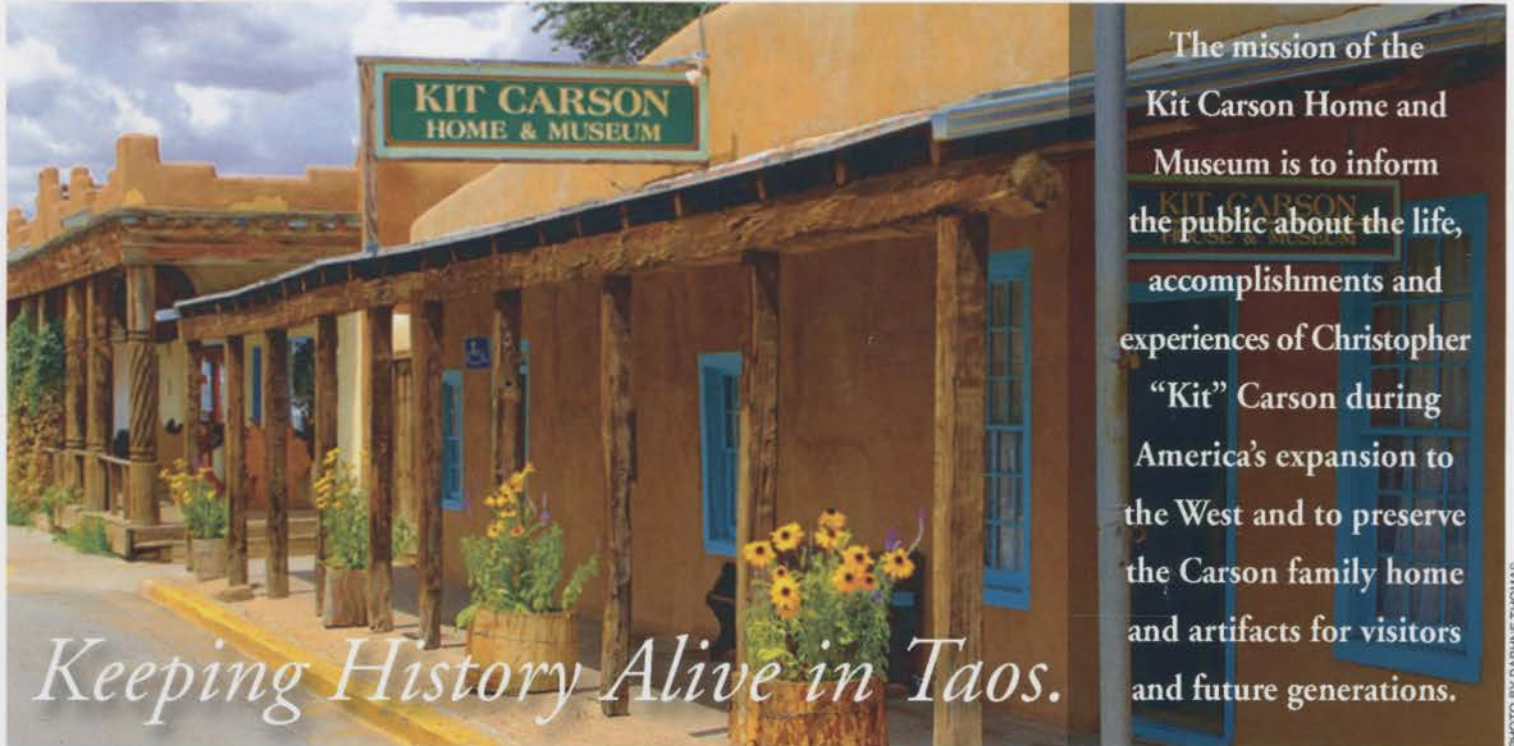




The Carson Courier

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KIT CARSON HOME AND MUSEUM

Spring 2014



The mission of the Kit Carson Home and Museum is to inform the public about the life, accomplishments and experiences of Christopher "Kit" Carson during America's expansion to the West and to preserve the Carson family home and artifacts for visitors and future generations.

PHOTO BY DAPHNE THOMAS

2014 SUMMER LECTURE SERIES

We are proud to announce that our 2014 Summer Lecture Series has been made possible by a generous grant from the New Mexico Humanities Council. Thank you to the Council for sharing our programming vision and for supporting us. Please visit nmhum.org to learn more about the New Mexico Humanities Council.

Saturday, July 5

RICK THOMPSON, a community scholar with a respected history of presenting historical subjects in different venues throughout New Mexico will present "General James Carleton: Hero or Villain?" Dressed in period uniform, Mr. Thompson will examine the life of General James Carleton, Kit Carson's superior officer, who directed the campaigns against the Apache and Navajo people. Mr. Thompson is currently working on a book about the life of General Carleton.



Saturday, July 19

STEPHEN ZIMMER, author of *Philmont: A Brief History of the New Mexico Scout Ranch*, will present "Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell: Compadres," and explore the relationship between Carson and Maxwell, a major entrepreneur and landowner in Taos and a contemporary of Carson.



Saturday, August 2

DR. RON WETHERINGTON, Professor of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University, will discuss his book, *Ceran St. Vrain: American Frontier Entrepreneur*. St. Vrain, another important entrepreneurial contemporary of Kit Carson, owned a flour mill in Taos and contracted to supply the US Army with flour. Dr. Wetherington was involved with excavation efforts of St. Vrain's mill.



Saturday, August 16

DR. VIRGINIA SCHARFF, a noted expert on the roles of women in early Southwestern history, will discuss "How Women Made New Mexico." The history of the Kit Carson home is also the history of María Josefa Jaramillo Carson. Left to fend on her own for long stretches of time with eight children to care for, Josefa was clearly a tough and knowing pioneer woman. Dr. Scharff's lecture will touch on the important influence of Josefa Carson and her contemporaries on their community.



All of our lectures are free to the public. Each lecture will take place at 6:00pm and be held in The Kit Carson Home and Museum Courtyard.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Thank you all for reading our 2014 Spring Newsletter and a special welcome to all our new members. I am so glad you are interested in preserving the history of Taos and invite you to stay involved with the museum by attending our summer lecture series and joining our new volunteer program.

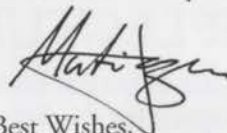
Each year is becoming more exciting at the KCHM. It is my pleasure to introduce Karen Douglas, who has joined our team at the Museum as Executive Director. Karen brings valuable museum experience to the KCHM and occupies the new administrative office on the east side of the courtyard. Please stop by and say hello.

And very exciting this year is our first summer fundraiser! Thom and Lavinia Wheeler have graciously offered to host a "Taos Rendezvous" on Sunday, July 6. We are going to have a great time at the Wheelers and I hope you will join us for this inaugural event. You will find more details at right.

Please plan on joining us for our **2nd Annual Summer Lecture Series**. We received a generous grant from the New Mexico Humanities Council to support this year's lectures. Our speakers are expert scholars and will surely present new and exciting information.

Finally, we are moving ahead with plans to restore the Romero House adjacent to the Museum. This important historic structure, home to Kit Carson's neighbors, will add dramatic square footage to the Museum's footprint. This much-needed space will provide room for educational programs, exhibitions and greater area for an expanded collection. We will have more information on the restoration process in our fall newsletter.

Please also stop by with your friends and family to visit the Museum shop, where we feature an extensive collection of books on the history of Taos and New Mexico as well as great gifts for all ages.



Best Wishes,
Martin Jagers, President

KIT CARSON HOME AND MUSEUM

Kit Carson Home and Museum, 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.

113 Kit Carson Road, Taos, NM 87571
575-758-4945, kitcarsonmuseum.org

 Kit Carson Home and Museum

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575-758-4082
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cmcginnis@kitcarsonmuseum.org
575-758-4945
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575-758-4945

THE CARSON COURIER is published semi-annually and is available in print, email attachment and on our web site. We welcome brief articles, book reviews and other material relevant to Kit Carson and his family, as well as life in 19th century New Mexico. Submissions should be less than 250 words and submitted in February or August, to director@kitcarsonmuseum.org.

KIT CARSON'S HAWKEN RIFLE

It was called, "buffalo gun," the "fur trapper's gun" and by other names but it was the Hawken rifle, the rifle used by Kit Carson for many years in the mountains and

plains of the West. An exact replica of this rifle is on display in the first room at the Kit Carson Home and Museum.

The Hawken rifle was a brand of black powder, flintlock and percussion cap long rifle. It was manufactured by Jacob and Samuel Hawken in their St. Louis, Missouri shop from 1815 to 1858. The brothers produced a number of variations on the weapon. It weighed between 10 and 15 lbs., used round shot with an average of .54 caliber. Historians disagree on its effective range which has been cited at between 200 and 400 yards. Most mountain men preferred the Hawken over other weapons because it was light and capable of hitting targets at long range.

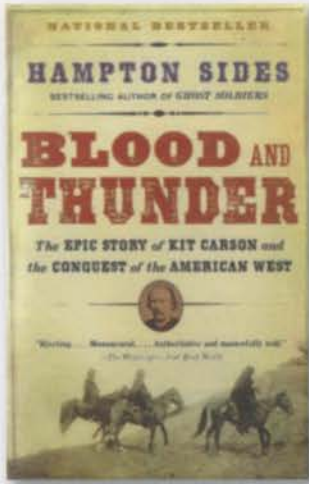
The Hawken rifle was replaced by breechloaders such as the Sharps rifle and lever-action rifles which flourished after the Civil War. The Hawken rifle has been carried in various Hollywood Westerns including the 1972 film *Jeremiah Johnson* starring Robert Redford.

The rifle in the KCHM is a faithful replica of the .54 caliber, thirty-one inch barrel rifle that Kit Carson left the Montezuma Masonic Lodge in Santa Fe in 1868, the year of his death. It was made by Ron Upchurch who took photographs and exact measurements of the original. Don Smith manufactured the roller lock and triggers and assembled the rifle.

Don't doubt it. The Hawken replica works. Upon completion, Ron Upchurch, using 80 grains of FFG and a spit patch, busted a cap or two. And afterward, many of his fellow Masons took turns shooting it.



BLOOD AND THUNDER MAJOR SELLER AT KCHM SHOP

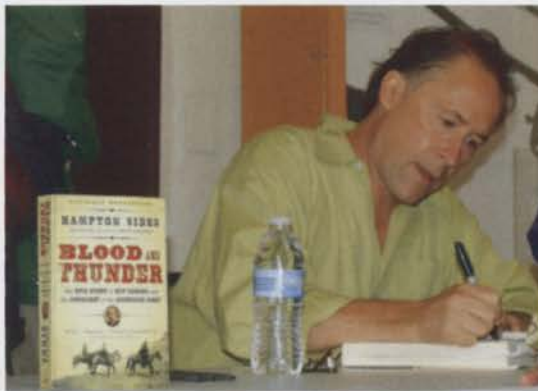


Author and historian Hampton Sides in his remarkable work, *Blood and Thunder*, paints a well-researched portrait of legendary frontiersman Christopher "Kit" Carson. *Blood and Thunder* refers to the dime novels of the day in which Kit Carson was romanticized and writ large. Carson, in the public imagination, became a frontier demigod, a sort of John Wayne on steroids.

True enough, Carson did live an adventuresome life. But counterpoint to his dime-novel superhuman stature, Carson was a short, unassuming man

who could not read or write. He spoke little and was mortified by his great fame. He hated the distortions in these popular works which had been published without his consent. Carson never approved or got a penny from them. Mr. Sides has managed to show the immense irony of this dichotomy between the factual Kit Carson and the make-believe hero of the pulps. The actual man turns out to be much more interesting and important than the invented one.

Mr. Sides has woven an intricate narrative of a vast sweep of history. People are alive. He never loses the human touch and gives us a clear picture of not only the turmoil within the New Mexico

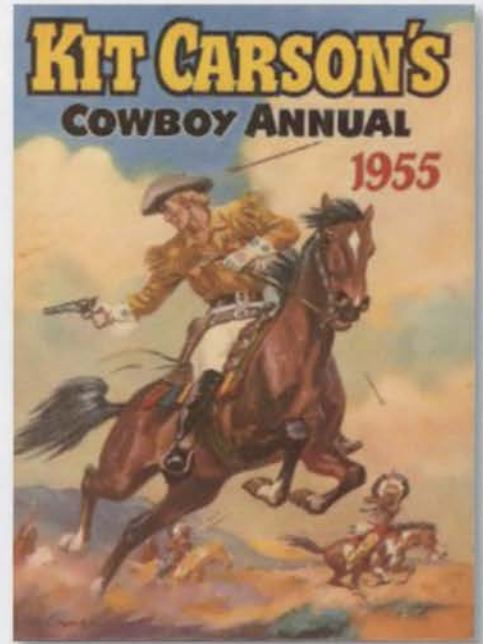


Territory but significant snapshots of the American continent as it is being vastly expanded. We watch the American Civil War unfold. We witness various battles with different Native American tribes and follow the Diné relocation. We see its abject failure and then we see the eventual return of the Diné to a reservation in their original homeland.

Blood and Thunder is set in the milieu of "Manifest Destiny" and western expansionism. We see Carson in many roles; Indian agent, Indian fighter, frontiersman, trapper, mountain man, scout, husband, father and soldier.

Like Ulysses in the Homeric epic, Carson always tried to get home. He once said, "My happiness directs me to my home and family." And eventually Carson did return to his wife, Josefa. It is easy to imagine him standing in his Taos courtyard gazing up into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Carson is buried next to his wife in Kit Carson Park, not far from the residence.

SAVE THAT DATE! SUNDAY, JULY 6TH



The Kit Carson Home and Museum presents **THE TAOS RENDEZVOUS!** Join us on Sunday, July 6 from 3:00 to 7:00pm for an afternoon and evening of food, drink, music, costumes, auctions, artisans, prizes and more!

The Rendezvous is generously hosted by Thom and Lavinia Wheeler at their home and gallery at 939 Kit Carson Road.

Tickets are \$75.00 per person.

Please call the Museum to purchase or reserve tickets now! 575-758-4945

WALTER UFER, one of the original Taos Society of Artists members, arrived in Taos circa 1914. His genre paintings of Taos, its surrounding landscape and native peoples are among the best of the early Taos artists' work. Ufer's painting of the Kit Carson house, with its mud street and a passing pack burro, is one of the Museum's most charming artifacts. The painting is on loan to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum for their Walter Ufer exhibition through May. The Kit Carson Home and Museum will offer archival quality prints of the Ufer painting coming soon—call the director at 575-758-4082 for more information.





Christopher (Kit) Carson
1809-1868

Volunteers Needed

The Kit Carson Home and Museum is growing and we need your help. Volunteer opportunities are available in such areas as the museum shop, office work, database input, mailings, lectures, fundraising, landscaping, maintenance and more. We are also looking for a summer intern who is interested in learning about cultural nonprofit management. This position will entail three full days per week and include a small stipend. Bring your enthusiasm to the Kit Carson Museum—you will find something fun to do! Please call the director for more details at 575-758-4945.



DETACH ALONG DOTTED LINE & RETURN



FRIENDS OF THE KIT CARSON HOME AND MUSEUM

Become a Member and Invest in History!

All membership categories include membership card, free admission, notice of upcoming events and **The Carson Courier**, the Museum's semi-annual newsletter.

- Senior (62+), Student or Youth (18 and under). \$20
- Individual or Freemason receive a complimentary Kit Carson lapel pin. \$35
- Corporate and Nonprofit receive a complimentary Kit Carson lapel pin plus mention of sponsorship in the Carson Courier. \$45

- Donor receive a complimentary Kit Carson lapel pin plus a 10% discount on all Museum purchases. \$100 - \$499
- Patrons of the Museum receive all above benefits plus a copy of *Blood and Thunder* signed by author Hampton Sides. \$500 - \$999
- Lifetime Museum Benefactor includes all benefits plus a private tour of the Museum with a local historian. \$1000 and above
- Donation—I would like to make a donation to the Museum. \$ _____

Yes! I want to be a member! I will pay by Check (payable to The Kit Carson Museum)
 Credit Card _____ Mastercard _____ Visa _____ Discover _____ AmEx

Name (as it appears on credit card) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone (____) _____

Credit Card Number _____

Credit Card Security Code _____ Expiration Date (MM/YR) _____

Thank you for your support! All memberships are annual (except Lifetime Museum Benefactor) and commence from date of purchase. The Kit Carson Home and Museum will never share or sell personal or financial information. The Kit Carson Home and Museum is a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization and your membership and donation are 100% tax deductible.

Please return form to The Kit Carson Home and Museum, 113 Kit Carson Road, Taos, NM 87571.