
The northernmost pueblo, Taos, shows the influence of Plains tribes in the dress, customs and physical makeup of its people. The Ute, Apache and Comanche met here to trade meat and hides for pueblo foodstuffs and textiles. The multi-storied construction of the pueblo, designed for defense, and the surrounding adobe wall give evidence that not all contacts were peaceful.

The present village was built about 1700 after the old one, located a few hundred yards to the northeast, was destroyed by fire in the 1690's. It closely duplicates the original pueblo, consisting of two house groups: Hlaumu (North House) and Hlaukwima (South House) located on either side of Taos Creek.

Alvarado first visited Taos in 1540. In 1598 Onate, following the Spanish custom of assigning saints' names to Indian pueblos, named it San Miguel. No trace remains of the original mission of San Geronimo established in the early 17th Century. The church ruins (also called San Geronimo) inside the wall date from 1706. The present church was built in 1847.

Dissatisfaction with Spanish rule led to the abandonment of the village in 1639 and the people moved onto the plains with the Jicarilla Apaches. They built a new pueblo in what is now Scott County, Kansas, and remained there for two years before they were brought back to Taos by the Spaniards.

Trouble with Spanish authority continued and Taos served as the base of operation for the conspirators who planned the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680. On August tenth of that year Taos warriors killed the resident priests and Spanish settlers and joined the other pueblos in attacking Santa Fe. The move was a military success and Governor Otermin was forced to retreat south to El Paso with all Spanish colonists.

In 1692 the Spaniards under De Vargas succeeded in reconquering the province. An uneasy truce followed, marked by minor revolts and temporary abandonments of Taos when the people fled to nearby mountain canyons to escape Spanish reprisals.

The only major uprising at Taos after the U.S. assumed control of the territory occurred in 1847. The Taos Rebellion, instigated by Mexicans who harbored ill-feelings toward the American


Picuris and Taos are descended from a common ancestral group which settled in the present general area about 900 A.D. Sometime during the 12th century, these people split to form two separate tribes. Picuris, like Taos, has had considerable contact with Plains tribes and particularly the Jicarilla Apaches with whom they frequently intermarried.

The original pueblo, now partially excavated, lies on the north edge of the present village. It dates from about 1250 A.D. and was visited by the Spaniards in the early 1540's. They named the village San Lorenzo and established a mission there in 1621.

Luis Tupato, one of the leaders of the Pueblo Revolt, was the governor of Picuris. The pueblo, which at that time had a population of 3,000, played an important role in the rebellion by providing a large force of fighting men for the campaign against the Spanish.
conquerors, resulted in the death of Governor Charles Bent and seven Americans. Troops from Santa Fe attacked and killed 150 rebels who sought refuge in the church (the ruins of which are still visible inside the wall) and later executed fifteen.

Encroachment on pueblo land by white squatters led to a threatened uprising in 1910 but the appearance of troops prevented bloodshed.

Problems at Taos are not all related to outside influences; factionalism within the pueblo is a common condition. The introduction of the peyote cult in the 1890's resulted in fifty years of bitter conflict.

The control of village affairs in the hands of a conservative religious hierarchy, lack of land, and limited job opportunities have led to frustration among the younger members of the pueblo. Politically powerless and economically insecure, many of them have left Taos to seek employment elsewhere. Internal dissension has prevented the development of economic opportunities necessary to meet the needs of a growing population.

Nevertheless, Taos continues to function as a pueblo society held together by the strong ties of a common language, culture and religion.

**SUGGESTED READING**


In 1692 they once again swore allegiance to Spanish authority but followed this with three more revolts in less than five years. After the last uprising in 1696, they abandoned their village to seek refuge at the Jicarilla Apache settlement of El Cuartelejo in western Kansas. In 1706, greatly decimated by disease and warfare, they returned to their pueblo. The present church was built in the 1770's following the resettlement of the village.

At the present time Picuris is in a state of cultural disintegration. Lack of local employment forces those with skills or education to leave the pueblo thereby depriving the village of the leadership it needs to develop into a self-sufficient community. There is a lack of tribal unity, and secular leaders lack community support. Those who live at the pueblo supplement their seasonal wage work incomes with subsistence farming, cattle raising, and craftwork.

Picuris pottery, made from a mica-flecked clay, has been traded widely for hundreds of years. Half a dozen women still produce this undecorated cooking ware which is much sought after by both Indians and Anglos. It is one of the few types of pueblo pottery that still serves a utilitarian purpose.