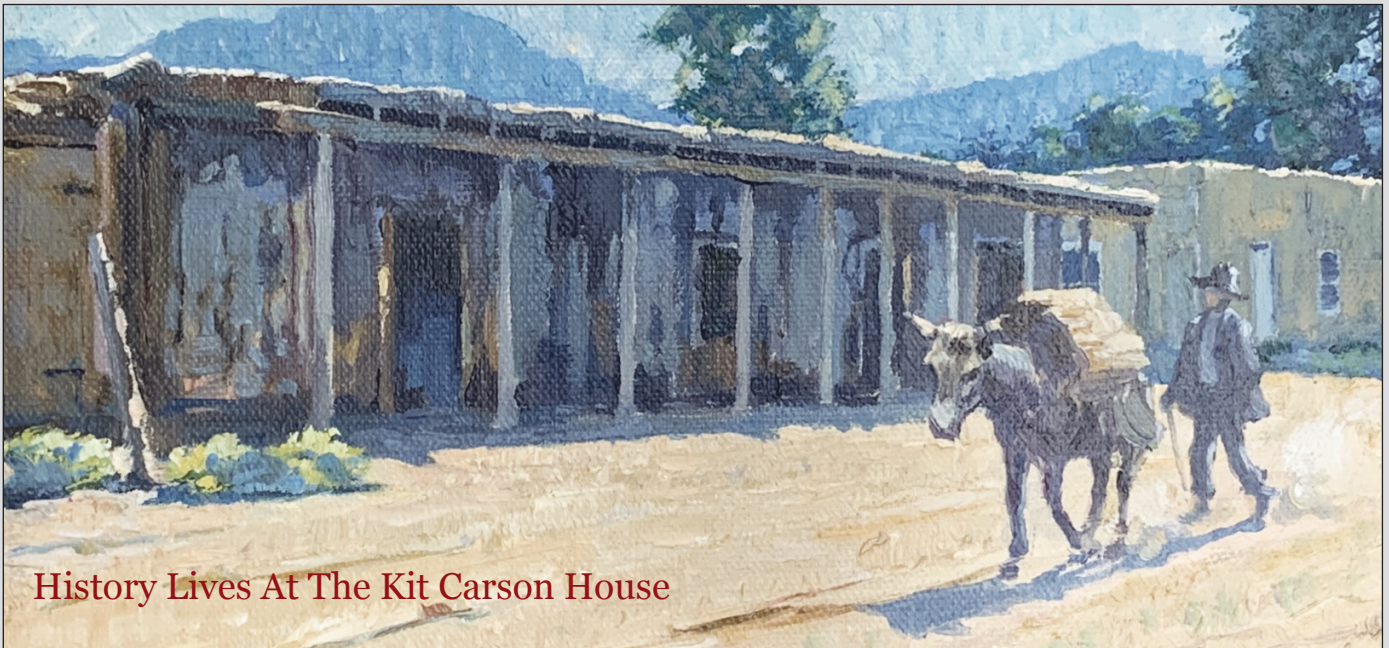


The Correspondent

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KIT CARSON HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



History Lives At The Kit Carson House

This painting is by Walter Ufer, one of the original members of the Taos Society of Artists. Ufer arrived in Taos circa 1914 and rented a small house across the road from the Carson house. He made several paintings of the House with different light and cloud formations, as have other artists over the years. This oil painting, “Kit Carson House” with its dirt road and a passing pack burro, was a gift from WB Cheetham to Bent Masonic Lodge # 42 in 1920. The Lodge has owned this charming rendition of the Carson House ever since.

Historic Preservation Grant

An important Historic Preservation project is underway in Taos. A Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant was recently awarded by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division to the Town of Taos. Working with the Kit Carson House, the grant is funding a Conditions Assessment and Preservation Plan for the home of the renowned frontiersman and his wife Josefa.

The assessment process involves a structural analysis, sampling for moisture analysis, required measurements and drawings and review of historic materials present. The process will identify critical concerns and recommend preliminary stabilization details.

Conron & Woods Architects of Santa Fe, NM is performing the work on this National Historic Landmark. This firm has been actively involved in historic preservation since the 1950's and is currently directing the restoration of the Old Courthouse on Taos Plaza. Roy Woods, principal Architect and owner, has entered into an agreement with the Kit Carson House to provide architectural services.

Work is scheduled to be completed in September when, working with the State Historic Preservation Division, the final assessment and recommendations will be submitted to the National Park Service. This plan will serve as the cornerstone for future funding requests.



Roy Woods of Conron & Woods inspects the interior walls of the Carson House.

President's Message

Welcome to our first newsletter. Our community has been through a hectic and traumatic period during the COVID pandemic, and the Kit Carson House is no exception. The House was closed during the pandemic, and then went through a major reorganization. But now we are back, the House is open to visitors, and we want to share our progress with you.

We have a new name, a new Board of Directors, a new Museum Manager, a new 501(c)3 designation, and now a newsletter. The future of our precious landmark looks



Martin Jagers

bright. This newsletter will explain about the grant funding and how it will be used. We hope you will join us in ushering in an exciting new era for the Kit Carson House. Please come see us!

— MJ

Kit Carson House Inc.

The Kit Carson House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of New Mexico and governed by a Board of Directors. The home of Kit and Josefa Carson has been owned and supported by Bent Lodge #42 AF & AM since 1911, when the Freemasons purchased the property.

Board of Directors

Martin Jagers, President
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Harvey Yocum, Secretary
Jed Noble, Treasurer
Kennith Paetzold, Director

Museum Manager

Dave Cordova

Newsletter Editor

Barbara Schultz

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What is a Certified Local Government?

Certified Local Governments (CLG) are municipalities that have demonstrated, through a certification process, a commitment to local preservation and saving the past for future generations. This commitment is key to America's ability to preserve, protect, and increase awareness of our unique cultural heritage found in structures across the country. The CLG program was federally mandated as part of an amendment to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and is administered

by the National Park Service. Partnership between Local, State and Federal governments provides the opportunity to help preserve, protect, and increase awareness of our unique cultural heritage, helping communities save their irreplaceable historic resources.

There are nine Certified Local Governments in the State of New Mexico.

On the right, Henry Avila of Conron & Wood Architect Firm inspects an outside wall of the Carson House.



Visitors to the Kit Carson House by Dave Cordova

The very best part of serving as manager of the historic Kit Carson House is my daily interacting with the many fans of Kit, Josefa and the family's home. 20,000 visitors a year from across our country and all over the world come to Taos to learn more about the legendary figure who was Kit Carson and to walk in his footsteps. This is an interest, or passion in some cases, that is shared by people of all ages. Although he was a real and much-admired figure during his lifetime, many stories about Kit are exaggerated. The American West has always been a fascinating and compelling place, and stories about Kit grew into legend with retelling by word-of-mouth and in pulp fiction.



Museum Manager Dave Cordova arranges books in the museum shop.

Thus Kit Carson became the epitome of the legendary hero.

I have heard numerous comments from visitors about their overwhelming pleasure to be in the very house that Kit called home. Visitors are not so much impressed with the artifacts, as they are with the humble house which was home to this historical figure. They like to stand where Kit stood and feel his presence.

They are amazed to learn that a man of such historical stature lived so modestly.

Recently a couple approached the admissions desk to purchase two tickets. As I was ringing up the transaction, the woman asked me, "Did he tell you?" Then pointing at the man she said, "His name is Kit Carson." I looked at his credit card in my hand, and there it was, in raised plastic letters, the name "Kit Carson." He told me he had driven 400 miles out of his planned route to come to Taos to visit the house of his namesake. He did not believe there was any connection between his family and his famous namesake, but he never regretted having the name of the legendary Kit Carson.

This is just one of many stories about guests to the Carson Home. On the same day that Kit Carson visited we had guests from Vermont, California and New Brunswick, Canada, all sharing the desire to get to know Kit a little better. The volume of visitors confirms the historical significance of this beloved National Landmark.



This sign preserves the memory of Kit Carson's wife, Maria Josefa Jaramillo Carson.

Highway Sign Honors Josefa

In an effort to recognize women's contributions to New Mexico history, The New Mexico Women's Forum founded The New Mexico Historic Women Marker Initiative in 2005. The State Legislature funded the project under Governor Bill Richardson in 2006. The Initiative celebrates New Mexico women of courage, vision and fortitude who have shaped our state's history, economy and culture by placing highway markers in their honor. In the summer of 2019, the State installed a highway sign in recognition of Maria Josefa Jaramillo Carson, wife of Kit Carson.

Josefa, who married Kit Carson in 1843, was a resilient and courageous person who managed her frontier household often alone, because Kit was gone for long periods of time traveling across the country working for his government. During one of Kit's absences Josefa witnessed the murder of New Mexico's first governor, Charles Bent, during the infamous "Taos Uprising."

Josefa was visiting the Bent home that fateful night and helped dig a hole in the adobe wall for the Bent family to escape. For this and other examples of her strength of character, the NMHW Marker Initiative has acknowledged Josefa with a highway marker.

Josefa's sign is located in Taos on Hwy 585, also known as the "bypass" just east of Weimer Road.



The Kit Carson House

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575-758-4945,

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National Historic Landmark

A National Historic Landmark is “a building, district, object, site or structure that is officially recognized by the United States Government for its outstanding historical significance.” There are over 90,000 places listed on our country’s Register of Historic Places, but there are only approximately 2,600 of them recognized as National Historic Landmarks. The Kit Carson House received recognition as a Historic Landmark in 1963. Other Landmark sites in Taos are: the Taos Pueblo, 1960; San Francisco de Assisi Mission Church, 1970; Mabel Dodge Luhan House, 1991; and the Ernest Blumenschein House, 1965. There are 46 Historic Landmarks in all of New Mexico.

Volunteer and Donation Opportunities

The Kit Carson House needs your help and support. We are specifically looking for a grant writer and occasional help in the museum shop which would entail opening and pricing new merchandise and curating. In the near future we will be asking for help with mailings, lectures, office work, writing thank you notes, landscaping and more. We currently have a small group of dedicated volunteers who are enthusiastic about protecting and preserving our precious Historic Landmark. If you can offer time, we will very gratefully welcome your service and you with open arms.

In lieu of service we also welcome donations in any amount. Mail checks to: Kit Carson House, 113 Kit Carson Road, Taos, New Mexico 87571, or call the Museum Manager @ 575-758-4945. Thank you for your support.

Mission Statement

The mission of the corporation is to operate exclusively to protect, preserve and maintain the Kit Carson House, adjacent buildings and grounds as a designated National Historic Landmark; and to operate the museum therewith for public education and enjoyment.

The corporation will maintain and display the collection of historical artifacts to the public.

The focus of education is the life and times of Christopher “Kit” Carson, Scout, Mountain man, Union Army Officer, Freemason and Family man.