maintained a small studio behind their Pasadena house at 1481 Corson Street (no longer extant), he painted very little in California and refused to be included in a *Who's Who in California*, stating:

I want to be known as a Taos painter, since I discovered it and told the other boys. Most of my painter life has been spent in New Mexico, Montana, and the Northwest Indian Country. I have never painted in California to amount to anything—never liked it and never cared to.<sup>383</sup>

During the Great Depression sales were slow—Sharp reported that he did not sell any paintings between 1930 and 1933—but the couple remained financially secure despite the economic difficulties.<sup>384</sup> In 1930, they traveled to Hawaii for the first time, and the lush landscape and ocean views inspired Sharp to produce new work, primarily watercolor marines and florals, which he exhibited at Gump's Fine Art Gallery in Waikiki.<sup>385</sup> Over the next eight years, the Sharps spent several winters in Hawaii and visited Mexico and Japan as well, returning to Taos in the summer.<sup>386</sup>

Now well into his seventies, Sharp began setting his personal affairs in order. In 1933, Sharp expressed his desire to sell Absarokee Hut and his other Crow Agency properties, completing the sale in 1935 and bequeathing the contents of the cabin, including paintings, to Samuel Reynolds's daughter, Carolyn Riebeth.<sup>387</sup> Two years earlier he had sent ninety-five of his older Indian portraits to his California agent, Grace Nicholson, to sell, and had pared down the contents of his Taos studio to mostly current work and a group of select artifacts.<sup>388</sup> With these actions, Sharp appeared to be closing the door on an important chapter of his life.

Sharp made plans for his Taos property as well. Sharp did not have any children, but he and Louise maintained a close relationship with Couse and his family, which began when Couse purchased the

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<sup>379</sup> "The Week in Art," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 4, 1927.

<sup>380</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 72.

<sup>381</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 66.

<sup>382</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 66-67.

<sup>383</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 268, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Ferdinand Serrett, November 12, 1941, Cincinnati Museum of Art Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

<sup>384</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 72.

<sup>385</sup> Watkins, "The Call of the West," 43; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 268-269.

<sup>386</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 269.

<sup>387</sup> Hassrick, ed., *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 133; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 275-279.

<sup>388</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 72.

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house adjacent to Sharp's chapel studio in 1909. In 1934, Sharp filed a quit-claim deed transferring the Taos property to Couse, with the understanding that the Couse family would take possession of the property upon Louise's death.<sup>389</sup> With these matters settled, Sharp could focus his energy on his art and the subject matter that inspired him throughout his later career.

#### Sharp's Later Work, 1930s-1953

In 1936, Sharp informed friend Joe Scheuerle that he "hadn't painted an Indian for over two years....I just got tired of them after over 40 yrs....I've been painting a good deal of landscapes, still life (mostly flowers on big scale) & marines."<sup>390</sup> Reviewing Sharp's 1935 Cincinnati exhibition *Hawaiian and Taos Paintings*, critic Mary Alexander praised his Hawaiian marines and other recent work, stating "His flower studies and landscapes are painted with the same serious and thoughtful care for the actual objects and their effect in arrangement and light as his Indian paintings."<sup>391</sup>

Art collectors, however, still desired the romantic firelight and genre paintings that encouraged Sharp's reputation as one of America's foremost painters of the American Indian. Sharp wrote to Scheuerle again in 1937, bemoaning the need to return to such subjects, but also a lack of appreciation for the subject of his life's work:

...I have to go back to [painting Indians] this summer. Almost cleared out of salable stuff, so have to do some firelight & war bonnet potboilers. Gee!! I have a lot of heads of the fine old fellows yet, but people (this generation) are only interested in a curious way, not as purchasers. Very few of the present generation know anything of the Indians, the romance, dignity & beauty of their life & care less."<sup>392</sup>

Though he returned to painting Indian subjects, Sharp continued to explore subjects that he found more compelling, if not always profitable. In *The Passing of a Penitente* (1934), Sharp fully exercised his interest in the Penitentes in a work that he considered a major artistic accomplishment.<sup>393</sup> In the painting, Sharp portrays a Penitente funeral, with members gathered around the coffin engaged in self-flagellation. On a card affixed to the back of the painting the artist noted that the scene was painted "in the little chappel [sic] on our place."<sup>394</sup> Shown at Cincinnati's Kreimer Gallery in 1935, the painting failed to sell immediately but was later acquired by Thomas Gilcrease.<sup>395</sup>

As Thomas Minckler, author of *In Poetic Silence: The Floral Paintings of Joseph Henry Sharp*, argues, "It is clear that nature in all her splendor, whether a landscape burgeoning with aspens or bouquets arranged by Louise from their gardens, had become Sharp's beloved muse and inspiration during the last

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<sup>389</sup> Hassrick, ed., *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 133.

<sup>390</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 73, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joe Scheuerle, October 13, 1936, Joseph Henry Sharp Collection, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY.

<sup>391</sup> Mary L. Alexander, "The Week in Art Circles," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 12, 1935.

<sup>392</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 45, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Joe Scheuerle, April 15, 1937, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

<sup>393</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 74.

<sup>394</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Penitentes (The Passing of a Penitente)*, 1934, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.307, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01307>.

<sup>395</sup> Hassrick, "The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp," 74.

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third of his career.”<sup>396</sup> The eye injury Sharp sustained in 1908 continued to trouble him and, along with the natural effects of aging, likely contributed to his preference for landscape and still life painting in the later decades of his life, but Sharp had shown a fondness for the natural landscape and flowers since he began painting in the West.

Throughout his career, Sharp incorporated floral elements in his landscape paintings, but only after 1926 did paintings depicting complex floral arrangements become a significant component of his repertoire.<sup>397</sup> Earlier portrait work that included floral elements, such as *Crucita—A Taos Indian* (ca. 1913) and *Sage and Thistle* (1915), presaged such work, and the flowers produced in the prolific gardens maintained by Louise Sharp provided the raw material.<sup>398</sup> It was an unusual subject for a western painter, but one that apparently gave him great personal pleasure and highlighted the eclectic nature of his work. Sharp’s floral paintings, exemplified by *Peonies in Studio Window* (1943) and *Seed Pods, and Tapa Cloth Table Cover* (1936), are simple compositions consisting of vessels of varying size and type containing generous bouquets of fresh or dried flower set upon a table top, often draped with fabric.<sup>399</sup> Occasionally, a small objet d’art is included as in *Apple Blossoms* (ca. 1940).<sup>400</sup> Nearly all of Sharp’s floral paintings include petals, stems, and leaves resting on the tabletop, representing, as Minckler suggests, the fragility and brevity of life.<sup>401</sup> Historian Brian Dippie supports Minckler’s viewpoint, arguing that in his floral compositions, the attention to color, texture and the formal arrangement of pictorial elements evident in his earlier work found full expression and “beneath the lush surface of Sharp’s florals is the same awareness of life’s transience that informs his Indian paintings.”<sup>402</sup>

In a February 1932 solo show at the Nicholson Gallery in Pasadena, Sharp exhibited exclusively floral paintings for the first time and about half of the paintings included in the 1935 *Hawaiian and Taos Paintings* exhibition were florals.<sup>403</sup> The show was held at the Kreimer Gallery, which had replaced the Traxel Gallery as Sharp’s main dealer in Cincinnati in the early 1930s. In the late 1930s and 1940s, Sharp relied less heavily on his Cincinnati connections, establishing relationships with western galleries that included the Blue Door Art Gallery in Taos, La Fonda in Santa Fe, the McKenzie Gallery in El Paso, and the O’Conner Gallery in Lubbock, Texas.<sup>404</sup>

In October 1945, wealthy Oklahoma oilman Thomas Gilcrease visited Taos with Potawatomi painter Woodrow (Woody) Crumbo, the Gilcrease Foundation’s artist-in-residence, specifically to visit Sharp.<sup>405</sup> Born to parents of Scots-Irish, French, and Muscogee (Creek) Indian ancestry, Gilcrease grew

<sup>396</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 57.

<sup>397</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 3, 53, 91.

<sup>398</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Crucita—Taos Indian Girl in Old Hopi Wedding Dress and Dry Flowers (winter bouquet)*, ca. 1913, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.2194, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/012194>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Sage and Thistle*, 1915, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.316, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01316>.

<sup>399</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Peonies in Studio Window*, 1943, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.510, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01510>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Seed Pods, and Tapa Cloth Table Cover*, 1936, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.333, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/0137333>.

<sup>400</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Apple Blossoms*, (n.d.), Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.2579, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/012579>.

<sup>401</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 3.

<sup>402</sup> Brian Dippie, “Foreword,” in *In Poetic Silence*, vii.

<sup>403</sup> Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 55-56.

<sup>404</sup> Hassrick, “The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp,” 74.

<sup>405</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 175.

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up in the Creek Nation. The 160-acre allotment he received as child in 1899 was later found to be rich with oil and provided the basis for his fortune.<sup>406</sup> Desiring to “tell the story of America... with special emphasis on the story of the American Indian and the development of [the] southwestern United States,” Gilcrease formed a foundation based in Tulsa for the purpose of collecting American Indian art and artifacts in 1942.<sup>407</sup>

The meeting was momentous for Sharp, as Gilcrease agreed to purchase eighty-eight paintings for \$18,680.<sup>408</sup> The sale included mostly portraits of “old Custer warriors, Army guides, old Tribal councillors [sic] and most noted of various tribes,” a few important genre paintings such *Tobacco Dance of the Plains Indians* (1910), and a small number of artifacts.<sup>409</sup> According to the authors of *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, Sharp “appreciated his good fortune to acquire a patron who shared his deeply held conviction that his Indian portraits and other Indian subjects were historically as well as artistically important.”<sup>410</sup>

The following June, Gilcrease purchased another eleven paintings for \$12,550, which included signature works such as *The Mourners* (1911) and *The Great Mystery*, as well as a marine oil painting, *Koko Crater Coast* (1930s) completed in Hawaii.<sup>411</sup> Gilcrease also acquired the bulk of Sharp’s museum-quality artifact collection. Corresponding with Ruel Tolman, acting director of the National Collection of Fine Arts in 1947, Sharp wrote:

I’m almost cleaned out of Indian stuff last two years—Gilcrease Foundation got the last seventy-five portraits of the old Custer and other warriors. Now over two-hundred of the old heads are in museums....I am satisfied.<sup>412</sup>

At age eighty-seven, Sharp was “still on deck, tho feel the age a bit in eyes and bones. I work in my studio everyday—maybe not so much steam, but the same enthusiasm,” and quipped the following year, “Some friends think I should retire and write things up—nixy. When I can’t paint I die.”<sup>413</sup> Later works such as *Rehearsal in the Estufa*, *Taos* (ca. 1946) demonstrate the artist’s celebrated facility with light, but are less detailed, rendering his models in broader strokes.<sup>414</sup> However, Sharp’s self-portrait, *The*

<sup>406</sup> “History,” Gilcrease Museum, <https://gilcrease.org/about/history/>.

<sup>407</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 173, quoting Aline B. Saarinen, *The Proud Possessors: The Lives, Times and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collectors* (Random House, 1958), 308.

<sup>408</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 175; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 289.

<sup>409</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 177, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Thomas Gilcrease, September 1, 1945, Gilcrease Museum Archives; Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 291.

<sup>410</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 177.

<sup>411</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 290. Fenn reprints the signed bill of sale for the eleven paintings. Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Mourners*, 1911, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.354, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01354>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *The Great Mystery*, 1910, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.325, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01325>; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Koko Crater Coast*, 1930s, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.306, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01306>.

<sup>412</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 291, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Ruel Tolman, February 20, 1947.

<sup>413</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 296 (caption), quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to unidentified individual in 1946; Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 179, quoting Joseph Henry Sharp to Thomas Gilcrease, no date [March or April 1947], Gilcrease Museum Archives.

<sup>414</sup> Hassrick, “The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp,” 74-75; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Rehearsal in the Estufa*, *Taos*, ca. 1946, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.348, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01348>.



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*Million Dollar Hat* (1947), depicting Sharp in his signature Tyrolean hat, demonstrates that the artist retained his outstanding portraiture skills, which he skillfully applied in his floral paintings as well.<sup>415</sup>

In 1949, the newly established Gilcrease Museum held its first one-man show, a major retrospective of Sharp's work that included 236 paintings, including Sharp's last major Indian painting, *Green Corn Dance* (1949).<sup>416</sup> Scholar Peter Hassrick describes *Green Corn Dance* as a fitting bookend to Sharp's first western masterpiece *The Harvest Dance* (1893) and arguably the end of his productive career. His health declining, Sharp left Taos for the last time in August 1952 and died the following year in Pasadena at age ninety-four.<sup>417</sup>

With a tireless work ethic, self-deprecating sense of humor, keen marketing sense, and unwavering desire to authentically portray the American West, Sharp produced a body of work that included more than 10,000 paintings completed over a seventy-year career. By Fenn's estimation, more than 500 of Sharp's paintings and most of his artifact collection are now housed in museums that include the Cincinnati Art Museum; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Butler Institute of American Art; Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley; Gilcrease Museum; New Mexico Museum of Art; Taos Art Museum; Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming; Denver Art Museum; Phoenix Art Museum; and the American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection in Denver.<sup>418</sup>

At his funeral, Ernest Blumenschein eulogized his friend, who had encouraged him to visit Taos long ago:

He was the reporter, the recorder of the absolute integrity of the American Indian...He will go down in history with Russell and Remington and the few early artists of Indian life. In trying to arrive at real values in our group of Taos artists, I sometimes wonder if our ambitious attempts along high art lines will be worth as much to the world as the honest unvarying recordings of this simple man, Henry Sharp.<sup>419</sup>

Decades later, Peter Seibert of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, summarized the lasting value of Sharp's work, emphasizing the artist's contribution to our understanding of a pivotal moment in American history:

In many respects, the life of Joseph Henry Sharp epitomizes the story of the West. From the plains and mountains of Montana to the shadows of the Sangre de Cristo [sic] Mountains in New Mexico, Sharp sought to capture both a natural and a historic world that was changing both for him and his generation. His imagery of Native Americans captured a thoughtfulness and reflection in the

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<sup>415</sup> Joseph Henry Sharp, *Self-Portrait (The Million Dollar Hat)*, 1947, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.323, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01323>.

<sup>416</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 179, 183; Joseph Henry Sharp, *Green Corn Dance*, 1949, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, 01.303, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/01303>.

<sup>417</sup> Hassrick, ed., *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 133.

<sup>418</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 296.

<sup>419</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 302, quoting Ernest Blumenschein, "Notes from Sharp Memorial Speech," September 5, 1953.

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subject's eyes that can only lead one to conclude that they, like we the viewers, were pondering the future of the changing American West.<sup>420</sup>

### COUSE-SHARP SITE DEVELOPMENT, 1930S-PRESENT

After moving his family to Taos to care for his ailing father after the death of his mother, Kibbey Couse converted his parent's sunroom and garage into a chemistry laboratory and a machine shop, respectively. Within these spaces, Kibbey, a 1917 graduate of Stevens Institute of Technology and an engineer by profession, created the prototype for a mobile machine shop that he patented and later manufactured at a plant in New Jersey, producing more than 1,000 mobile shops for the U.S. military during World War II. Kibbey had initially planned to manufacture the mobile machine shop on the Couse property in a building completed south of the machine shop in 1933, known as the Lower Shop, but abandoned those plans after his father's death in 1936.<sup>421</sup> When his wife, Lucille, died in 1939, Kibbey moved to New Jersey to initiate manufacturing of his mobile machine shop and the couple's children—Elizabeth, Virginia, and Irving—went to California to live with their aunt, Chesta Wrenn. The children returned to Taos in the summers and Kibbey maintained the Couse house and studio as they were in 1936.

In 1934, Sharp filed a quit-claim deed transferring all of his Taos property to the Couse family after his death and the death of his wife, Louise.<sup>422</sup> After Sharp's death in 1953 and Louise's in 1957, ownership of the Sharp house and studios formally passed to Kibbey Couse.<sup>423</sup> In 1961, Ivan Rosequist, co-founder with wife Jane Rosequist of the highly successful Rosequist Galleries in Tucson, Arizona, traveled to Taos with plans to convert the fire-damaged Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Taos into a gallery with his business partner, art collector, and well-known actor Raymond Burr.<sup>424</sup> When the ambitious plans could not be realized, Rosequist pivoted, and by 1962 had acquired the former Joseph Sharp home from the Couse family and opened the Mission Gallery within its walls.<sup>425</sup>

Ivan Rosequist operated the Mission Gallery with the assistance of Rena Oppenheimer, and the two later married after he and Jane divorced in 1964. Rosequist remodeled the building multiple times over the years and was in the midst of a remodeling project when he died in 1985.<sup>426</sup> According to Rena Rosequist, her husband "loved to renovate and completed over 15 projects with the assistance of Louis Reyes Sr." at the gallery.<sup>427</sup> A commercial storefront was established facing Kit Carson Road and the building significantly expanded to the east and west by multiple additions. By 1981, when the Mission

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<sup>420</sup> Peter Seibert, "Forward," in *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Center of the West, 2018), ix.

<sup>421</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 332.

<sup>422</sup> Hassrick, *The Life & Art of Joseph Henry Sharp*, 133.

<sup>423</sup> Kibbey Couse remarried in 1943. He and his second wife, Ceil Marion Currie (1907-1996), did not have any children.

<sup>424</sup> "Making Plans for New Gallery," *Taos News*, November 9, 1961.

<sup>425</sup> Spud Johnson, "Dog Days," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 26, 1962.

<sup>426</sup> "Ivan Rosequist dies, founder of gallery," *Taos News*, February 21, 1985. Jane Rosequist continued to own and manage the Rosequist Galleries in Tucson until 1968, when it was sold to Ralph J. Wollheim. The gallery retained the Rosequist name and Jane continued as manager before retiring in 1969. The gallery building was reportedly demolished shortly afterward as part of a local urban renewal effort and operations moved to a new location; see Micheline Keating, "Jane Rosequist Sells Galleries," *Tucson Daily News*, March 18, 1968 and Micheline Keating, "Art Dealer Ran One Of The Southwest's Best Galleries," *Tucson Daily News*, August 29, 1969.

<sup>427</sup> Pat Wright, "Rena Rosequist, Art Gallery Owner," *Remarkable Women of Taos*, 2012, <https://womenoftaos.org/women/profiles-businesswomen/?/item/150/Rena-Rosequist-Art-Gallery-Owner>.

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Gallery was documented as part of the Taos Downtown Historic District National Register, the building had been transformed into a 5,000-square-foot contemporary commercial building with design details inspired by the historic buildings at Taos Pueblo.<sup>428</sup> Rena Rosequist continued to operate the Mission Gallery after her husband's death, and "built a reputation on identifying and displaying quality works of art by some of the best-known painters and sculptors who lived and worked in Taos" including Taos Modernists such as Emil Bisttram, Andrew Dasburg, and Earl Stroh.<sup>429</sup>

The Couse family continued to use the property as a summer home, occasionally leasing portions of the property to others. Kibbey Couse died in 1978 at age 89 and in 1982, the Lower Shop was rehabilitated for use as artist studios. Beginning in 1991, Elizabeth Couse (1925-2013), an artist and former nurse, took up permanent residence in the west wing of the Couse house, using Sharp's chapel studio as her own for nearly twenty years.<sup>430</sup> Her sister, Virginia, an art historian, and her husband, Ernest Leavitt, a former curator at the Arizona State Museum, increasingly spent time at the Taos property in the 1990s and 2000s. The couple painstakingly worked to preserve the buildings, gardens, and multitude of onsite artifacts, keeping it as unchanged as possible. In March 2001, the Leavitts and like-minded supporters formed the non-profit Couse Foundation to further preserve what is now known as the Couse-Sharp Historic Site. In 2012, ownership of the property was formally transferred from E.I. Couse's descendants to the foundation. Since her husband's death in 2015, Virginia Couse Leavitt has occupied the west wing year-round.

In 2017, Rosequist entered into an agreement with the Couse Foundation to transfer ownership of the Mission Gallery building to the non-profit organization.<sup>431</sup> After securing grant funding from The Lunder Foundation of Portland, Maine, and others, the Couse Foundation undertook a \$3 million rehabilitation led by architects David and Alix Henry of Henry Architects and with Paul Espinoza II of Los Alamitos serving as general contractor.<sup>432</sup> The rehabilitation preserved the building's exterior appearance when acquired by the Couse Foundation. Reopened as The Lunder Research Center in 2022, the building functions as a state-of-the-art museum, research library, learning center, archive and exhibit space dedicated to the early Taos art colony and Taos Society of Artists. In 2022, the Couse Foundation acquired "Rosie," the last known example of the Couse Mobile Machine Shop Aviation Model, now on display near Kibbey's machine shop.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, the Couse-Sharp Historic Site is one of fifty-five artists' homes and studios in the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios, a nationwide program established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1999, joining the coalition of sites associated with prominent American artists in 2002.<sup>433</sup> The site currently hosts First Saturday Open

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<sup>428</sup> For an image of the Mission Gallery in 1981, see Boyd C. Pratt, Taos Downtown Historic District Nomination, photo 12.

<sup>429</sup> Rick Romancito, "Longtime gallery owner and political activist Rena Rosequist has died," *Taos News*, September 18, 2019.

<sup>430</sup> Rick Romancito, "Taos artist Elizabeth Couse dies," *Taos News*, February 21, 2013.

<sup>431</sup> Romancito, "Longtime gallery owner and political activist Rena Rosequist has died."

<sup>432</sup> "Bringing the Legacy to Life: The Lunder Research Center focusing on the Taos Society of Artists," Couse-Sharp Historic Site, <https://couse-sharp.org/lunder-research-center>; Dena Miller, "Preserving history: Lunder Research Center opens quietly at the Couse-Sharp Historic Site," *Taos News*, September 30, 2021.

<sup>433</sup> Historic Artists' Homes & Studios, <https://artistshomes.org/site/couse-sharp-historic-site>; Jim O'Donnell, "An American treasure preserved," *Tempo Magazine (Taos News)*, July 19-25, 2012, 5.

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House events on the first Saturday of each month from June to October, docent-led tours by appointment, lectures, exhibitions in the Lunder Center and Sharp studios, and annual heritage seed and plant giveaways.

#### DEPICTIONS OF AMERICAN INDIANS AND CULTURE IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY-TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Some of the earliest pictorial depictions of American Indians were undertaken with anthropological intentions, to document the numerous tribes encountered by military and railroad surveying expeditions as they pushed westward in the first half of the nineteenth century. Since these expeditions into the Western frontier sought to discover and settle the lands through which they moved, there was an assumption on the part of the US government that the indigenous peoples within them would eventually vanish, either through death or assimilation.<sup>434</sup> As such, the federal government sought to document tribes before they disappeared and became a primary patron of paintings of American Indian subjects in the early nineteenth century.

One such example was the American Indian Gallery, begun in 1821 by the US War Department's Indian Bureau following the British tradition of portrait galleries of notable people. English-trained painter Charles Bird King (1785-1862) created portraits of tribal leaders visiting the capital as part of treaty delegations; by 1837, the Gallery included 150 such works, with most painted by King.<sup>435</sup> Another example was the work of George Catlin (1796-1872), a former-lawyer-turned-artist who sought to paint all the American Indian tribes in the hopes that his collection would be bought by the US government. Unlike King, Catlin ventured far into the country's interior to spend time among tribes so that he might faithfully render their daily life and traditions of dress and ritual. His five painting tours between 1830-36 produced hundreds of paintings of, by his own count, forty-eight tribes. Although Catlin ardently promoted the idea of American Indians as "noble savages" who had many qualities to admire, "his enthusiasm was poorly received by many of his American contemporaries."<sup>436</sup> However, in later decades his portrayals of Northern Plains Indians inspired other painters of indigenous cultures; as art historian Joan Carpenter Troccoli states, "Thanks in no small part to Catlin's stirring paeans, the Indians of the Northern Plains would become synonymous in the popular mind with *all* American Indians."<sup>437</sup>

After the culmination of the Indian Wars in ca. 1890 and the relegation of many tribes to reservations, a fascination with American Indian culture was on the rise amongst the general public. This coincided with an anthropological shift in thinking regarding the supremacy of White, Euro-centric American society: cultures should not be ranked as hierarchical to one another and were in fact relative, and tribal lifeways could be superior in at least some aspects. As such, Truettner states, "for the first time in national history, there was a consuming interest in Indian life, a wish to identify with it, and a desire to atone for two centuries of neglect and misunderstanding."<sup>438</sup> He goes on to note that in American art, "an image emerged that attributed extravagant virtues to Indian life...that had little basis in

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<sup>434</sup> James P. Ronda, "'You Shall Not Lose by the Change': American Indians and the Nation," in *Painters and the American West, Vol. II*, ed. Joan Carpenter Troccoli (Denver: American Museum of Western Art, The Anschutz Collection, 2013), 120-21.

<sup>435</sup> Joan Carpenter Troccoli, "Charles Bird King," in *Painters and the American West*, 35.

<sup>436</sup> Joan Carpenter Troccoli, "George de Forest Brush," in *Painters and the American West*, 133.

<sup>437</sup> Joan Carpenter Troccoli, "George Catlin," in *Painters and the American West*, 44.

<sup>438</sup> Truettner, "Indian Images at the Turn of the Century" in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 24.

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contemporary reality...[and] were in fact an amalgam of sympathy and propaganda created to provide an acceptable view of a beleaguered race... such romanticized attributes became more thoroughly nationalized until the Indian became no less a hero than the Founding Fathers.” This culminated in the irony that “after a brutal campaign to subdue the Indian (and a corresponding subversion of history), the white man had chosen him to represent the virtues of the American nation.”<sup>439</sup> Rodríguez characterizes this phenomenon as “Indians in the North American imagination [going] from the subhuman to the sublime more or less as their numbers and military threat diminished.”<sup>440</sup>

Truettner and other historians of Western American art describe these turn-of-the-twentieth-century representations of American virtues in Plains Indian imagery as generally dividing into two types. One was the “Fallen Hero,” unwilling to give up his freedom and way of life and thus fated to meet tragic defeat; the other a risen hero, who rises “from the ashes of the Fallen Hero, a stronger, more stalwart figure, godlike in his classical form, a symbol of power more American than Indian and more mythological than anthropological.”<sup>441</sup> Some well-known American western artists of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries who made portrayals of American Indians an important aspect of their work include Henry Farny (1847-1916), George de Forest Brush (1854-1941), Charles Schreyvogel (1861-1912), Charles M. Russell (1864-1926), Grace Carpenter Hudson (1865-1937), and Joseph Scheuerle (1873-1948).

As Truettner suggests, the portrayal of American Indians varied widely among artists. Inspired by the “romanticized, one-sided version of the Anglo-American conquest of the West” as dramatized in William “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s Wild West shows, Schreyvogel and his rival Frederic Remington (1861-1909) painted scenes such as battles between American Indians and US Cavalry that encouraged the American public’s conception of western expansion as one of valorous triumph over inhospitable peoples and lands.<sup>442</sup> Farny frequently depicted Plains Indians encountering Industrial Age intrusions, such as telegraph lines or railroads, on the formerly open landscape, but avoided depicting the increasingly desperate poverty created by the failed promises of the reservation system.<sup>443</sup> Brush shared Catlin’s sentiments on the nobility of indigenous cultures but found his own portrayals of American Indians decades after Catlin to be more fortuitously timed; his formal paintings that evoked European old masters through allegorical compositions and rendering the human body in ideal, muscular forms found great public success.<sup>444</sup> Although Russell was known as “the cowboy artist,” his works have also been characterized as having “authenticity, rich insight, and sympathy” in regards to his American Indian subjects, and he is credited as occasionally depicting historical events from the perspective of

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<sup>439</sup> Truettner, “Science and Sentiment” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 32. American Indian imagery was even coopted for the national currency, famously so in the buffalo nickel, designed by James Earle Fraser in 1914.

<sup>440</sup> Rodríguez, “Art, Tourism, and Race Relations,” 93.

<sup>441</sup> Truettner, “Science and Sentiment” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 33.

<sup>442</sup> Joan Carpenter Troccoli, “Charles Schreyvogel” in *Painters and the American West*, 188, 191. Remington’s House in Ridgefield, Connecticut, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965. He only occupied the 1909 home and studio for a few months before dying unexpectedly; his earlier home and studio in New Rochelle, New York, was demolished in the 1930s. Blanche Higgins Schroer, Frederic Remington House National Historic Landmark Documentation, National Archives, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/132353604>; Gary Kriss, “New Rochelle Recaptures Its Tie to Remington’s Old West,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/28/nyregion/new-rochelle-recaptures-its-tie-to-remingtons-old-west.html>.

<sup>443</sup> Troccoli, “Henry F. Farny” in *Painters and the American West*, 142-45.

<sup>444</sup> Troccoli, “George de Forest Brush,” 133.

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tribal people.<sup>445</sup> Hudson painted over 600 portraits of the Pomo peoples of northern California, many infants and children. Her commercially popular works have been characterized as both sentimental and sympathetic (at least from a Euro-centric viewpoint), yet she confessed to surreptitiously taking photographs of children to avoid objections from their parents, stating that if they knew she had “photographed and painted their babies I would be regarded as a murderess and my studio would be shunned...”<sup>446</sup> Like Hudson, Scheuerle was a commercial artist who painted over 200 portraits of Northern Plains Indians. Depicting his subject’s personality with intimate, tender regard, Scheuerle’s paintings have been contrasted with Russell, Sharp, and Farny’s “heroically styled works [that] tend to focus on Indians as anonymous but integral parts of the environment.”<sup>447</sup>

The studio practices of these artists also differed. Many of them, such as Farny, Brush, and Schreyvogel, sporadically traveled West to visit tribes, make sketches and photographs, and collect tribal objects and regalia to use as references back in their Eastern- and Midwestern-city studios. Schreyvogel maintained studios and most of his clientele in New Jersey.<sup>448</sup> To supplement his field sketches while home in Cincinnati, Farny purchased images of American Indians and western landscapes from commercial photographers or clipped them from periodicals; as a result, his works were composites that freely used artifacts from a wide range of tribes among settings that were not necessarily combined accurately.<sup>449</sup> Painting in New York and New Hampshire, Brush depicted American Indians for less than a decade before moving on to mother and child portraits.<sup>450</sup> Russell, however, set up his artistic practice in Montana, where he had worked as a shepherd, trapper, and wrangler during his youth, filling his log-cabin studio (NHL December 21, 1965) with cowboy and American Indian objects.<sup>451</sup> Similarly, Hudson worked from her studio at Sun House in Ukiah, California (National Register listed September 2, 1981), where she had grown up as the child of commercial photographers. She and her doctor-turned-

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<sup>445</sup> Charles C. Eldredge, “Artist Biography: Charles Marion Russell” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 206;

“Object Record: Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross’ Hole, catalog no. X1912.06.01” Montana Historical Society, accessed June 14, 2024. <https://mthsmuseum.catalogaccess.com/objects/21881>.

<sup>446</sup> “Grace Carpenter Hudson,” Grace Hudson Museum, October 28, 2024, <https://www.gracehudsonmuseum.org/grace-hudson/>; “Very Hard to Get Papooses to Pose,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1895, 2.

<sup>447</sup> Jennifer Bottomly-O’looney, “Sitting Proud: The Indian Portraits of Joseph Scheuerle,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 58, no. 3 (Autumn 2008), 64.

<sup>448</sup> According to city directories, Schreyvogel painted at 1220 Park Avenue, Hoboken, New Jersey, in the 1890s and early 1900s, and at 1232 Garden Street from ca. 1903 until his death in 1912. Both buildings appear to be extant and display good integrity (Jersey City and Hoboken, New Jersey, city directories, 1893-1912, accessed via Ancestry.com).

<sup>449</sup> Farny’s Cincinnati studios have apparently been lost to fire or urban redevelopment. His Covington, Kentucky, studio and residence was demolished in 1987. (Cincinnati, Ohio, city directories, 1897-1916, accessed via Ancestry.com; Kenton County Public Library, “Henry Farny,” [https://www.kentonlibrary.org/genealogy/regional-history/biographies/henry\\_farny/](https://www.kentonlibrary.org/genealogy/regional-history/biographies/henry_farny/).)

<sup>450</sup> Brush appears to have moved frequently; he is listed at different New York City addresses in 1884, 1886, and 1889. His Dublin, New Hampshire, studio was destroyed by fire in 1937. (Antiques and the Arts Weekly, “George De Forest Brush: The Indian Paintings at National Gallery of Art,” <https://www.antiquesandthearts.com/george-de-forest-brush-the-indian-paintings-at-national-gallery-of-art/>; New York City directories, 1884, 1886, 1889, accessed via Ancestry.com.)

<sup>451</sup> After Russell’s death in 1926 and prior to NHL designation in 1965, the Charles M. Russell House and Studio site in Great Falls, Montana, experienced a number of alterations, including an addition to Russell’s log studio and construction of a modern museum building nearby. In 1972, the Russell House was relocated 50’ east and 50’ north of its original location and a historic rear porch and associated shed removed. The initial decision to revoke the Russell House and Studio’s NHL status due to relocation of the house was reversed after further review and the boundary expanded in 1983 to include the relocated residence.

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anthropologist husband also collected objects and regalia from her Pomo neighbors and subjects.<sup>452</sup> Scheuerle maintained different studios in midwestern cities but spent long periods visiting tribes in Montana, Oregon, and Washington throughout his career and developed longstanding relationships with many tribal leaders.<sup>453</sup> Unlike several of his contemporaries who asked their models to don specific regalia or clothing to adhere to preconceived notions of American Indians, Scheuerle left the choice of what to wear up to his portrait sitters, thus creating “a valuable chronicle of Indian lives as they were actually lived at the time.”<sup>454</sup>

#### Depictions of Pueblo Indians

As noted earlier, imagery of American Indians from Northern Plains tribes in the work of George Catlin and his successors had “hardened into a cliché,” and by the turn of the twentieth century, “the Plains Indian had come to represent *all* American Indians, whom the public considered essentially alike.”<sup>455</sup> Anthropologists and some other contemporaries knew the falseness of “pan-Indianness” and advocated for keeping distinct Plains cultures intact, an increasingly difficult goal to achieve as reservations or assimilation were aggressively pursued. However, the sedentary, agriculturally-based Pueblo cultures of the southwest were by and large not targets of nineteenth century forced removal or assimilation. This can be ascribed to the fact that most Pueblos were located in land claimed by Spain, which exerted colonial control from a distance and often with few resources, and which enforced conversion to Catholicism under the Jesuit mission system. After Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the Northern Pueblos were still far from the seat of power at Ciudad de Mexico. Truettner argues that Pueblo tribes were spared the forced decline of their traditional customs and lifestyle due “more or less [to] passive acceptance of the indigenous Indian culture” in New Mexico.<sup>456</sup> As such, “Pueblo Indians became the premier example of America’s ancient, unspoiled past” and thus attracted artists wishing to paint American Indian subjects.<sup>457</sup>

Depictions of Pueblo Indians first arose in the works of illustrators and photographers accompanying anthropologists doing field work among the southwest Pueblos in the late nineteenth century; their portrayals of daily domestic life “constituted a sympathetic vanguard whose images most directly correspond to subjects” chosen by the first generation of Taos artists and their successors.<sup>458</sup> Artists depicting Pueblo Indians created works “directly opposed to the more heroic, often confrontational

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<sup>452</sup> Barbara Eversole, “Sun House” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1980) <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/123859824>; “The Family,” Grace Hudson Museum, October 28, 2024, <https://www.gracehudsonmuseum.org/the-family>. Prior to completion of Sun House in 1912, Hudson worked from a studio built behind her parent’s home, which doubled as a residence after her marriage to John Hudson. After her death in 1937, the studio at Sun House was converted to a bedroom with adjoining bathroom. (Karen Holmes, “The Sincerest Form of Flattery: Grace Hudson’s Little Mendocino and Its Many Copies,” *Maine Antique Digest*, August 2013; Eversole, “Sun House,” 7:2).

<sup>453</sup> Scheuerle is listed at many different addresses in Cincinnati and Chicago directories, and does not appear to have remained in one locale for any notable length of time. The home he occupied later in life—163 College Place, South Orange, New Jersey—is extant with what appears to be fair integrity. (Various city directories, accessed via Ancestry.com; Thornton I. Boileau, and Margo Boileau, “Joe Scheuerle: Modest Man with Friendly Palette,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 21, no. 4 (1971): 39–58.)

<sup>454</sup> Bottomly-O’looney, “The Indian Portraits of Joseph Scheuerle,” 70.

<sup>455</sup> Truettner, “Indian Images at the Turn of the Century,” 33.

<sup>456</sup> Truettner, “Science and Sentiment” 18.

<sup>457</sup> Truettner, “Indian Images at the Turn of the Century” 28.

<sup>458</sup> Truettner, “Indian Images at the Turn of the Century” 38.

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images of Plains Indians.”<sup>459</sup> Such portrayals of Pueblo Indian domestic life were also in line with European art academies’ interest in folk cultures. Art historian Julie Schimmel notes that, “Paintings of European peasants were legion in the 1890s,” and many of the Taos artists, trained in European academies at that time, had first painted among the peasants of France and Germany and continued their interest in folk culture for most of their careers.<sup>460</sup> This interest finds roots in the European art movements of aestheticism and primitivism, both of which were on the rise in the early twentieth century. Aestheticism pursued the maxim “art for art’s sake” by emphasizing beauty and self-expression over narrative or moral intent, while primitivism sought inspiration in cultures untouched by large-scale industry and consumerism. Both found subjects in the “exotic” cultures of Africa, Oceania, Asia, and American Indian tribes, and artists frequently collected their everyday, utilitarian objects, finding their handmade qualities beautiful and unique, thus treating them as works of art themselves. As Schimmel notes, the Taos artists simply replaced the oriental rugs and *chinoiserie* of some of their European counterparts with American Indian and Hispano crafts.<sup>461</sup>

How a European-trained artist rendered such themes depended in large part on which academic tradition they studied. The French academies, particularly the École des Beaux-Arts and Académie Julian, espoused idealism and often depicted their subjects as archetypes, relying upon careful studies made beforehand. Couse epitomizes the French approach to subject matter as applied in the Southwest, which Schimmel maintains “aspired not simply to the representation of day-to-day reality but to the expression of universal truths” that in depictions of Pueblo Indians “frequently expressed itself in scenes of artisans at work, which were metaphors for creativity, and scenes of man in union with nature, which signified a quest for spirituality.”<sup>462</sup> In a 1913 article, the *New York Sun* opined that Couse was “justified in his choice of the American Indian as a model...No one ever tried to paint the Indian in Couse’s way before. No one has ever taken [the Indian] quite so seriously from a purely artistic standpoint.”<sup>463</sup> Couse’s own thoughts on depicting Pueblo Indians have been largely lost to time, as very few of his own words are extant. However, in 1916, Couse consulted on preliminary plans to turn the 1902 novel *The Captain of the Gray Horse Troop* by Hamlin Garland into a film, and his notes on the project to the film’s producer sound as if they could also describe his own approach to portraying American Indians in his paintings: “...to remove the misconception and contempt in which the Indian has been held, and to show that they are human beings worthy of consideration and a place in the sun...”<sup>464</sup>

As opposed to the more posed and studied French compositions, the Munich Academy encouraged a looser approach grounded in realism, and had one of its strongest adherents in Taos in Sharp. Schimmel describes the German tradition as “characterized by a direct and spontaneous reaction to a subject, with no preliminary drawing, fluid brushwork, and rich painted surfaces—hallmarks conveying immediate contact with the physical world,” a description that readily applies to Sharp’s paintings of both the Northern Plains and Taos Pueblo people he painted.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> Truettner, “Science and Sentiment” 18.

<sup>460</sup> Schimmel, “From Salon to Pueblo,” in *Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945*, 51.

<sup>461</sup> Schimmel, “From Salon to Pueblo,” 54.

<sup>462</sup> Schimmel, “From Salon to Pueblo,” 48.

<sup>463</sup> “Prize Picture Inspired by Taos Indians,” *New York Sun*, May 18, 1913.

<sup>464</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 253; quoting E.I. Couse to J.S. Blackton, May 5, 1916, draft, Misc. Correspondence, CFA.

<sup>465</sup> Schimmel, “From Salon to Pueblo,” 49.



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#### Contemporary Critiques of American Indian Imagery in TSA Works

Twenty-first-century critiques of the TSA artists' works find a dichotomy in their use of American Indian imagery, in that they "both ennobled and exploited Indian cultures."<sup>466</sup> Art historian John Ott elaborates,

...although their romantic mode of conceptualizing Indians dramatically improved on past images of and attitudes toward Native Americans, and although it appears on its face to be more benign or, at worst, a harmless fantasy, this antimodernist primitivism is just as stereotypical and as consequential for its subjects.

...On the one hand, the TSA members' strong identification with the Taos Pueblo and clear commitment to their cultural traditions at once contested centuries of unflattering stereotypes and directly helped the Pueblo win ongoing legal conflicts over land rights. On the other hand, by subscribing to static and essentialized conceptions of race, community, and culture, the redface romance of the Taos Society of Artists artificially preserved Pueblo society from both the perils and blessings of modernity, heightened interethnic tensions with [Hispano] residents, and fostered regional economic underdevelopment.

...Positive stereotypes may flatter, but they still dehumanize.<sup>467</sup>

Art historian Sascha Scott also prefers to avoid presenting Anglo artists as either "unambiguously exploitative or blindly celebratory," instead arguing that they were "agents of positive political change, if paradoxically so...[Anglo artists] tended to be preoccupied with keeping traditional Pueblo culture 'pure' and 'authentic,' often failing to understand tradition as something fluid and adaptive. As a result, Anglo proponents of Pueblo culture problematically claimed the authority to determine what was authentic and worth saving. Ironically, they also advocated for Pueblo political rights in the present while attempting to safeguard Pueblo culture by freezing it in the past."<sup>468</sup> Scott and fellow art historian Elizabeth Hutchinson present numerous cases in which Pueblo artisans and artists, such as painter Awa Tsireh of San Ildefonso Pueblo, navigated the cross currents of benefitting from Anglo interest in their culture and the desire to protect Pueblo traditions on their own terms.<sup>469</sup>

In addition to these critiques, many historians have pointed to the frequent use of Plains Indian regalia and garments in the TSA paintings, especially in Couse's works, as being a clear indication of the artist catering to the American public's expectations of a pan-Indian culture. However, it is important to note that as a long-standing tribal trading center, Taos Puebloans regularly traded for these Plains tribe materials themselves and wore them socially, saving their Pueblo regalia for closed religious ceremonies. As such, to wear or use Plains materials while modeling could be seen as a way to protect Pueblo traditions from exploitation as Anglo interest in Pueblo culture increased.

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<sup>466</sup> Scott B. Vicker, *Native American Identities: From Stereotype to Archetype in Art and Literature* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1998), 65.

<sup>467</sup> Ott, "Reform in Redface," 87-88, 103.

<sup>468</sup> Scott, *Strange Mixture*, 6.

<sup>469</sup> See Scott, *Strange Mixture*, 153-180; and Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

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#### Current Taos Pueblo Reflections on the Legacy of Couse and Sharp

For the purposes of this nomination, interviews were conducted with five members of Taos Pueblo in March 2024 to discuss their thoughts on the legacy of E. Irving Couse and J. Henry Sharp and the TSA artists generally, including their depictions of American Indians and their relationships with Pueblo people.

#### *Use of Other American Indian Tribes' Regalia in Paintings*

Regarding the use of Plains Indian materials in the paintings of Couse and Sharp, Taos Pueblo Traditional Knowledge Bearer and artist Ryan Suazo states,

Initially, just personally, I've had slight reservation with some of the depictions that emphasize Plains Indian props and regalia, because I always regard Pueblo people and Pueblo culture as being its own thing, and seeing the absence of a Pueblo aesthetic in certain imagery, that hasn't always sat right with me. But as time has gone on, I still do see the value of the work, and I'm very aware that how Taos Pueblo, of all the Pueblos, probably had more historic interactions with the people that came to be the nomadic Plains Indian people...

...in my own depictions of the Pueblo, I do tend to lean towards having a Pueblo aesthetic. If I depict something like a piece of regalia that is more Plains Indian in origin, I'll try to make it clear that this is, yes, of our people, but they're utilizing this thing that is from a different tribe, from a different people. So, it's always been my own way to want to emphasize things that are Pueblo.<sup>470</sup>

Ben Lujan's granddaughter, Mary Archuleta, notes that "to this day there's [Plains Indian] songs and dances that we do" and artist Patricia Michaels recalls that she grew up with the crafts of other tribes in her household, such as Navajo blankets and rugs and Hopi jewelry, and maintains that Taos Pueblo has always had "a real diversity of culture" that would naturally attract artists to depict it.<sup>471</sup> Furthermore, though Couse used materials from his extensive collection to help create his compositions, Taos Pueblo member and Director of Marketing Ilona Spruce asserts that "you can just clearly tell [that models Ben Luhan and Jerry Mirabel] brought [Plains Indian] items from their own home to be a part of [the modeling session], and I don't think if they weren't comfortable with any of that, they would do that."<sup>472</sup>

#### *Cultural Appropriation or Appreciation?*

Regarding whether Couse and Sharp's depictions of Pueblo people should be considered as cultural appropriation or appreciation, many of the interviewees discussed the complexity of the issue. Mary Archuleta responds that, "Maybe [it's] a little of both" and wonders if the Taos Pueblo people understood the extent to which the paintings of them would be seen, and whether it may have caused friction in the community.<sup>473</sup> Ryan Suazo states that,

<sup>470</sup> Ryan Suazo, interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024.

<sup>471</sup> Mary Archuleta, with Virginia Couse Leavitt, joint interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024; and Patricia Michaels, interview with E. Warzel, March 18, 2024.

<sup>472</sup> Ilona Spruce, interview with E. Warzel, March 13, 2024.

<sup>473</sup> Mary Archuleta, with Virginia Couse Leavitt, joint interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024.

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I see it more as cultural appreciation. And of course, always being aware that everyone is a product of their time...I think if [Couse] was looking to, if his inclination was to exploit, he could have really done it, you know, very easily. Because he was here working at a time when, I think money was still almost foreign at the Pueblo. If he was looking to exploit things, he could have easily done it and I think it would have been plainly obvious.<sup>474</sup>

In 2022-23, Patricia Michaels served on a curatorial advisory council for the exhibit *Painted: Our Bodies, Hearts, and Village* at Colby College's Museum of Art that explores different Pueblos' perspectives on the TSA's works. That experience disheartened her because she felt that it dismissed the portrayals of Taos Pueblo as mere cultural appropriation. In addition to writing a letter to the Colby Museum, Michaels recalls in the interview her feelings on the beauty of the TSA paintings. She recounts that as a child she was one of the few American Indians at her school in Santa Fe and was frequently bullied because of it, but found refuge in looking at paintings of Taos Pueblo by the Taos artists, realizing that "my people are beautiful." Michaels also notes that the paintings captured and preserved a "brilliance" and "magic" of the Pueblo, noting that "erasure is permanent."<sup>475</sup> Sculptor and author John Suazo believes that the works of Couse and Sharp are "recording history for my people" and that they are "dramatic and dynamic paintings. It shows the real Taos Indian."<sup>476</sup> Ilona Spruce also states that she believes the models were for the most part "running the show" by agreeing to how they would be depicted.<sup>477</sup>

### *Artists' Relationships with Models*

Many artists have developed relationships with models such that they paint the same people again and again in their work; family members, spouses, and friends have all been commonly used along with paid models. Couse and Sharp were no exception, and regularly turned to the same models through different phases of their careers. In Taos, both artists employed many of the same models from Taos Pueblo, including Ben Lujan, Jerry Mirabel, Juan Concha, and their family members, as has been documented above. Some scholars, such as Sylvia Rodríguez, have interpreted these relationships between artist and model as perpetuating economic inequities and evidence of domination of Pueblo people.<sup>478</sup>

The decades Couse and Sharp spent in Taos, and their respective homes and studios where they had arranged the conditions each found ideal for working, meant that each was able to maintain longstanding relationships with their models. Accounts of the quality of these relationships vary, but in some cases they clearly went beyond purely employer-servant. Indeed, Couse's working relationship with Ben Lujan developed into a friendship that spanned generations. In addition to Lujan feeling as though the Couses were his adopted parents, Virginia Couse Leavitt has recounted that Lujan "was like a father to me" due to Kibbey Couse's absence while focusing on his business back East. She further describes how her maternal aunt, Chesta Wrenn, who raised her and her siblings in La Jolla, California after the death

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<sup>474</sup> Ryan Suazo, interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024.

<sup>475</sup> Patricia Michaels, interview with E. Warzel, March 18, 2024. See also Michaels' letter to Colby Museum, posted on its website at <https://museum-exhibitions.colby.edu/patricia-michaels-letter/> (accessed May 30, 2024).

<sup>476</sup> John Suazo, interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024.

<sup>477</sup> Ilona Spruce, interview with E. Warzel, March 13, 2024.

<sup>478</sup> Rodríguez, "Art, Tourism, and Race Relations," 96.

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of their mother, would bring them every year to Taos to stay at the Couse property, where Lujan continued to keep the garden he had created with Virginia Couse. She recounts how her aunt would knit sweaters for all of Lujan's nine children that "were all different colored, so you'd see [the Lujan children] out in the Pueblo, all these, little, you know, red, blue, green, purple... You knew just who they were related to."<sup>479</sup>

Ilona Spruce opines that, "There's an accountability [to models] now that's different. I think, at the time in the past, Couse understood some of that [need for accountability]; maybe not in the same context, but he understood that there was definitely a strain happening in the community, and that his relationship with Ben was very beneficial to not only Ben, but his whole family. And vice versa, like how Couse saw the benefits of his children growing up with an individual like Ben, or his grandchildren really having that relationship with Ben." She also notes that she previously thought there may have been some exploitation on the part of the artists, but later realized, "no, there was a bigger relationship here. I don't think Ben would have brought his children around if he didn't feel that way, because there definitely is this protective—especially at that time because of boarding schools—there was definitely a feel of protecting your children. I don't think Ben would have brought his kids around here if he didn't feel that they were okay."<sup>480</sup>

Much has been made of the modeling fees the TSA artists paid their models and whether they were equitable given the large amounts their paintings fetched. John Suazo, whose aunt modeled for Couse as a child, remembers that she told him she was paid ten cents per day, while his grandfather was paid fifty cents, and notes that for both, this amount would have been a lot at the time. Ilona Spruce notes that "when you're an artist and you [have] someone model for you and you pay them, that [painting] is your work [and not the model's]. That's what I always remind our people of, is that these [models] weren't cheaply compensated for that time, either."

#### *Value of Couse-Sharp Historic Site to Taos Pueblo*

John Suazo expresses a gratitude for the artistic legacy of Couse and Sharp, "because they brought a lot to the people of Taos Pueblo; not only did they bring out the artistic talents of my people... They opened the doors for everything to happen in the artistic field." Ryan Suazo finds the Couse-Sharp Site "having a specific value for our people at the Pueblo...[as a] visual archive of a specific time in the past." Ilona Spruce echoes this opinion and notes that the Couse Foundation has ensured that Taos Pueblo people have access to the site and use of its archives. For example, photos taken by Couse, such as of Taos women wearing regalia in town that would be taboo to wear outside of the Pueblo today, provides important historical content that is now being used by Taos artists today as inspiration. She further states, "it's this little treasure trove that people don't quite know about." Patricia Michaels agrees, stating, "there are so many riches there."

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

According to the findings and recommendations that emerged from the Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop convened by the National Park Service in 1991, artists' homes and studios, unlike museums or galleries, can convey "a sense of the artist as a person, providing a personalized framework

<sup>479</sup> Virginia Couse Leavitt, with Mary Archuleta, joint interview with E. Warzel, March 12, 2024.

<sup>480</sup> Ilona Spruce, interview with E. Warzel, March 13, 2024.

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for understanding the art.”<sup>481</sup> To be considered nationally significant, such sites should “express the personality and values the artist brought to his or her art,” “be associated with a productive period of the artist’s life,” “illustrate an approach, technique, or technology of creating art, and demonstrate the artist’s use of space and sense of design.”<sup>482</sup> Encompassing the homes and studios where nationally renowned artists Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp lived and worked during the mature period of their celebrated careers, the Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios site meets these criteria and provide an outstanding lens for understanding their artistic achievements.

The Couse home and studio, Sharp’s two studios, associated contributing outbuildings, and surrounding gardens, provide an exceptional framework for understanding the personalities, aesthetics, and artistic process of two founding members of the Taos Artist Society, both acclaimed for their depictions of American Indian subjects during a transitional period in Western history. The site firmly grounds the two artists within the landscape and cultural context that inspired and profoundly shaped their work during the height of their careers, and provides a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the trajectory of their impressive careers and the close relationship the two artists and their families enjoyed for nearly three decades.

Exceptionally well-preserved both inside and out, with only minor non-historic alterations, the Couse home expresses the physical form Couse considered most appropriate when he converted an existing nineteenth-century adobe residence to suit his specific needs as an artist and that of his family. Couse’s personal aesthetics and relationship with Southwestern culture is expressed in his decision to preserve existing materials and features characteristic of nineteenth-century New Mexican residences and carry them forward as he modified and expanded the home. The design details introduced by Couse after he acquired the property in 1909—such as the mission-inspired shaped roof parapets and Pueblo ceramic tiles embedded in the east-wing’s fireplace and portico’s *banco*—further this understanding, as does the home’s existing furniture, decorative items, and artwork, which have remained in situ since the artist’s death.

Purpose-built for Couse shortly after he acquired the residence, his studio expresses the value Couse placed on light and provides insight into his artistic process. Couse’s desire for a large north-facing window, inspired by the shingle glass windows of nineteenth-century Parisian ateliers, dictated the unusual roof form that indelibly marks the space as an artist’s studio. The studio’s adobe corner fireplace, which served as a backdrop for several Couse paintings, represents a tangible connection to the artist’s work and speaks to the important place firelight paintings occupy in his oeuvre. The studio’s size and openness reflect Couse’s process, which required ample space for a large mobile platform on which he posed his models. Couse’s artistic process is further revealed in the studio’s exceptional well-preserved darkroom, where Couse developed the photographs that informed the large majority of his paintings. The studio has been preserved as it was at the time of Couse’s death, and the existing interior finishes, furniture, American Indian artifacts, ephemera, and artwork found throughout the space enhance our understanding of the artist’s values and the role his artifact collection played in his work. Overall, Couse’s studio conveys a visceral sense of the artist’s presence, as if he might enter the room to begin work at any moment.

<sup>481</sup> “Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop,” 21.

<sup>482</sup> “Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop,” 21-22.

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Although Sharp's home, extensively remodeled after Sharp's death in 1953, does not retain sufficient integrity to convey national significance for its association with Sharp, the artist's two studios remain largely unchanged since the artist left the property for the last time in 1952 and provide exceptional insight into his values and process. Sharp's decision to purchase and convert a nineteenth-century adobe chapel for use as a studio speaks to his interest in the Penitente Brotherhood and romanticization of Southwestern culture. The design choices he made when remodeling the chapel to meet his specific needs as an artist—installation of a large north-facing shingle glass window and corner adobe fireplace—reveal the high value that he, like Couse, placed on natural north light and the important role firelight paintings played in his success as an artist at that time. Sharp's second studio functions in the same manner, but on a larger scale. His decision to introduce Pueblo design features when remodeling an existing nineteenth-century residence for use as his studio reflect a desire to incorporate Pueblo motifs in his environment as well as his paintings at this point in his career. Sharp's first and second studio have been carefully rehabilitated to function as an art gallery and interpretative center, respectively, but continue to provide a visceral sense of the artist's personality and process. The studio's historic physical features, which appear in so many of Sharp's paintings, provide a tangible connection to the artist's work that cannot be experienced in a museum setting. Likewise, the rehabilitated Sharp gardens, views of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, and tipi replicating the one Sharp maintained on his property throughout his time in Taos contribute strongly to our understanding of what inspired and informed Sharp's work.

The natural landscapes of Taos that surround the site served as setting and inspiration for both artists, who often painted *en plein air*. Likewise, a proximity to Taos Pueblo, home to the majority of Couse's and Sharp's models who were critical to the artists' work and to their understanding of the cultures they depicted, further sets this site apart in its ability to represent the productive work life of Couse and Sharp.

As discussed above, most prominent late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century artists who focused on depicting Western themes and American Indians maintained their studios in Midwest or East Coast cities, whereas only a few lived and worked among the landscapes and people that were their artistic subjects for extended periods of time. Extant sites associated with the productive lives of the more prominent Western artists are rare, and often have short periods of association with the artist and/or low integrity. Northern New Mexico's exceptional status as a location for exploration of Western indigenous subjects is directly related to the influence of the TSA. These facts, along with the national significance of the Couse-Sharp Site for its association with the TSA and its two master artists, affirms that the most fruitful sites to explore for comparative analysis are those associated with Sharp, Couse, and other TSA members. Accordingly, the following discussion documents additional extant sites directly associated with the productive work lives of Couse and Sharp, the Taos homes and studios of TSA members Ernest Blumenschein, Walter Ufer, E. Martin Henning, and W. Herbert Denton, and the Santa Fe homes and studios of TSA associate members Gustave Baumann and Randall Davey.

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### Sites Associated with Joseph Henry Sharp and E. Irving Couse:

#### **Absarokee Hut, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming, relocated from Crow Agency, Montana, 1988**

Built on government land and completed in 1905, Absarokee Hut served as the home and work environment for Sharp on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana until 1923. When describing his home and studio, Sharp emphasized the importance of place in his decision to build in Crow Agency, Montana, “I have been painting Indians in the various reservations for fifteen years, and have built my ‘hut’ in just this spot because I wanted to paint the winter landscape here as well as the Indians,” he stated, “to paint them day after day and month after month.”<sup>483</sup> The artist and wife Addie Sharp decorated the cabin in the Arts and Crafts style, incorporating items from Gustav Stickley’s Craftsman shops, Roycroft furniture, and Indian artifacts, including a buffalo robe, shields, skins, Navajo rugs, pottery, and baskets.<sup>484</sup> *The Craftsman* magazine featured the cabin in its June 1906 issue, but did not reference Sharp by name.<sup>485</sup>

Sharp split his time between the cabin, Taos, and Pasadena, California, spending the fall and early winter months in Montana, producing portraits and genre paintings focused on members of the Great Plains tribes, and paintings depicting the stark beauty of Montana’s natural landscape in winter. Sharp acquired title to the property in 1922, but did not occupy the cabin after 1923, choosing instead to treat it as a rental property. As art historian and curator Sarah Boehme points out, by 1935 “Too many changes had occurred for the cabin to mean what it had in Sharp’s earlier life and art” and Sharp sold the cabin that year.<sup>486</sup> Sharp biographer and art collector Forrest Fenn purchased Absarokee Hut in 1988 and donated the building to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming, shortly afterward. The log cabin was disassembled and relocated to the museum grounds, where it underwent restoration work and no longer retains integrity of location and setting, therefore diminishing its ability to fully convey its significance associated with Sharp.<sup>487</sup> The Sharp home and studio at 1481 Corson Street in Pasadena, California, where Sharp regularly spent winters from roughly 1913 until his death in 1953, was demolished between 1964 and 1972 to make way for the Foothills Freeway.<sup>488</sup>

#### **Couse Winter Studio, Van Dyck Studio Building, 939 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York**

Couse maintained a winter residence and studio in the Van Dyck Studio Building in New York from 1898 to 1904.<sup>489</sup> Located near Columbus Circle, the Van Dyck Studio Building opened ca. 1889 and “housed the Grand Opera Society of New York and the American School of Miniature Painting, along with studios for forty to fifty artists—primarily painters but also sculptors, musicians, and dancers,” according to the New-York Historical Society—and with nearby Carnegie Hall, “formed one of the main art communities in late-nineteenth-century New York City.”<sup>490</sup> The building retains good integrity, with alterations limited to the first-floor storefronts. The period of association with Couse was cut short

<sup>483</sup> “Our Home Department: A Real Lesson in House Building,” *The Craftsman*, June 1906, 408.

<sup>484</sup> Boehme, “Absarokee Hut: The Joseph Henry Sharp Cabin,” 89, 92.

<sup>485</sup> “Our Home Department,” 408-412.

<sup>486</sup> Boehme, “Absarokee Hut: The Joseph Henry Sharp Cabin,” 96.

<sup>487</sup> Michael Milstein, “Portrait of the artist: Western artist’s cabin preserved,” *Billings Gazette*, September 7, 1992, 9.

<sup>488</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 216; <https://www.historicaerials.com/>.

<sup>489</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 146-148, 194.

<sup>490</sup> New-York Historical Society, quoted in “Two very different scenes painted from an 1889 artists studio building on Eighth Avenue,” *Ephemeral New York*, September 11, 2023, <https://ephemeralnewyork.wordpress.com/2023/09/11/two-very-different-views-painted-from-an-1889-eighth-avenue-artists-studio-building/>.

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in 1904, when the Couse family moved to a studio space in the Sherwood Studio Building at 58 W. 57th Street in New York.<sup>491</sup> Constructed in 1879 as artists' apartments, the Sherwood Studio Building was demolished in 1960.

#### **First Couse Residence and Studio, 119 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Taos, New Mexico Contributing Resource, Taos Downtown Historic District, National Register of Historic Places (Designated July 8, 1982)**

When they first arrived in Taos, Couse and his family rented rooms at the Hacienda De Los Martinez, 708 Hacienda Way, in 1903 and 1905 before purchasing the house at 119 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, which they called *Casa Golondrinas* (house of the swallows), in 1906.<sup>492</sup> Couse painted there until 1909, when the family purchased the adobe residence on Kit Carson Road now known as the Couse House and Studio. Located just south of the Taos Inn and constructed at an unknown date, Couse's first home and studio in Taos is identified as contributing to the Taos Downtown Historic District National Register nomination, but is not specifically discussed.<sup>493</sup> Based on a ca. 1906 photograph of Couse's home and studio, the property displays fair integrity relative to the period when Couse lived and painted there. The residence/studio was converted to commercial use after 1909, likely in the 1960s.<sup>494</sup> A flat-roof portico was added along the front of the building and the adjacent properties to the south. Street-facing window openings were enlarged and storefront windows installed, and a passageway created leading from the sidewalk along Paseo Del Pueblo Norte to the building's interior courtyard. The original street-facing door openings remain intact; however, the southern door has been converted to a storefront window. Due to the property's relatively brief association with Couse's productive work life and fair integrity, its association with the artist is not as strong as the Couse House and Studio, which provides a more robust and intact representation of the artist's life and work.

#### **Taos Society of Artists – Associated Homes and Studios**

##### **Ernest L. Blumenschein House, 222 Ledoux Street, Taos, New Mexico National Historic Landmark (Designated December 21, 1965)**

While studying in Paris in 1896, Ernest L. Blumenschein met Joseph Henry Sharp, who recommended that the artist visit Taos Pueblo.<sup>495</sup> After arriving in Taos in 1898 with Bert G. Phillips, Blumenschein spent three months there before returning to New York and his career as an illustrator. Beginning in 1910, Blumenschein and wife Mary Shepard Greene, also an accomplished artist, spent summers in Taos. The couple permanently relocated to Taos in 1919, purchasing four rooms within a ca. 1797-1823

<sup>491</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 194, 283, 311.

<sup>492</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 199; Hacienda De Los Martinez, owned by Taos Historic Museums, is operated as a museum honoring the contributions of early Hispano settlers in the Taos region, with a focus on life during the 1820s.

<sup>493</sup> Boyd C. Pratt, "Taos Downtown Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1981), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847673>, map of "significant" and "contributing" properties prepared by Garner/Hicks Architects; Mundus Bishop and Town of Taos, *Taos Historic Plaza Cultural Landscape Report*, September 2016, 3-22.

<sup>494</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DNM18\_p5\_item1\_recto, New Mexico's Digital Collections, University of New Mexico, <https://nmde.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/8852/rec/1>.

<sup>495</sup> Blumenschein, "Origin of the Taos Art Colony," 190.



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adobe residence south of Taos Plaza from fellow TSA artist W. Herbert Dunton (see discussion of the W. Herbert Dunton Home and Studio at La Loma Plaza below).<sup>496</sup>

Between 1919 and 1931, the Blumenscheins acquired additional rooms, expanding the former Dunton studio and home to eleven rooms and remodeling it to serve their residential and artistic needs.<sup>497</sup> A co-founder of the TSA and member until 1923, Blumenschein was less prolific than Couse and Sharp, producing a little over 400 paintings, illustrations, and studies during his lifetime. His paintings reflected his European academic training, which he combined “with more progressive ideas gleaned from avant-garde artists, creating a distinctive, responsive style” characterized by “vivid colors, highly structured compositions and dynamic brushwork.”<sup>498</sup>

Mary Greene and Ernest Blumenschein lived and painted at 222 Ledoux Street until their deaths in 1958 and 1960, respectively. In 1962, daughter Helen Greene Blumenschein, also an artist, donated the property to the Kit Carson Memorial Foundation, now Taos Historic Museums.<sup>499</sup> In 1965, the property was listed as a National Historic Landmark for its association with Ernest Blumenschein and served as multi-family residence through the mid-1970s before conversion to its current use as a house museum, gallery, and gift shop.<sup>500</sup> The Blumenschein House displays good integrity to the period Blumenschein lived and worked at the property. Restoration work was undertaken after 1975 to restore the home’s configuration during the Blumenschein family’s occupation based on sketches provided by Helen Blumenschein. One of the adobe fireplaces in place in Blumenschein’s studio in 1926, but later removed by the artist, was restored in 1989.<sup>501</sup> Limited non-historic alterations, primarily contemporary gallery lighting throughout the public spaces and adaptation of the garage for use as a visitor entrance/gift shop, have been undertaken to accommodate its current use.<sup>502</sup> Several rooms have been furnished to appear as they may have during the Blumenschein period with Blumenschein family furniture, curios, and artwork, as well as works by other well-known TSA artists, including Couse and Sharp.<sup>503</sup>

#### **W. Herbert Dunton Home and Studio, 110 La Loma Plaza, Taos, New Mexico Contributing, La Loma Plaza Historic District, National Register of Historic Places (Designated July 8, 1982)**

Born near Augusta, Maine, in 1878, W. Herbert (Buck) Dunton developed a passion for the outdoors as a child. Beginning in 1896 he traveled extensively in the West, working summers as a ranch hand and

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<sup>496</sup> Richard Greenwood, “Ernest L. Blumenschein House,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847030>; “Ernest L. Blumenschein House” National Historic Landmark Documentation (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1963-1975) <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847030>.

<sup>497</sup> Tom Sharpe, “Blumenschein led artists to Taos,” *Taos News*, June 5, 1980, 40. For an accounting of the alterations undertaken by the Blumenschein’s see Christopher C. Mead, “Ernest L. Blumenschein Home,” SAH Archipedia, <http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/NM-01-055-0182>.

<sup>498</sup> Kyle MacMillian, “The essential Blumenschein,” *Denver Post*, November 6, 2008.

<sup>499</sup> “Blumenschein Home is Given to Kit Carson Memorial Foundation,” *Taos News*, April 19, 1962, 7.

<sup>500</sup> Greenwood, “Ernest L. Blumenschein House.” Greenwood documents the home as divided into four apartments in 1975.

<sup>501</sup> Leah Leach, “Old hacienda nearing renovation,” *Taos News*, February 13, 1975, 3. See “Ernest L. Blumenschein in his studio, Taos, New Mexico,” 1926, 040404, <https://econtent.unm.edu/digital/collection/acpa/id/5104/rec/6>.

<sup>502</sup> See Larry Beckner, “Exterior of Blumenschein House in Taos, New Mexico, ca. 1985, HP.2014.14.1689, <https://econtent.unm.edu/digital/collection/acpa/id/16247/rec/27>.

<sup>503</sup> Taos Historic Museums, “About Taos Historic Museums,” <https://www.taohistoricmuseums.org/about-us>.

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hunter. In 1897, he studied at the Cowles Art School in Boston, Massachusetts, and embarked on a career as an illustrator, arriving in New York in 1903. In 1912, he studied under Ernest Blumenschein at the Art Students League in New York. Visiting Taos at Blumenschein's suggestion that year, he permanently relocated there in 1914, purchasing four rooms within a ca. 1797-1823 adobe residence south of Taos Plaza.<sup>504</sup> Dunton adapted the space for use as a residence and studio, raising the height of the ceiling, installing large windows and two false fireplaces in his studio space.<sup>505</sup>

A charter member of the TSA, Dunton remained a part of the group until 1922.<sup>506</sup> Dunton engaged with American Indian subjects on a limited basis, focusing primarily on depictions of the cowboys and hunters on horseback that have been described as "contributing to the constructed mythology of the American West."<sup>507</sup> After selling his house and studio at 222 Ledoux Street to the Blumenscheins in 1919, Dunton purchased an adobe residence at the south side of La Loma Plaza, just west of Taos Plaza, in 1921, which he presumably occupied until his death in 1936. A privately-owned residence currently addressed as 110 La Loma Plaza, the property appears to retain good integrity to Dunton's period of occupation, receiving no discernable alterations after it was identified as a significant contributing building to the National Register-listed La Loma Plaza Historic District in 1982.<sup>508</sup>

### **Walter Ufer Home and Walter Ufer Studio, 101 Des Georges Place and 100 Des Georges Lane, Taos, New Mexico**

#### **Contributing Resource, Taos Downtown Historic District, National Register of Historic Places (Designated July 8, 1982)**

Born in Germany in 1876, Walter Ufer immigrated to Louisville, Kentucky, as a child with his parents in 1880.<sup>509</sup> After training as a lithographer, Ufer studied in Germany before settling in Chicago, where he worked as an illustrator. In 1911, he returned to Germany for further study, attending the Royal Academy in Munich. In 1914, he traveled to Taos and was captivated by the Taos Pueblo people, who became the subject of the majority of his subsequent work. Ufer preferred painting *en plein air*, believing that studio work "dulls the mind and the artist's palette."<sup>510</sup> A TSA member from 1917 to 1923 and committed Socialist, Ufer frequently painted Pueblo members engaged in everyday activities, depicting his subjects in a frank and straightforward manner that eschewed romanticism.

In Taos, Ufer rented the pre-1908 two-story adobe house with Victorian era details at 101 Des Georges Place, and in 1916 purchased the small Guadalupe Chapel across Des Georges Lane to the north. He converted the mid-1880s one-story flat-roof adobe chapel for use as a studio, which he occupied until his death in 1936. During the 1960s, the studio was briefly used by western artist Hugh Cabot III (1925-2005) and a plaque bearing his name is embedded in the adobe wall that separates the property from Des Georges Lane. Both the studio and home were identified as significant contributing buildings to the Taos Downtown National Register Historic District in 1982 and appear to retain good integrity, with few if

<sup>504</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 371.

<sup>505</sup> Interpretive signage on display at The Blumenschein Museum, 222 Ledoux Street, Taos, New Mexico.

<sup>506</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 14.

<sup>507</sup> Phoenix Museum of Art, exhibition description for "William Herbert "Buck" Dunton: A Mainer Goes West," <https://phxart.org/exhibition/dunton-mainer-goes-west/>.

<sup>508</sup> Ellen Threinen, "La Loma Plaza" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service), 1982, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847655>, Section 7, 3 and map of significance ratings.

<sup>509</sup> U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>510</sup> Interpretive plaque at Ufer home at 101 Des Georges Place, Taos, New Mexico.

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any alterations since that time. The studio and home are currently under separate ownership and the home has been converted to commercial use.

#### **E. Martin Hennings House and Studio Historic District, 409 Dolan Street (506 Kit Carson Road), Taos, New Mexico**

##### **National Register of Historic Places (Designated July 5, 1990)**

Born in Penns Grove, New Jersey, in 1886, nationally-recognized painter and TSA member E. Martin Hennings grew up in Chicago and graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago before enrolling at the Royal Academy in Munich in 1912 and studying with Franz Von Stuck. In 1915, Hennings returned to Chicago, where he worked as a muralist and illustrator.<sup>511</sup> Hennings first visited Taos in 1917 at the behest of Chicago mayor and patron Carter Harrison and four years later made it his permanent home, joining the TSA as an active member in 1924.<sup>512</sup> Like Couse and Sharp, Hennings primarily depicted American Indian individuals, often traveling through the New Mexico landscape on horseback, and approached in his art from a similar perspective.<sup>513</sup> Hennings initially occupied a guest house on Pueblo Road before moving to an apartment at the Harwood Foundation, a center for artists established by Lucy Harwood in 1923. In 1936, he acquired the property at 506 Kit Carson Road, east of Couse and Sharp's homes and studios, and lived and worked there until his death in 1956.<sup>514</sup> The property dates to the later phase of Hennings' career, after dissolution of the TSA in 1927.

Hennings widow, Helen Hennings, continued to live there through 1979, when the property was sold. A 1983 fire destroyed the second-story windows and floor. Repair work included the construction of wood frame additions on the east and south sides. In 1989, the property was sold, the additions removed, and other work completed to restore the building to its historic exterior appearance, prior to its opening as The Willows Inn and listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 (E. Martin Hennings House & Studio Historic District, NRIS.90001028). Interior changes were made to adapt the home for its new use and a new building constructed west of the house and studio.<sup>515</sup> The property was subsequently remodeled to serve as a private residence, with extensive alterations to the interior of Henning's home and the surrounding grounds and some loss of historic material due to installation of replacement windows.<sup>516</sup> The adobe wall surrounding the property appears to date to this period.<sup>517</sup> Overall, the Hennings home and studio does not retain a level of integrity comparable to the Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios.

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<sup>511</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 100.

<sup>512</sup> Porter et al., *Taos Artists and Their Patrons*, 100, 102; White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 14.

<sup>513</sup> Smithsonian American Art Museum, "E. Martin Hennings," <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/e-martin-hennings-2169>.

<sup>514</sup> Susan Silberberg-Peirce, "E. Martin Hennings Home and Studio (currenting the Willows Inn)," ca. 1989, Canyonlights World Art Slides and Image Bank/Artstor, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14742744>.

<sup>515</sup> Corinne P. Sze, "E. Martin Hennings House and Studio Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990) Section 8, 6-7, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847683>.

<sup>516</sup> Taos Real Estate Group, "409 Dolan Street," <https://homesintaos.com/homes-for-sale-details/409-DOLAN-STREET-TAOS-NM-87571/111069/556/>.

<sup>517</sup> A plaque inset in the wall reads "Casa Willows | A Private Residence."

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#### **Randall Davey House, 1800 Canyon Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico National Register of Historic Places (Designated May 26, 1970)**

Born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1887, noted American artist Randall Davey studied architecture at Cornell University before leaving to pursue a career in art. He briefly attended the Art Students League in New York before studying under Robert Henri at the New York School of Art, and in 1913 Davey's work was included in the groundbreaking New York Armory Show. Davey taught at the Art Institute of Chicago prior to 1920, and afterward at the Kansas City Art Institute and Broadmoor Art Academy in Colorado Springs. In 1921, he was elected an associate member of the TSA. His subject matter included portraits and still life, landscape, and genre paintings crafted in a modern realist style.<sup>518</sup> In contrast to Couse, Sharp, and most TSA artists, Davey was not inspired to paint Pueblo Indian subjects, generally preferring Hispano subjects for his portraits and exploring his love of horseracing and polo in his genre paintings.<sup>519</sup>

After visiting Santa Fe for the first time in 1919, Davey purchased a former sawmill and associated buildings at the upper end of Canyon Road in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the following year, adapting the property for use as his residence and studio. Constructed in 1847 to provide lumber for nearby Fort Marcy, the sawmill is considered the first to be built in New Mexico Territory.<sup>520</sup> Davey maintained the property as his primary residence while teaching in Kansas City and Colorado Springs and continued to live and work there until his death in a car accident in 1964. The property was listed in the National Register in 1970 (NRIS.70000409) and in 1983 the Randall Davey Foundation donated the property to the National Audubon Society.<sup>521</sup> The artist's home and studio are currently the centerpiece of the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary, which includes contemporary compatibly-designed buildings—an office building, classroom building, and visitor center—north of the house and studio, and the Henderson Pavilion to the south. The Davey house and studio is surrounded by green lawns, mature trees, and flower gardens, with views of the natural landscape that comprises the majority of the 114-acre parcel.<sup>522</sup> Well-preserved since Davey's death, his house and studio, and associated historic secondary residence directly to the north retain very good integrity, with little to no alteration since 1964.

#### **Jane and Gustave Baumann House and Studio, 409 Camino de Las Animas, Santa Fe, New Mexico**

##### **National Register of Historic Places (Designated August 31, 2012)**

Born in 1881, Gustave Baumann emigrated to Chicago with his family from Magdeburg, Germany, as a boy. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Royal School of Arts and Crafts in Munich, Germany, and spent time in Indiana as a member of the Brown County Art Colony, before settling in Santa Fe in 1918. A founding member of both the Santa Fe Art Club (1923) and the Society of New Mexico Painters (1926), Baumann worked primarily as a graphic artist and printmaker producing

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<sup>518</sup> Stan Cuba, "Randall Davey," *Modernist West*, <https://www.modernistwest.com/randall-davey-i-1-1>.

<sup>519</sup> Cuba, "Randall Davey."

<sup>520</sup> Samuel Larcombe, "Randall Davey House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1970) Section 8, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847582>.

<sup>521</sup> Cuba, "Randall Davey."

<sup>522</sup> Historic Santa Fe Foundation, "Randall Davey House," <https://www.historicsantafe.org/randall-davey-house>; Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary, <https://randalldavey.audubon.org/>.

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colorful woodcuts depicting the southwestern landscape and Pueblo life.<sup>523</sup> He was elected as an associate member to the TSA in 1922, and was the Santa Fe area coordinator of the Public Works of Art Project of the Works Progress Administration in the early 1930s.<sup>524</sup>

In 1923, Baumann purchased property at 409 Camino de Las Animas in Santa Fe and commissioned Santa Fe architect Charles T. Gaastra to design a one-bedroom home and studio. The adobe home blended Pueblo Revival and Territorial features with eclectic details designed by Baumann. In 1925, Baumann married Jane Devereux Henderson, an actress and singer from Denver, and the couple added a detached art studio to the back of the property and expanded the house after the birth of a daughter, Ann, in 1927. Gustave Baumann lived and worked at the property until his death in 1971. In 1978, Ann Baumann sold the property to Anne Albrink who made very few alterations before donating the property to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation in 2008. The property underwent extensive conservation and rehabilitation work and was listed in the National Register in 2012 (NRIS.12000875) for its association with Baumann and its architectural significance.<sup>525</sup> In 2014, the property was sold to preservationist Nancy Meem Wirth, daughter of architect John Gaw Meem.<sup>526</sup> The property retains excellent integrity both inside and out, with no significant alterations since Baumann's death.

### Summary

In comparison with other extant sites associated with the productive work lives of Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp, the Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios on Kit Carson Road in Taos is directly associated with the pinnacle period of their careers and excels in its ability to express the personality and values the artists brought to their art, illustrate their approach and technique to creating art, and demonstrate their use of space and sense of design when constructing or adapting buildings for use as their home and studio. Divorced from the Montana landscape and Crow Reservation lands where Sharp produced a good share of his early paintings, Absarokee Hut does not retain integrity of location and setting, aspects essential to understanding Sharp's close relationship with the northern tribes and the landscape surrounding Crow Agency, which informed a large share of his early work. Similarly, Couse's winter home and studio in the Van Dyck Studio Building in New York is situated far from the landscape and people that were the subject of Couse's art and cannot provide an in depth understanding of the artist's life and work. Couse occupied his first studio in Taos at 119 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte for three years, a relatively brief moment in comparison to the twenty-seven years that he lived and worked at the Couse House and Studio, where he reached the height of his career and produced much of his best-known work. Furthermore, the Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios is where both men lived and worked when they, along with four other artists, formed the highly influential Taos Society of Artists, and continued to work during their tenure as members of the collective.

The integrity of the Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios meets or exceeds that displayed by the extant homes and studios of other TSA members, and perhaps more than any other site associated with

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<sup>523</sup> Historic Santa Fe Foundation, "Gustave Baumann House," <https://www.history.santafe.org/gustave-baumann-house>; Smithsonian American Art Museum, "Gustave Baumann," <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/gustave-baumann-282>.

<sup>524</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, 14; Smithsonian American Art Museum, "Gustave Baumann."

<sup>525</sup> Catherine Colby, "Jane and Gustave Baumann House and Studio," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2012), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77847588>.

<sup>526</sup> Santa Fe County Assessor Records, Parcel Number 99305461, 409 Camino De Las Animas, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Santa Fe County Tax Parcel Viewer; Anne Constable, "Santa Fe Living Treasures: Wirth works to save state's historic structures, culture," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, May 4, 2017.

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the collective provides an opportunity to interrogate the relationship between the artists and their Pueblo Indian subjects and understand the influence of European academicism on the TSA. W. Herbert Dunton did not frequently engage with American Indian subjects and Walter Ufer painted the Pueblo people from a markedly different perspective from Couse and Sharp, informed by his Socialist ideals. Hennings' work speaks to different stylistic influences, principally Art Nouveau, than those represented in Couse and Sharp's work. Gustave Baumann's work also speaks to the influence of Art Nouveau, as well as Japanese printmaking and aesthetics. Baumann is best known as a printmaker, engaging with different media and technology and employing a different process than Couse and Sharp.<sup>527</sup> Randall Davey's home and studio also retain very good integrity, but like Dunton, Davey did not engage with American Indian subjects with any regularity, and his work displays different stylistic influences, principally French Impressionism.

No single site can fully convey the significance of the TSA and the diverse qualities that distinguished the work of its members; however, the Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios property is an excellent vehicle for telling the story of the group's formation and trajectory, representing Sharp, the first of the TSA artists to arrive in Taos, and Couse, who with Sharp, constitute two of the group's best known and most celebrated charter members. The Couse House and Studio and Sharp Studios compares exceptionally well with the NHL-listed home and studio of TSA co-founder Ernest L. Blumenschein, exhibiting as good, if not better overall integrity due to the preservation efforts of the Couse family over the past several decades, and more recently the Couse Foundation, providing a rare opportunity to compare and contrast the work of these important artists.

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<sup>527</sup> Michael Abatemarco, "Etched in wood: The printmaking of Gustave Baumann," *Pasatiempo*, September 28, 2018.

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### **6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY**

#### **Ownership of Property**

Private: X  
Public-Local:  
Public-State:  
Public-Federal:

#### **Category of Property**

Building(s):  
District: X  
Site:  
Structure:  
Object:

#### **Number of Resources within Boundary of Property:**

##### **Contributing**

Buildings: 5  
Sites: 1  
Structures: 0  
Objects: 0  
Total: 6

##### **Noncontributing**

Buildings: 2  
Sites: 0  
Structures: 0  
Objects: 0  
Total: 2

### **PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY**

**(Please see specific guidance for type of resource[s] being nominated)**

The Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios occupies 2.23 acres in the historic town of Taos, the county seat of Taos County in northern New Mexico. Founded by Spanish settlers on the Don Fernando de Taos land grant around 1795, Taos is situated at 6,969' in New Mexico's high desert region on the western edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Couse-Sharp complex sits atop a ridge at the southeastern edge of the Taos Downtown National Register Historic District (NRIS.82003340, NR designated July 8, 1982), one block east-southeast of Taos Plaza. Approximately 2.7 miles to the northeast is the autonomous indigenous community of Taos Pueblo (Pueblo de Taos), whose people played a pivotal role in the work of both artists. Established as early as 1300, Taos Pueblo (NRIS.66000496, NHL designated October 9, 1960) was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992.

The triangular parcel is bound by Kit Carson Road/U.S. 64 (Camino del Cañon) to the north and Quesnel Road (Camino del Molino) to the south. To the west stand mostly one-story adobe buildings, many identified as contributing to the Taos Downtown Historic District and a few identified as "significant" contributing buildings.<sup>528</sup> These buildings give way to the compatibly-designed adobe commercial buildings that line Paseo del Pueblo Sur, Taos's primary north/south artery, and lie outside the Taos Downtown historic district. The Sanborn Map of Taos from 1908 indicates that from Taos Plaza to Quesnel Road, Kit Carson Road was historically flanked by one-story adobe dwellings. An undated photograph of Virginia Couse looking west down Kit Carson Road provides a sense of the rustic nature of the neighborhood during the early 1900s,

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<sup>528</sup> Boyd C. Pratt, "Taos Downtown Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1981), map of "significant" and "contributing" properties prepared by Garner/Hicks Architects.

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documenting a dirt road flanked by adobe walls, gates, and wood fences.<sup>529</sup> By the late 1920s, these buildings were slowly converted to commercial use, and by the 1960s housed galleries, shops, and restaurants. South of Quesnel Road and west of Kit Carson Road, 20.387 acres of pastureland extends to the south, purchased by E.I. Couse in 1923-24 to preserve a picturesque view of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and surrounding natural landscape from the family's house and gardens. A gravel public parking area occupies the northeast corner of the pasture; the remainder of the land has been used for raising horses. This parcel is under separate ownership and is not included in the NHL boundary. The area surrounding the pasture retains a rural residential feel.

Built and expanded using a mix of Pueblo and Spanish Colonial construction techniques, the oldest buildings within the Couse-Sharp complex are concentrated at the southern edge of Kit Carson Road and include Sharp's first studio, the former Juan de Luna family chapel, first built about 1835 and acquired by Sharp in 1909; the Couse House and Studio, first built about 1839 and later expanded by the Couse family between 1909 and 1931; and Sharp's residence, first built around 1860, acquired by Sharp in 1908, and extensively remodeled to house Ivan Rosequist's Mission Gallery in the early 1960s. Behind these buildings sit Sharp's second studio, first built around 1840 and enlarged by Sharp in 1915, and the 1933 Lower Shop built for Kibbey Couse, son of E.I. and Virginia Walker Couse, as a facility for manufacturing his patented invention, the Mobile Machine Shop. Outbuildings include "Little Egypt," an adobe outhouse associated with the second Sharp studio and a ca. 1920 Well House in the Couse House and Studio's west courtyard.

The landscape surrounding the buildings is a significant component of the site, which includes Virginia Walker Couse's extensive terraced garden; the remnants of the irrigation system developed for the garden by Ben Lujan; the Couse circular entrance drive, accessed from Kit Carson Road via a historic wood entrance gate with stone wing walls; a walled courtyard on the west side of the Couse residence; and an internal circulation system of gravel drives and parking areas.

The Couse House and Studio, Joseph Henry Sharp's chapel studio, and a portion of the Sharp House-Mission Gallery were identified as "significant" contributing buildings to the Taos Downtown Historic District in 1981, and the Second Sharp Studio and the southern portion of the Lower Shop identified as contributing.<sup>530</sup> In 2004, the portion of the property owned by the Couse Foundation at that time, which did not include the Sharp House-Mission Gallery, was listed in New Mexico's State Register of Cultural Properties (NMSRCP.1865). This same portion of the property was subsequently listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 under Criteria A and B for its significance at the state level in the areas of Art and Architecture from 1908 to 1953. The nomination recognized the Couse house and studio, Sharp's chapel studio, Sharp's second studio, and the surrounding site as contributing resources, and identified the full extent of the Lower Shop as non-contributing.<sup>531</sup> This NHL nomination expands the NR boundary to include the Sharp House-Mission Gallery as a non-contributing resource, and specifically identifies the contributing status of the property's historic outbuildings.

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<sup>529</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DNM18\_p7\_item1\_recto, New Mexico's Digital Collections, University of New Mexico, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/9141/rec/1>.

<sup>530</sup> Pratt, "Taos Downtown Historic District," map of "significant" and "contributing" properties prepared by Garner/Hicks Architects.

<sup>531</sup> Ernest E. Leavitt, "Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios."



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**Table 1. Contributing/Noncontributing Status of Resources within the NHL Boundary**

Resource Number	Name	Contributing Status	Resource Type	Year Built
1	Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios	Contributing	Site	ca. 1909-1953
2	Juan de Luna Family Chapel-Joseph Henry Sharp Studio	Contributing	Building	ca. 1835-1909
3	Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio	Contributing	Building	ca. 1839-1936
4	Couse Well House	Contributing	Building	ca. 1920s
5	Sharp House-Mission Gallery-Lunder Research Center	Non-contributing	Building	ca. 1840-1980s
6	Second Sharp Studio	Contributing	Building	ca. 1860-1915
7	Little Egypt Outhouse	Contributing	Building	ca. 1915
8	Lower Shops	Non-contributing	Building	1933

**Juan de Luna Family Chapel-Joseph Henry Sharp Studio, contributing building, ca. 1835-1909**

In 1909, Joseph Sharp purchased the family chapel, or *oratorio*, built by Juan de Luna at the eastern edge of Taos, and converted it for use as his studio.<sup>532</sup> Constructed by Luna about 1835, the chapel was occasionally used by members of the Penitente Brotherhood before passing into the hands of the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1863, who were persuaded to sell the chapel to Sharp.<sup>533</sup> Built when the region was under Mexican rule, the rustic chapel follows design conventions established during the Spanish Colonial period, featuring thick adobe walls and a flat roof with shaped parapet rising above the primary entrance. The rectangular-plan chapel stands facing southeast, set back from and parallel to Kit Carson Road. Portions of the Couse residence adjoin the south and west walls, but there is no interior connection between the two buildings.

The symmetrical shaped parapet holds a cast bronze bell, dated 1868, purchased at Taos Pueblo for \$100 and installed by Sharp. The bell hangs from a round wood beam spanning the parapet’s central projecting elements, and prompted Sharp to refer to his studio as “The Studio of the Copper Bell.” A single historic wood *canal* drains water from the roof at the west side of the parapet. Below the parapet, a central, deeply inset board-and-batten wood door with iron strap hinges provides access to the interior. Stone terracing installed ca. 1918 provides access from the Couse circular drive to the entry. The stonework wraps around the northeast corner of the studio and extends along the north wall, separating the building from a gravel parking area to the north. The roof structure is visible within the chapel interior. Pine *vigas* transfer the roof’s weight to the load-bearing exterior adobe walls. The *vigas* are braced by carved corbels that sit atop wood headers carved with a simple triangular pattern. Sawn wood boards, installed over the existing *vigas* by Sharp in 1912, support a dirt roof. A small four-light wood awning window sits high on the west wall. The interior walls are covered with smooth beige plaster of a color specified by Sharp.

<sup>532</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 316.

<sup>533</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 368: fn 5, 368: fn 12.

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After purchasing the chapel, Sharp made a number of modifications to facilitate its use as a studio. The artist installed a large window at the northwest corner of the chapel, positioned to face directly north. The wood window is divided into six sections by vertical muntins. Shingle glass (lapped rectangular panes) occupies each section. The window is set flush with the exterior wall and features a wood sill and wood trim. The trim at the head of the window is slightly peaked. Sharp also installed a two-by-two wood slider window with functional wood shutters at the north wall. The smaller window features the same sill and trim details as the larger window.

Modifications to the interior executed by Sharp include installation of the existing tongue-and-groove fir floor and adobe corner fireplace. Set at the northeast corner of the studio, Sharp used the fireplace to illuminate his models. An arched niche sits north of the fireplace. A historic photograph taken by architect Rudolph M. Schindler during a visit to the studio in 1915 document these features.<sup>534</sup> After completion of a second studio on the property in 1915, Sharp used the chapel principally for storage, and around 1925 Sharp's friend and assistant, Alois Liebert, constructed a concrete-walled vault in the interior southeast corner.<sup>535</sup> Used to protect his paintings and artifact collection when he was away for extended periods, the vault incorporates an early twentieth-century bank vault door, salvaged from a failed bank in which Sharp had invested.

*Alterations:* Electrical service, exhibit lighting, and storm windows were installed outside the period of significance. Sympathetically designed and carefully installed to avoid damaging historic material, these non-historic additions do not detract from the integrity of the studio. The building remains otherwise unchanged since Sharp completed his modifications.

#### **Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio, contributing building, ca. 1839-1931**

In 1909, on the advice of artist Bert Phillips, E.I. and Virginia Couse purchased the adobe dwelling attached to the Juan de Luna family chapel, now owned by Sharp, for use as a permanent summer residence. The Couse family had outgrown its summer home on Pueblo Road, and the conveniently located dwelling, close to Taos Plaza and other artists' homes and studios, provided additional space, room for expansion within the one-acre parcel, and picturesque views to the south toward the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

Pedro Luna, whose relationship to Juan de Luna has not been determined, first constructed a south-facing, rectangular-plan, flat-roof, adobe home about 1839, adding a south wing shortly afterward. This L-plan home later became the Couse dining room, living room, and the eastern portion of the kitchen. In 1851, James H. Quinn, a Maryland native of Irish descent, Taos lawyer, merchant, and Mexican-American War veteran, acquired the property. Quinn remodeled the house, added the two-room east wing, and acquired a small house to the west previously occupied by Cristina Sandobal.

Executed after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War and transferred control of northern Mexico, including Taos, to the United States, Quinn's alterations employed design details imported from the eastern United States and utilized milled lumber and manufactured materials such as sash windows and paneled wood doors. The east wing featured two rooms separated by a central entry on the south wall and a carved wood fireplace surround and mantel imported from the eastern United States. Quinn also

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<sup>534</sup> R. M. Schindler Papers, Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California-Santa Barbara, Box 40-41, 44, Card-file-box 34-35, Box 33d, Folder 7.

<sup>535</sup> Fenn, *The Beat of the Drum and the Whoop of the Dance*, 244.

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introduced a shed-roof, wood-frame *portal* (porch) with chamfered square posts extending along the south and east walls of the home.

After Quinn's death in December 1856, ownership transferred to Taos parish priest Padre Gabriel Ussel in 1862. From 1865 through 1867, members of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (more widely known as the Christian Brothers or De La Salle Brothers) operated a school for boys on the property. The Juan de Luna family chapel, acquired by the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1863, was also utilized by the school. Ussel was transferred to Walsenburg, Colorado, in 1876, and the house sold to George Smith, a Civil War veteran and carpenter. When Smith died in 1907, the house was left to his housekeeper, Filomena Martinez, who sold it to E.I. and Virginia Couse in 1909.<sup>536</sup>

Immediately after purchasing the property, E.I. Couse added an artist's studio, incorporating portions of the south wing and expanding it to the south and east. In use by July 1909, the studio addition featured a 20' ceiling and a large, north facing, multi-light shingle glass window. The existing *portal* was extended to wrap around the studio, with peeled logs supporting the shed roof. The Couse family continued to expand the home periodically. In 1911, damaging rains prompted the Couses to repair the home's flat roof the following summer. When repairing the roof, they added shaped parapets inspired by those found on missions built in the southwestern United States by Spanish colonizers. At the same time, the home's small kitchen was expanded to the west.

An adobe entrance arcade was added at the end of the east wing in 1913.<sup>537</sup> A 1909 photograph documents the area prior to its construction.<sup>538</sup> Featuring a flagstone floor, adobe *banco* (built-in bench), and views of Virginia Couse's garden and the mountains beyond, the arcade was the first space visitors to the Couse home encountered and a frequent gathering place for the Taos Society of Artists. In 1914, a south-facing, adobe and wood-frame automobile garage was built against the studio's west wall.<sup>539</sup> Electric lights were introduced, a bathroom added to the east wing and modern plumbing added to the kitchen after the Couses became full-time residents in 1928. In 1929, a flat-roof sunroom with coal-burning stove, kitchenette, and bathroom was added to the south end of the studio.<sup>540</sup>

In 1931 a west wing was added off the kitchen expansion and a mudroom added to the kitchen's south wall to accommodate Kibbey Couse and his family. The new residential wing incorporated the Sandobal house acquired by Quinn in the 1850s. Prior to 1931, E.I. Couse used the small house as workshop where he manufactured his picture frames.<sup>541</sup> A historic photograph from 1930 documents the addition under construction.<sup>542</sup>

Around the same time, Kibbey Couse converted the sunroom and garage into a chemistry laboratory and a machine shop, respectively, and E.I. Couse moved his frame-making tools and materials to the machine shop.

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<sup>536</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 316. The Christian Brothers operating the school were headquartered in France, as opposed to the Congregation of Christian Brothers, also commonly known as the Christian Brothers but based in Ireland.

<sup>537</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 320.

<sup>538</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item5027\_GP\_1909\_1\_68, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17436/rec/1>.

<sup>539</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 324.

<sup>540</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 326-27.

<sup>541</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 333.

<sup>542</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2924\_1930\_1\_2, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15753/rec/1>.

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About 1935, Kibbey built a carport extension, open to the south, at the south end of the machine shop, and a new, east-facing, flat-roof adobe garage against the south wall of the sunroom/laboratory.<sup>543</sup>

In its final existing form, the Couse House and Studio is roughly T-shaped in plan, extending approximately 108' along its east/west axis and 141' along its north/south axis. The pre-1931 sections of the house form an L oriented to the south and east and opening onto Virginia Couse's extensive gardens. The residential section built for use by Kibbey Couse and his family in 1931, forms the west arm of the T facing south and opening onto the west courtyard. The house is one-story in height, constructed mostly of adobe brick, and sheltered by a variety of flat roofs, many with mission-inspired shaped parapets introduced by the Couse family. The exterior walls are coated with plaster or stucco. The flat roofs are covered with non-historic elastomeric material. There appears to be no foundation under the oldest sections of the house; stone and concrete foundations are evident in later sections built by the Couse family. All of the windows are historic and include a number of large shingle-glass windows designed to maximize natural lighting within studio and workshop spaces. Most windows are six-over-six windows with wood sills, trim, and historic wood shutters. Non-historic storm windows have been added to most windows. Exterior and interior doors are historic unless indicated otherwise. A variety of historic exterior doors are present including older rustic board-and-batten doors and four-panel doors, later five-panel doors, and board-and-batten doors with machine carved middle rails dating to the remodeling efforts undertaken in the early 1930s. Historic exterior paint colors, identified via paint analysis, have been maintained.

#### *North Side*

Unlike other buildings along the 100 block of Kit Carson Road, the Couse House and Studio is set back deeply from the road, sitting about 70' from the existing sidewalk. The primary entry point is through a rustic arched wood gate at home's east end. "COUSE | STUDIO" is carved in the north side of the gate, which features rustic strap hinges. A shaped parapet with inset bell marks the gate's location. West of the gate, on the north side of the east wing, a projecting adobe porch shelters a secondary entrance. The porch and entry were added ca. 1931 based on design and materials. A ca. 1920 historic photograph documents that the north wall was previously unfenestrated.<sup>544</sup> The porch's flat roof features a shaped parapet with projecting *vigas* and is supported by peeled log posts. Flagstones form the porch floor. A small adobe lean-to sits at the porch's west side. A pair of six-light awning windows sit above the lean-to. A board-and-batten wood door with machine carved middle rail, built-in mail slot, and rustic wood lintel leads from the porch interior to the east room of the east wing. Mature lilac bushes hide much of the porch structure from public view.

#### *East Side*

On the east side, the arcade's shed roof overhangs to the east and features thick, roughly carved exposed rafter tails. Two large arched openings spring from a low knee wall on the arcade's east side and provide views of the garden. During Couse's lifetime, the existing adobe knee walls were added to separate the arcade from the garden and a corner seat added at the southeast corner. An undated photograph of E.I. Couse seated at this location documents these features and the arcade's flagstone floor.<sup>545</sup> Within the arcade, the east wall east wing holds a six-over-six wood window covered by a non-historic storm window. Historic shutters, built from diagonally-oriented wood planks and painted "Couse blue," flank the window. Couse and Sharp chose to paint

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<sup>543</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 332.

<sup>544</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p6\_item4b\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12206/rec/1>.

<sup>545</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p19\_item1\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12394/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item7846\_ND\_17\_13, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20442/rec/1>.

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the wood doors and trim of their respective homes and studios in similar, but distinctly different, shades of light blue, referred to today as “Couse blue” and “Sharp blue” by the Couse Foundation. Below the window, the historic plastered *banco* features inset Tesuque Pueblo ceramic tiles. The window, shutters, and *banco* are documented in undated historic photos depicting E.I. and Virginia Couse.<sup>546</sup>

The arcade directly connects to the shed-roof *portal* that stretches along the south wall. Chamfered wood posts support a frieze beam and the composition shingle roof. The central entrance on the south wall of the east wing was converted to a window when a small kitchenette was added to accommodate a caretaker after 1937. The wood door frame remains intact. A pair of six-light casement windows sit at the top of the opening and a wood panel fills the remainder of the opening. Six-over-six wood windows and paneled wood shutters flank the former entry.

At the west end of the south wall, a pair of double wood doors lead from the *portal* into the Couse dining room. The rustic nine-light board-and-batten wood doors feature historic rustic iron hardware and are covered by a pair of wood screen doors. An undated historic photo taken prior to remodeling of the roof in 1912 indicates that the doors were installed by the Couse family and replaced an earlier six-over-six window.<sup>547</sup> The photograph also documents the original *portal* roof design, which featured no overhang and arched wood cresting atop the existing frieze beams. Another historic photo, taken after 1912, documents the existing shaped parapets, doors, windows and shutters, and the former entry.<sup>548</sup>

The *portal* was modified by the Couse family to create a southeast-facing porch outside the dining room doors. The previously mentioned photograph taken after 1912 documents the remodel.<sup>549</sup> In the photograph, steps lead from the east and south to an elevated platform under the new angled porch roof. A simple wood railing extends between the chamfered posts at the corners of the elevated platform. A 1913 historic photograph depicts E.I. Couse sitting on the railing, enjoying the view of the garden.<sup>550</sup> The steps, platform, wood railing, and porch roof remain intact.

The *portal* continues south along the east wall of the south wing. A rustic, nine-light board-and-batten door and wood screen door provide access from the east *portal* to the Couse living room, or *sala*. An arched niche in the east wall, north of the door, was added by the Couse family about 1913 and is documented in historic photographs.<sup>551</sup> A metal medallion depicting the Italian Renaissance artist Tiziano Vecellio, better known as Titian, sits between the niche and the door.

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<sup>546</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC7\_p11\_item1\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12509/rec/1>;

Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item7861\_ND\_17\_29, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20469/rec/1>.

<sup>547</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p30\_item2\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12350/rec/1>.

<sup>548</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p32\_item1a\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12333/rec/1>.

<sup>549</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p32\_item1a\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12333/rec/1>.

<sup>550</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item9032\_1913\_3\_14, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/21442/rec/1>.

<sup>551</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item5423\_ND, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/18016/rec/1>.

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South of the *sala* door, an eighteen-light window marks the north end of E.I. Couse's studio. The flat roof over the Couse *sala* features a shaped parapet with an inset niche of the same design as the niche found on the wall below. A small statue of the Virgin Mary is currently displayed in the niche. E.I. and Virginia Couse displayed similar religious statuary in both niches during their lifetime.<sup>552</sup>

South of the *sala* is the Couse studio. L-shaped in plan, the studio is sheltered by a complex composition shingle roof composed of shed and hipped sections. The shed-roof section to the north shelters a double-height volume, created by Couse at the south end of Pedro Luna's 1839 south wing. The shed roof form allowed for installation of a very large north-facing window that floods the studio interior with natural light. The shingle-glass window is divided into fifteen vertical sections by wood muntins. The remainder of the roof is essentially hipped in form. An adobe chimney rises from the roof's southeast corner.

A shed-roof *portal* wraps around the studio. Peeled log posts sit on natural stone piers and support the composition shingle roof. Within the *portal*, the floor is wood and historic wood *bancos* are found along the studio wall. A door leads from the *portal* to the studio interior, and a six-over-six window faces east. A historic photograph of E.I. Couse sitting on the *portal* shortly after the studio's completion document the studio's existing roof form, door, window, *bancos*, and *portal* details.<sup>553</sup> A historic photograph of Kibbey Couse taken at the same time documents that the *portal* and *bancos* originally wrapped around the full extent of the studio's south wall.<sup>554</sup> The western half of the *portal* was enclosed, presumably when the Couse sunroom was added to the south end of the *portal* in 1929. The east wall of this interstitial space is clad with horizontal wood siding and a wood door leads from the *portal* to the interior space. The door features decorative artwork created by Lucille Couse depicting what appears to be a Pueblo kachina figure. A historic wood screen door with spindle work covers the door. A screen door of the same design is depicted in a historic photograph of Virginia Couse, Ben Lujan, and children from the Taos Pueblo community taken in a different area of the property.<sup>555</sup>

To the south is the one-story sunroom addition with basement, built in 1929 and later used by Kibbey Couse as a laboratory. Constructed of concrete block stuccoed to mimic the appearance of adobe, the rectangular-plan addition is sheltered by a parapeted flat roof. A group of seven one-over-one windows stretches across the sunroom's east wall.

#### *South Side*

The one-story rectangular-plan ca. 1935 adobe garage is built against the sunroom's south wall. The garage is not documented in a 1933 photograph of the property taken from the southeast, but is understood to have been built before Kibbey Couse and his family left Taos in 1937.<sup>556</sup> The ground slopes away in this area and the garage sits lower than the sunroom, covering the lower portion of a group of four one-over-one windows on the

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<sup>552</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item7847\_ND\_17\_14, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20844/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DC7\_p12\_item2\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12431/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item5423\_ND, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/18016/rec/1>.

<sup>553</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p26\_item1\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12264/rec/1>.

<sup>554</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item5006\_GP\_1909\_1\_47, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17806/rec/1>.

<sup>555</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item3669\_GP\_1909\_6\_109, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17333/rec/1>.

<sup>556</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2945\_1933\_1\_5, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15481/rec/1>.

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sunroom's south wall. The garage roof is flat with parapets. *Vigas* protrude from the north and south exterior walls and a *canal* extends from the parapet on the south side. The entry is on the east side, through rustic wood double doors with a rustic wood lintel. An adobe bollard sits at the southeast corner; stone steps lead from the garage level to the garden and the studio *portal* above. The garage's south side is unfenestrated; a pair of four-light casement windows with rustic wood lintels sits on the garage's west wall.

#### *West Side*

North of the ca. 1935 garage is the rectangular wood-frame ca. 1935 carport extension, built against the sunroom's west wall and the south wall of the 1914 garage/machine shop. Historic photographs taken in 1933 document the garage/machine shop prior to construction of the carport.<sup>557</sup> The carport roof is flat with no parapet. Historically open at its south end, the carport was recently enclosed. The non-historic stuccoed wood-frame south wall holds wood double doors. The portion of the sunroom's west wall that remains visible from the exterior holds a one-over-one window, one of a group of four windows. The remaining three windows are intact within the carport interior, along with a pair of six-light casement windows to the north. The carport's west wall holds a large shingle-glass window. The window is divided into seven sections by vertical muntins. Above the window, lumber roof joists extend from the wall mimicking the appearance of *vigas*.

To the north is the 1914 Couse garage, converted to house Kibbey Couse's machine shop in 1931. Two undated photographs document the garage's south wall about 1914.<sup>558</sup> The photographs depict a stuccoed building with a shaped parapet. The garage door opening is on the east side of the south wall; a window covered by a wood panel sits to the west. An adobe wing wall, no longer extant, extended west from the garage's southwest corner. A door in the wall provides access to the property from Quesnel Road. A later photograph taken in 1930 documents removal of the shaped parapet and wing wall prior to that date.<sup>559</sup> The garage/machine shop's south wall remains intact within the ca. 1935 carport extension and holds a historic sliding wood door and infilled window opening.

The garage/machine shop's west wall holds two large fifteen-by-fifteen slider windows. The north wall is angled at the northwest corner and holds a large shingle-glass window. The window is divided into seven sections by vertical muntins. East of the window, a wide beadboard door provides access between the garage/machine shop and the west *portal*.

Extending along the west wall of the Couse *sala*, the west *portal* sits between the north wall of the garage/machine shop and the ca. 1931 mudroom. The *portal*'s shed roof features unpeeled log rafters and is supported by peeled log posts. The floor inside the *portal* is non-historic smooth cut stone. Within the *portal*, the west wall of the Couse *sala* holds a four-panel wood door covered by a wood screen door and a nine-light fixed window flanked by six-light casement windows.

Within the west *portal*, the south wall of the mudroom holds a four-light board-and-batten wood door flanked

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<sup>557</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2942\_1933\_1\_2, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15454/rec/1>.

Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2944\_1933\_1\_4, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15667/rec/1>.

<sup>558</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item3104\_ND\_11\_112, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15582/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item3095\_ND\_11\_103, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15660/rec/1>.

<sup>559</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2936\_1930\_1\_1, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/16118/rec/1>.

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by four-light casement windows. The west wall of the mudroom holds a second door of the same design covered by a wood screen door to the north and a window covered by a pair of four-light historic wood storm windows to the south. North of the service porch, the west wall of the 1912 kitchen addition holds a group of three six-light casement windows, covered by a historic window screen hinged at the top. According to granddaughter Virginia Couse, due to the thickness of the adobe wall, “The space between the window on the inside and a screen on the outside provided a wide, open air, bug-free cooling cupboard.”<sup>560</sup>

Extending west from the kitchen is the west residential addition, built for use by the Kibbey Couse family in 1931. The addition’s south side includes a sunken playhouse that extends from the south wall. Inspired by Taos Pueblo buildings, the child-sized house features adobe walls, a flat roof, shaped parapet, adobe chimney, and exposed *vigas*. A small wood door on its south wall provides access to the interior from the west courtyard. A six-light window sits adjacent to the west is decorated with wood details honoring the children’s pet lamb. Steps leading to the rooftop play area and a copper playground slide are incorporated along the west wall. The rooftop play area is sheltered by a flat roof with exposed *vigas*. A window within the play area looks into the west wing. A *horno*, a traditional Pueblo outdoor oven, sits against the east wall of the playhouse.

East of the playhouse, a six-light wood door with wood screen door provides access to the west wing’s living room. A pair of six-light wood windows covered by historic wood storm windows sits west of the door. West of the playhouse, a wood door with wood screen door provides access to the west wing’s bedroom. A group of three eight-light casement windows sit adjacent to the door. A single rustic wood lintel extends across the windows and the door. The addition’s west wall is shared with the present-day Lunder Research Center. The east end of the addition’s north wall is marked by a large eighteen-light window. *Vigas* protrude from the wall above the window. West of the window is a small rectangular screened opening with interior wood shutter. The exterior face of the shutter is decorated with a Pueblo-inspired bird motif. A pair of four-light wood windows with wood beam lintel and board sill sits to the west. At the west end of the wall is a secondary entrance with historic wood door. The door is sheltered by an overhanging portion of the Lunder Research Center. The edge of the overhang is marked by a carved wood beam and carved corbel.

#### *Interior*

The Couse House and Studio retains the vast majority of its historic interior finishes, including white plastered interior walls and tongue-and-groove wood flooring installed by the Couse family over the original dirt floors. The studio retains its beige wall color and historic paint colors have been maintained throughout the home and studio. The studio, dining room, and *sala* remain as furnished by E.I. and Virginia Couse, and much of the lighting is historic, including the hanging light fixture over the dining room table. Large *vigas* are exposed in the dining room, *sala*, and 1839 section of the kitchen, sawn roof beams are exposed in the east wing. Wood planks laid perpendicular on top of the *vigas* and beams form the interior ceiling in these spaces. The 1912 kitchen expansion and 1931 west residential wing feature exposed *vigas* and wood plank ceilings as well. The dimensional lumber roof structure is exposed in the studio, sunroom/laboratory, garage/machine shop, and carport. Two interior doors in the east wing feature wood designs created by Lucille Couse.

Historic fireplaces are found throughout the home—in the east wing, dining room, *sala*, studio, west wing living room, and children’s playroom. With one exception, all are adobe corner fireplaces. Two fireplaces exist in the east wing: a mid-nineteenth century Euro-American fireplace installed by owner James Quinn when he built the east wing in the 1850s, and an adobe corner fireplace installed by the Couses. The corner fireplace features the

<sup>560</sup> Leavitt, *Eanger Irving Couse: The Life and Times*, 321.



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same Tesuque Pueblo ceramic tiles used to decorate the arcade *banco* and is stepped to allow for the display of art and artifacts. The dining room's fireplace features flanking *bancos* and a niche displaying a carved *santo*. A historic photograph of the fireplace indicates that the upper portion of the fireplace was modified and the niche added by the Couses at some point.<sup>561</sup> The fireplace in the *sala* follows the same design as the dining room fireplace with its own niche displaying a carved *santo*. Built-in wood benches designed and installed by the Couses flank the *sala* fireplace. Historic photographs depicting E.I. Couse around 1909 document the fireplace and benches and indicate that the upper portion of the *sala* fireplace was also modified to create a display niche.<sup>562</sup> The fireplace in the west wing's living room incorporates recessed lighting and a Pueblo ceramic bowl inset above the firebox. The studio fireplace includes flanking *bancos* and a curved hearth.

The interior of E.I. Couse's studio appears as it did when the artist died in 1936. Couse's easels, storage racks, and furniture remain in place. The photography darkroom in the studio's northwest corner, and its contents are intact to their documented appearance in 1909.<sup>563</sup> Paintings, artifacts, and items from Couse's collection of Pueblo pottery are displayed as they were during his lifetime. In the same manner, the interiors of the sunroom/laboratory and garage/machine shop remain as they were when he ended his work at the site in 1937, with his books, papers, equipment, tools, and machines preserved in the same position.<sup>564</sup>

#### *Alterations*

The Couse House and Studio retains exceptional integrity to the period when E.I. Couse occupied the home and pursued his art career in the attached studio. Very few alterations have been made to the Couse Home and Studio after E.I. Couse's death in 1936 and are largely limited to minor alterations made to the east wing to accommodate use by a caretaker, principally the addition of a small central kitchenette on the wing's south side, and the floors in the east wing have been carpeted. In the 1960s, the exterior walls and the parapets, which had lost some of their fine details due to erosion, received a hard stucco coating. The Couses originally covered the studio and *portal* roofs with Oregon cedar shingles. After the wood shingles reached the end of their life cycle, they were replaced with asphalt shingles and later composition shingles. Elastomeric material has been installed at the flat roofs in recent years to prevent water intrusion. Non-historic compatibly-designed galvanized steel half-round gutters were installed in select locations to help drain water from the roofs.

More recent alterations were undertaken to preserve the building or allow for its continued occupation by Couse descendants. The ceiling in the dining room and *sala* originally consisted of tightly packed *cedros* (split cedar) laid atop the existing *vigas* and covered with mud to form the roof. The *cedros* were removed in 1981 when the dirt roof was removed to lessen the load on the sagging *vigas*. The original 1928 plumbing and electrical systems have been selectively upgraded, and a small number of modern upgrades made to the kitchen and west wing, which continue to be occupied by Virginia Couse Leavitt. These upgrades are largely limited to installation of modern appliances in the kitchen and mudroom. Most recently, the south end of the carport extension was enclosed and a wood double door installed to protect the interior from the elements and improve security. The enclosure was sympathetically designed to avoid adverse impacts the historic integrity of the site.

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<sup>561</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item7838\_ND\_17\_4, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20463/rec/1>.

<sup>562</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item7854\_ND\_17\_22, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20441/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item5023\_GP\_1909\_1\_64, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17693/rec/1>.

<sup>563</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item5019\_GP\_1909\_1\_60, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17714/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item5022\_GP\_1909\_1\_63, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17740/rec/1>.

<sup>564</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2941\_1933\_1\_1, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15537/rec/1>.

### Well House, contributing building, ca. 1920s

The rectangular one-story Well House sits within the west courtyard and is documented in the 1929 Sanborn map of Taos. The well house is sheltered by a composition shingle hip roof with exposed rafter tails. A five-panel wood door on the east side allows access to the interior. The south, west, and north walls are unfenestrated. Built during E.I. Couse's lifetime and retaining excellent integrity to the period of significance with no apparent alterations, the building contributes to the significance of the property.

### Lower Shop, non-contributing building, 1933

After returning to Taos to care for E.I. Couse after the death of Virginia, Kibbey Couse embarked on a program of new construction and building rehabilitation to adapt the property to house his young family and business activities. This effort included construction of a large building in 1933, the Lower Shop, to serve as a factory for manufacturing mobile machine shops. A number of 1933 photographs document the building as it neared completion.<sup>565</sup> The photographs depict a large, flat-roof, irregular-plan adobe building facing Quesnel Road. As documented, the building consisted of two wings—a large, roughly rectangular open-plan manufacturing wing with large shingle-glass windows divided by vertical muntins on the west side and a smaller east wing.

Upon E.I. Couse's death in 1936, Kibbey chose to return to the East Coast and establish a mobile machine shop manufacturing facility in New Jersey. The Lower Shop fell vacant and slowly deteriorated over time. In 1982, it was converted for use as artist studios. Six of the seven studio spaces are currently vacant; the large studio at the building's east wing is occupied by New Mexican painter Ed Sandoval.

Set one-story below the Couse House and Studio on the property's southeast slope, the Lower Shop's parapeted flat gravel roof was historically used for parking. Solar panels installed about 2021 sit at the roof's south end. The parapet on the south side includes an arched projection with small alcove where the west and east wings meet. Portions of the stone foundation walls are visible at the west and east sides below the adobe walls.

The west wall of the Lower Shops is divided into six studio bays. Each bay includes a large non-historic wood window divided vertically by muntins and a non-historic wood entrance door with two large vertical lights. Recessed lighting sits above the entrances.<sup>566</sup> The shop's west wing tapers to a blunt point at the south end. An adobe wing wall, no longer extant, historically projected from the southwest corner. A large garage door opening sits on the west wing's angled east wall. The opening holds a sliding wood door with a decorative design similar to those created by Lucille Couse for the Couse House and Studio. East of the door is the south wall of the east wing, which holds a large shingle-glass wood window and garage door opening sheltered by a pent roof supported by exposed *vigas*. A historic, unusually-shaped adobe wing wall projects south from the southeast corner. An adobe *banco* sits below the window. The garage door opening has been infilled with a non-historic highly decorated wood door presumably designed by artist Ed Sandoval. The east wall holds a wood

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<sup>565</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item2942\_1933\_1\_2, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15454/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item2943\_1933\_1\_3, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15667/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item2945\_1933\_1\_5, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15481/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item2943\_1933\_1\_3, <https://nmhc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/15452/rec/1>.

<sup>566</sup> The recessed lighting is in keeping with the recessed lighting found on the fireplace in the Kibbey Couse family living quarters.

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side entrance door; a six-light wood window sits adjacent to the north.

#### *Alterations*

Rehabilitation of the Lower Shop in 1982 to convert it for use as artist studios was completed thoughtfully, with an intention to preserve historic material and features while accommodating a new use and meeting applicable building code requirements. The most significant alterations were to the west side and involved removal of the historic shingle-glass windows and installation of the existing door and window assemblies. The new assemblies maintained the general design and feel of the historic windows. Electrical and plumbing systems were upgraded and a new gravel roof installed. The shop interior was subdivided into seven rental studios and Saltillo tile floors installed. Built solely for use as part of Kibbey Couse's business activities in 1933, the Lower Shop was not historically associated with E.I. Couse or Joseph Sharp and is considered non-contributing due to the extent of the alterations to the west side outside the period of significance.

#### **Sharp House-Mission Gallery-Lunder Research Center, non-contributing building, ca. 1840s-1980s**

Joseph Sharp purchased an existing adobe house and orchard west of the Juan de Luna family chapel in August 1908. Believed to have been built during the 1840s, the building reportedly housed a dance hall for a time. Early historic photographs of the chapel/first Sharp studio provide a glimpse of the narrow one-story, flat-roof adobe building with shaped parapet facing Kit Carson Road, prior to and after construction of a *portal* along the building's east side in 1918.<sup>567</sup>

The Sharp House-Mission Gallery-Lunder Research Center stands facing north on Kit Carson Road. The building's central projecting block with stepped parapet and large twelve-light window, inset at an angle, marks the extent of the Sharp house façade. The inset pedestrian door east of the window marks the location of the Sharp *portal*. Completed by the Rosequists, the additions to the east and west blend in with existing adobe buildings along Kit Carson Road, while incorporating commercial features such as large display windows. The building displays common design details found on the Couse House and Studio and nearby adobe buildings including rustic wood lintels, stepped massing and parapets, multi-light wood windows, wood beam lintels, and *canales*. Distinctly modern features introduced by the Rosequists include ribbon windows at the north side of the east and west additions. The primary entry is located on the west addition and angled to face north, perhaps as an homage to the angled studio window found at Sharp's first studio directly to the east.

As rehabilitated in 2022, the south (rear) side of building does not draw attention to itself and is compatible in design and details with the historic buildings present at the site. A sunken shed-roof *portal* with carved wood posts topped by *zapatas* stretches across most of the rear wall, sheltering a rear entrance. Planting beds at the west and east ends of the *portal* partially screen the building from view. In the narrow space between the Lunder Research Center and the 1931 addition to the Couse House, non-historic true divided-light wood windows with wood beam lintels complement the historic details of the Couse addition. The Sharp House-Mission Gallery-Lunder Research Center is considered non-contributing due to a loss of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to the period of Joseph Sharp's productive work life.

#### **Second Sharp Studio, contributing building, ca. 1860-1915**

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<sup>567</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p3\_item3\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12249/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DTaos6\_p19\_item1\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/10721/rec/1>.

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Joseph Sharp outgrew his first studio in the Juan de Luna family chapel, and in 1915 expanded a small one-story ca. 1860 dwelling on his property, northwest of his residence, for use as a new studio space. The remodeled L-plan studio building includes a two-story studio space with interior loft and large north-facing shingle-glass window and a one-story section to the east, converted for use as an attached garage sometime after 1916.<sup>568</sup> All windows and doors are historic, but of various ages. The two-over-two windows found on the south and north sides appear to have been part of the original ca. 1860 house, with the larger multi-light and shingle-glass windows marking the 1915 expansion. The south side of the building mimics features of Taos Pueblo buildings and appears as if purposely constructed to serve as a background for Sharp's paintings. The west side features log window trim and lintels; simple wood trim boards painted "Sharp blue" surround the doors and windows elsewhere. The distinctive blue color that the artist used to paint the windows and doors throughout the Sharp compound is well documented in several of his paintings.<sup>569</sup>

Constructed of adobe with a flat, parapeted roof, Sharp's second studio stands facing east toward the Couse House and Studio. The primary entrance on the east side of the two-story studio holds a pair of board-and-batten wood doors painted "Sharp blue." A large fifteen-light wood window sits north of the doors. A small four-light window sits above the doors and window, near the top of the wall. A conical adobe buttresses is found at the northeast corner. South of the entry is a secondary entry on the north wall of the attached garage, holding a four-light door. The garage's large board-and-batten wood double doors on the east side are painted "Sharp blue" and feature decorative diamond-shaped perforations. The doors are sheltered by a pent roof with exposed lumber rafters. Above the one-story garage, a pair of six-light windows with a rustic wood lintel look out from the interior loft space. A rustic wood ladder leans against the studio wall in front of the window, reaching from the garage roof to the studio roof. A similar ladder in the same position is visible in the background of a historic photograph of artist model Ben Lujan taken in 1916.<sup>570</sup>

The south wall of the garage holds a two-over-two window with a small single-light square window to the west. All rectangular windows and doors on the south side are framed by vertical logs, with log lintels and sawn board sills. The studio wall to the west holds a two-over-two window and a small unframed round window on the first floor. A stepped buttress is found at the southwest corner. At the second story, a door leading to the interior loft is flanked by a pair of windows to the east and a single window to the west. The door and windows share a log lintel, and west of this grouping is a single in-filled window opening of the same design. *Vigas* protrude from the parapet at the top of the two-story studio wall. In a historic photograph, likely taken about 1916, Sharp is depicted painting Taos Pueblo models posing at this side of the building.<sup>571</sup> In the photograph, a rustic wood ladder leans against the building, leading to the second-floor door. The existing round window and stepped buttress are visible, as is the existing two-over-two window to the east, framed by unpeeled logs that have now lost their bark.<sup>572</sup>

The west side holds a two-over-two window to the south and a pair of twelve-light windows to the north. At the

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<sup>568</sup> A 1916 photograph of the building's east side does not show the garage doors. Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item110\_1916\_3\_44, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/13387/rec/1>.

<sup>569</sup> See Minckler, *In Poetic Silence*, 64-76.

<sup>570</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item110\_1916\_3\_44, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/13387/rec/1>.

<sup>571</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DTaos4\_p8\_item1b\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/10967/rec/1>.

<sup>572</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item103\_1916\_3\_37, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/14542/rec/1>.

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north side, the studio wall holds a very large shingle-glass window, angled to face due north. The window is sheltered by a pent roof with exposed lumber rafters. The ends of the rafters are hidden from view by non-historic galvanized steel gutters.

#### *Interior*

Within the studio interior, exposed round logs support the roof and are overlaid with sawn ceiling boards. A loft occupies the south end of the studio. Constructed of round logs and heavy timbers, the loft is designed to keep the first floor clear of vertical support posts. A wood ladder against the west wall provide access to the loft. Under the loft, an adobe corner fireplace sits in the southwest corner. The two-story volume at the studio's north end remains open to the ceiling. A four-panel wood door leads to the converted garage space. The floors are wood and the plaster walls painted a soft beige.

#### *Alterations*

The building exterior received a stucco coating in the 1960s. The stucco was later removed from the lower walls, as its weight was destabilizing the structure. The parapets remain covered with stucco to counteract deterioration by rain and melting snow. In 1995, the building was repaired, the plumbing, heating, and electricity upgraded, and the interior of the attached garage remodeled to house a kitchen and bathroom. For a time, the building was used as an artist residence and studio. In the mid-2010s, the building underwent an extensive restoration to house a permanent interpretive exhibition dedicated to the life and work of Sharp and reopened to the public in June 2017. During the restoration non-historic lighting was added to illuminate the exhibits and HVAC systems upgraded.

#### **Little Egypt Outhouse, contributing building, ca. 1915**

An adobe outhouse dubbed "Little Egypt" by Joseph Sharp, reportedly in reference to its resemblance to an Egyptian mastaba, or burial tomb, stands northeast of Sharp's second studio.<sup>573</sup> Remodeled around the time Sharp completed work on his second studio, purportedly to provide more attractive facilities for visiting patrons and art collectors, the rectangular-plan outhouse faces east and features a flat-roof with Mission Revival style shaped parapet.<sup>574</sup> The flat roof overhangs on the north side and features both log and lumber rafters. Entry is through a historic four-panel door set in the battered east wall and painted "Sharp blue." The south and north walls hold a small historic window; the west wall is unfenestrated. Simple wood trim boards painted "Sharp blue" surround the window and door. No longer functional, the outhouse interior has been preserved as it appeared during Sharp's lifetime.

#### *Alterations*

No significant alterations have been made to the outhouse after Sharp left Taos in 1952.

#### **Landscape**

The landscape within the Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios property comprises the circular Couse entrance drive, accessed from Kit Carson Road via a decorative wood gate with

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<sup>573</sup> According to the Couse Foundation, Sharp extensively remodeled the existing outhouse on his property after returning from a trip abroad in 1914 that included a visit to Egypt. Couse-Sharp Historic Site, "Studios/Sharp 2," <https://couse-sharp.org/studios-sharp2>.

<sup>574</sup> Conversation with Davison Koenig, Executive Director & Curator, Couse-Sharp Historic Site, June 12, 2023.

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stone wing walls installed in 1918; Virginia Walker Couse's extensive terraced garden on the property's east side and remnants of an irrigation system developed for the garden; an interior walled courtyard at the west side of the Couse residence; the Sharp gardens west of the walled courtyard; and an internal circulation system of gravel drives and parking areas. A teepee of the type occupied by indigenous peoples of the Great Plains stands east of Sharp's second studio. Although the extant teepee is contemporary, Sharp historically kept a teepee erected onsite to facilitate his painting, which often depicted members of northern tribes. A historic photograph from 1916 documents Taos Pueblo member Ben Lujan with a horse in front of Sharp's teepee modeling for E.I. Couse.<sup>575</sup> "Rosie," the last known example of the Couse Mobile Machine Shop Aviation Model, was acquired by The Couse Foundation in 2022 and is parked outside the ca. 1935 carport entrance. The Couse garden is partially fenced along Kit Carson and Quesnel roads by natural wood post and woven wire fencing; traditional wood coyote fencing runs along the western property line.

In 1917, the Couses acquired the portion of Sharp's property east of the Luna Chapel and the two families worked together to improve the landscape along Kit Carson Road. In 1918 the area was leveled to establish a lawn and garden adjacent to Sharp's first studio and house, and establish a formal entrance to the Couse property from Kit Carson Road.

The historic gate installed by the Couses along Kit Carson Road in 1918 is depicted in several historic photographs. In one image, used by the family as a Christmas card in the 1920s, Virginia and E.I. Couse peer over the double swinging gate in a humorous pose.<sup>576</sup> The photograph documents the wood gate's existing form, lightning bolt decorative details, and iron strap hinges and hardware. The only apparent change to the gate is the painting over of E.I. Couse's name, which stretched across the leaves of the gate. A historic photograph documents the curved stone wing walls from which the gates hang, prior to their installation.<sup>577</sup> The west wall remains unchanged, while some modifications have been made to the east wall, presumably to accommodate development of Kit Carson Road.

The gateway leads to a gravel drive encircling a flagstone area marked by a rustic stone birdbath created from a salvaged millstone. The flagstone circle and birdbath were removed in the 1950s and restored in 1997 based on historic photographs using the original stones, which had been set aside nearby.<sup>578</sup> Irises surround the flagstone circle as they did historically. Stone terracing established by the Couses and documented in historic photographs of the area remain intact at the entrance to the Juan de Luna Family Chapel-Sharp Studio.<sup>579</sup> The area historically occupied by the Sharp garden is now a gravel parking area.

Southeast of the Couse House and Studio, the property falls away in a series of terraced gardens established by Virginia Couse between roughly 1909 and 1929 with the assistance of Taos Pueblo member and artist model Ben Lujan. Lujan continued to care for the garden for many years after Virginia Couse's death in late 1929.

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<sup>575</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item110\_1916\_3\_44, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/13387/rec/1>.

<sup>576</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC8\_p9\_item3\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12513/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item6646\_ND\_X6\_29, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/19407/rec/1>.

<sup>577</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item171\_1916\_3\_103, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/14158/rec/1>.

<sup>578</sup> Leavitt, "Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios," Section 7, 10; Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p7\_item2\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12245/rec/1>.

<sup>579</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll7\_DC4\_p3\_item3\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12249/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DC4\_p6\_item4b\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12206/rec/1>.

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Forced to relinquish her dream of becoming an illustrator after developing difficulties with her eyesight, Virginia Couse “turned her passion to gardening; she relinquished her pen and brushes for shovel and hoe; the soil became her canvas and flowers her colorful palette.”<sup>580</sup> Introduced to gardening as a child growing up on her parents’ ranch in Klicitat County, Washington, Virginia watched as her mother, Catherine Purvine Walker, “coaxed an abundance of vegetables and flowers from the arid landscape.”<sup>581</sup>

According to her granddaughter, Virginia Couse Leavitt, no formal plans for the garden are known to exist, and Couse transformed the property’s barren hillside into a lush garden over time, acquiring plants by mail order, exchanging seeds with friends, and gathering native plants from the surrounding mountains. At times referred to as the “Mother Garden of Taos,” Couse and Lujan provided local residents with cuttings and seeds for their own gardens and “Taos’s abundance of phlox, hollyhocks, cosmos, and poppies today is credited in part to Couse and Lujan’s work.”<sup>582</sup>

By 1920, the existing black limestone dry-stack retaining walls, black limestone pathways, and flagstone terrace with millstone birdbath and garden seat overlooking the Taos Valley were completed. A large lawn was established and flower beds developed around its perimeter. A cutting garden and vegetable and herb garden filled the lower terraces. Several historic photographs of the garden document the stone terracing, stone seating area, mown grass lawn, flowering plants, and lush vines covering the *portal* established by Virginia Couse.<sup>583</sup> An irrigation system designed and constructed by Lujan, no longer functional, brought water from the town’s acequia at Kit Carson Road to the site’s gardens. The main irrigation gate remains visible at the edge of the small parking lot on Kit Carson Road. Historic photographs document that Couse and Lujan employed flood irrigation methods in the early 1910s.<sup>584</sup>

Many of the plants in the garden, and particularly the shrubs, were planted during Virginia Couse’s lifetime. The Virginia Creeper that vines along the south *portal* was started from seedlings sent from Oregon by Virginia Couse’s sister. Original plantings established by Couse are maintained in the upper flower beds, and additions limited to varieties of flowers she was known to have grown. The beds currently include perennials such as oriental poppies, iris, peonies, day lilies, delphinium, and hollyhock, and annuals and bi-annuals such as cosmos, bachelor buttons, and nasturtium. The lower terraces currently lay fallow. In 2008, a sprinkler system was installed and in 2009 the stone garden seat was restored, both with funding assistance provided by the Los

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<sup>580</sup> Virginia Couse Leavitt, “Historic Couse Garden,” n.d., on file at the Lunder Research Center, Taos, NM.

<sup>581</sup> Leavitt, “Historic Couse Garden.”

<sup>582</sup> Kelly Koepke, “Couse-Sharp Site Connects the Past with Present,” *New Mexico Magazine*, November 2, 2022, <https://www.newmexicomagazine.org/blog/post/taos-couse-sharp-historic-site-artists/>.

<sup>583</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item7042\_1919\_12\_15, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/19586/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DC4\_p20\_item2\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12246/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DC4\_p35\_item3b\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12225/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item10003\_ND, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/22389/rec/1>; mscoll7\_DC4\_p32\_item1b\_recto, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/12215/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item9034\_1913\_3\_16, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/21464/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item9994\_ND, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/22624/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item7871\_ND\_18\_1, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/20451/rec/1>; mscoll15\_item9993\_ND, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/22438/rec/1>.

<sup>584</sup> Couse Family Photograph Collection, mscoll15\_item5007\_GP\_1909\_1\_48, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17709/rec/1>.

mscoll15\_item5021\_GP\_1909\_1\_62, <https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/couse-sharp/id/17473/rec/2>.

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Jardineros Garden Club of Taos.<sup>585</sup>

From Quesnel Road, a dirt drive leads northwest to the ca. 1935 Couse garage and ca. 1935 carport extension. To the west, historic curved stone retaining walls flank a gravel drive leading from Quesnel Road to the Lower Shop. Stone retaining walls, walkways, and steps are found on the Lower Shop's west and east sides. Further west, a gravel drive leads from Quesnel Road to gravel parking areas west of the Lower Shop and at the south side of the Sharp's second studio.

The Sharp garden historically occupied the space between the Sharp residence and the artist's second studio. After the Sharp residence was sold and redeveloped by Ivan and Rena Rosequist as the Mission Gallery, the area became a parking lot for the gallery with access from Kit Carson Road via a gravel drive. A carved wood and adobe gateway at Kit Carson Road, added by the Rosequists between 1981 and 2008, marks the drive's location. The existing wood gate was added around 2022 during rehabilitation of the Mission Gallery as the Lunder Research Center. The former gallery parking was also rehabilitated at this time. Non-historic fencing and walls were removed, flagstone walkways established, the Sharp well rebuilt within a gravel courtyard, and shrubs, trees and planting beds established at the perimeter of the courtyard. The entry courtyard at Sharp's second studio was also rehabilitated at this time. Vehicular access from Kit Carson Road to the southwest corner of the property was maintained via a rehabilitated gravel drive.

A wide flagstone pathway leads from the gravel drive to a walled courtyard garden at the west side of the Couse House and Studio. Separated from the Sharp property by adobe walls, the garden occupies the space between the 1931 Kibbey Couse family living quarters and the 1914 garage/workshop. The west courtyard wall extends south from the southwest corner of the 1931 addition. The courtyard's south wall extends from the 1914 garage to meet the west wall. A historic wood picket gate allows access from the garage area. A larger paneled wood gate sits near the southwest corner, and a non-historic gate near the northwest corner allows access from the Lunder Research Center. The courtyard interior features flagstone walkways, trailing Virginia Creeper vines, lilac bushes, and garden beds planted with a wide variety of floral species including poppies, bachelor buttons, and hollyhocks. A mature fruit tree serves as the primary focal point of the garden.

#### *Alterations*

Alterations to the historic landscape are centered in the area south of the Sharp House-Mission Gallery-Lunder Research Center, which was used as the gallery's parking lot from the 1960s through 2019, and was originally a garden area maintained by the Sharps. The rehabilitation work conducted in the early 2020s removed non-historic material and restored the residential feel in this area.

#### **HISTORIC INTEGRITY:**

The Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios retains excellent integrity to 1908-1952, the period of significance for its association with the productive work lives of artists Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp. Couse's son Kibbey and his descendants have purposely maintained the Couse home and studio as they were at the time of E.I. Couse's death in 1936. Sharp's two studio buildings have likewise been preserved as they were in 1952, when the artist left the property for the last time, with minor and thoughtfully conceived rehabilitation work undertaken in recent years to adapt the two buildings to compatible new uses. The site's historic layout and landscape is well-preserved, the vast majority of historic materials

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<sup>585</sup> Leavitt, "Historic Couse Garden."



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remain intact throughout the property, and the historic building techniques and craftsmanship employed when constructing the various buildings remain clearly evident.

Conversion of Sharp's adobe residence to a commercial art gallery in the early 1960s rendered the building non-contributing and eroded the site's integrity of design and setting. The impact of these alterations was significantly lessened when the residence-gallery and its surrounding landscape was carefully rehabilitated to house the Lunder Research Center in the early 2020s. The excellent level of integrity exhibited throughout the remainder of the site—especially those buildings most strongly associated with Couse and Sharp's artistic work—counter the impact of this non-contributing building and allow the site to fully convey its significance. The impact of the only other non-contributing building, the Lower Shop, on the site's integrity is minimal. Completed shortly before E.I. Couse's death and never used by the artist, the Lower Shop is built into the hillside below the contributing buildings. Alterations made to rehabilitate the building for a compatible use in the 1980s maintained the building's scale, form, and massing, and the vast majority of its exterior character-defining features. Replacement of the large shop windows along the west side in the 1980s to adapt the Lower Shop to a new use as artist studios, rendered the building non-contributing; however, the changes were designed to minimize the impact on the integrity of the Lower Shop and do not impact the site's ability to convey the significance associated with E.I. Couse and Joseph Sharp.

#### *Location and Setting*

The buildings associated with Couse and Sharp have not been moved and the site retains excellent integrity of location. The Couse-Sharp complex sits at the east edge of the National Register-listed Taos Downtown Historic District, and contributing buildings dating to the period of significance stand to the north, south, and west. These buildings support the site's very good integrity of setting, which is strongly enhanced by the large well-preserved parcel of pastureland adjacent to the southeast, purchased by E.I. Couse in 1923-24 to protect the picturesque view of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and surrounding natural landscape from the family's house and gardens. The pastureland has changed very little since Couse's day, and views from the site toward the Sangre de Cristo Mountains remain very close to the views enjoyed by Couse and Sharp. Dirt roads when Couse and Sharp arrived in Taos in the early 1900s, Kit Carson and Quesnel Roads have since been improved, but maintain their historic alignment and character. Historic or compatibly-designed low-scale adobe buildings continue to line Kit Carson Road and Quesnel Road remains a narrow access road with a strong residential feel.

Within the nomination boundary, the historic landscape surrounding the buildings is well-preserved and the setting within which the buildings stand remains very close to what it was when Couse and Sharp occupied the site. No new buildings have been introduced outside the period of significance and Virginia Couse's extensive gardens have been carefully maintained since her death in 1929. Historic landscape features such as the Couse entrance gate at Kit Carson Road, stone retaining and flagstone walks found throughout the site, adobe walls surrounding the Couse's west garden, and small-scale features installed by the Couse's, such as the birdbaths fashioned from salvaged millstones, and have been preserved. The circular drive and garden outside the main entrance to the Couse house was restored based on historic photographs. The impact of the non-historic gravel parking area west of the circular drive is minimal and mitigated by the use of compatible materials and the installation of garden plantings at its perimeter.

The Couse well house and Sharp's Little Egypt outhouse both exhibit excellent integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and contribute to the setting of the site's principal contributing buildings—the Couse house and studio and Sharp's two studio buildings.

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The setting is further enhanced by the presence of a replica Great Plains tipi erected outside Sharp's second studio, a practice that Sharp established and continued throughout his productive work life. Alterations made to the landscape in the early 1960s and afterward to accommodate conversion of Sharp's adobe residence to a commercial art gallery were mitigated when the residence-gallery was carefully rehabilitated to house the Lunder Research Center in the early 2020s. During the rehabilitation, non-historic landscape features were removed and new plantings installed that restored a sense of the gardens that historically surrounded Sharp's house and second studio. The installation of a Couse Mobile Machine Shop near the workshop spaces where Kibbey Couse developed the vehicle in the early 1930s does not detract from the historic setting of the buildings.

#### *Design, Materials, and Workmanship*

The house and studio where E.I. Couse lived and worked retains excellent integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Only minor updates have taken place, principally to the mechanical systems and appliances in the kitchen area. No alterations have been made to the design of the house and studio or their decorative features since 1936 and nearly all of the historic materials present at that time remain intact. Appreciable changes to materials are limited to replacement of the historic wood shingle roofing with composition shingle roofing and the historic *latilla* ceiling with sawn boards in the oldest sections of the house. These changes do not impact the house and studio's ability to convey its historic significance. The building techniques and craftsmanship employed as the house and studio was built and expanded over time are readily discernable, notably in the adobe walls, *vigas*, shaped adobe parapets, fireplaces and *bancos*, shingle-glass studio and workshop windows, decorative door treatments, and hand-forged iron hardware.

Likewise, Joseph Sharp's two studio buildings retain excellent integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. His first studio, the former chapel remodeled for Sharp's use in 1909, retains its design, materials, and finishes in place when the studio served as Sharp's principal workplace; contemporary alterations are limited to the addition of unobtrusive gallery lighting, designed to minimize impact on historic materials. The storage vault constructed in the studio's southeast corner by Sharp ca. 1915 does not detract from the building's overall integrity. Used by Sharp to store his paintings and other valuables during extended absences, the vault speaks to Sharp's continued use of the building after completion of a second studio on the property in 1915. The interior is currently used as an exhibition space, a compatible use that does not significantly detract from the building's overall integrity.

Sharp's second studio, a former adobe residence remodeled and expanded for Sharp's use in 1915, retains its design, materials, and finishes in place when the studio served as Sharp's principal workplace and as a background for his paintings. Installation of the garage door at the building's east side occurred during Sharp's productive work life and does not detract from the building's integrity. Contemporary remodeling of the garage interior, a space that did not play an active role in Sharp's work, diminishes the integrity of design, materials, workmanship to a small degree. The studio interior is currently used as an interpretative center focused on Sharp's work, a compatible use that does not significantly detract from the building's overall integrity.

#### *Feeling and Association*

The site retains an exceptionally high level of feeling and association. Visitors feel as if they are stepping back in time, enjoying the same sights and smells experienced by the artists, and the same sounds experienced by Couse. One can easily imagine the artists at work in their studios or relaxing on the Couse *portal*, enjoying

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views of Virginia Couse's garden.

Stepping into the Couse house and his studio, one is immediately transported back to the time when Couse was alive. The dining room, *sala*, and studio interiors have been carefully preserved as they were at the time of Couse's death and retain the finishes, furniture, decorative elements, paintings, artifacts, and curios present at the end of Couse's life. Entering Couse's studio, one experiences the same northern light that illuminated the artist's models and his easel. In the northwest corner of Couse's studio, the artist's darkroom and its contents remain essentially untouched.

Entering Sharp's chapel studio, the modifications Sharp made to the building—principally installation of an adobe corner fireplace (a common background in Sharp's firelight paintings) and large north-facing shingle-glass window—speak directly how he used the space and support the building's excellent integrity of feeling and association. Visitors can still readily imagine Sharp at work within the space, local Pueblo models positioned in front of the fireplace.

In Sharp's second studio, historic features that that speak directly to how Sharp used the exterior and interior of the building remain intact. The interior continues to be flooded by north light from the large shingle-glass studio window, and visitors can readily imagine Sharp in front of his easel models posed in front of the adobe corner fireplace and round window that appear in several of his paintings. The loft space, depicted in *Bawling Deer, Taos* (ca. 1925) and the northwest corner of the studio captured in *Studio Interior* (ca. 1925) remain immediately recognizable today and support the building's excellent integrity of feeling and association.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)
 Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in only 4, 5, and 6 below)

- 1. NR #: 05001096
2. Date of listing: 9/28/2005
3. Level of significance: National
4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A\_\_ B\_X C\_X D\_\_
5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A\_\_ B\_\_ C\_\_ D\_\_ E\_\_ F\_\_ G\_\_
6. Areas of Significance: Art, Architecture

- \_\_ Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:
\_\_ Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:
\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No.
\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.
\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

Location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office: New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency: N/A
Federal Agency: N/A
Local Government: N/A
University: N/A
Other (Specify Repository): Lunder Research Center, Taos, New Mexico



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