

Verbal Description: The boundary of the acreage of Taos Pueblo proposed for World Heritage nomination encloses an irregular tear-drop shaped area which is approximately 2900 feet (883.9m) long, southwest to northeast, and approximately 1200 feet (365.75m) wide, southeast to northwest, at its widest point. The boundary may be defined by six corner points. Point A is located just east of the fork in the road which follows the Rio Pueblo east of the village, point B is located immediately southeast of the intersection of the road leading to the Pueblo School and the road which encircles the village, in the center of the former road. It is approximately 2240 feet (682.75m), S49.5 degrees W, of Point B and is approximately 500 feet (152.4m), S29 degrees E, of the Taos Pueblo Visitor Center. Point D is located immediately south of the intersection of the modern road to Taos and the road which encircles the village. It is approximately 400 feet (121.9m), N 29 degrees W, of Point C and 100 feet (30.5m), S20 degrees E, of the Visitor Center. Point E is located immediately west of the ruin of the mission of San Geronimo de Taos between the road which encircles the village and an adjacent corral. It is approximately 450 feet (137.1m), N 2 degrees E, of Point D. Point F is located immediately north of the westernmost of the two trash middens on the north side of the village. It is approximately 660 feet (201.1m), N 42 degrees E, of Point E and approximately 2240 feet (682.75m), S 81.5 degrees W, of Point A.



Close-up of highest portion of South House, 1974 (National Park Service Photograph)



Pueblo de Taos: Longitude 105°32' W / Latitude 36°26' N

#### DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

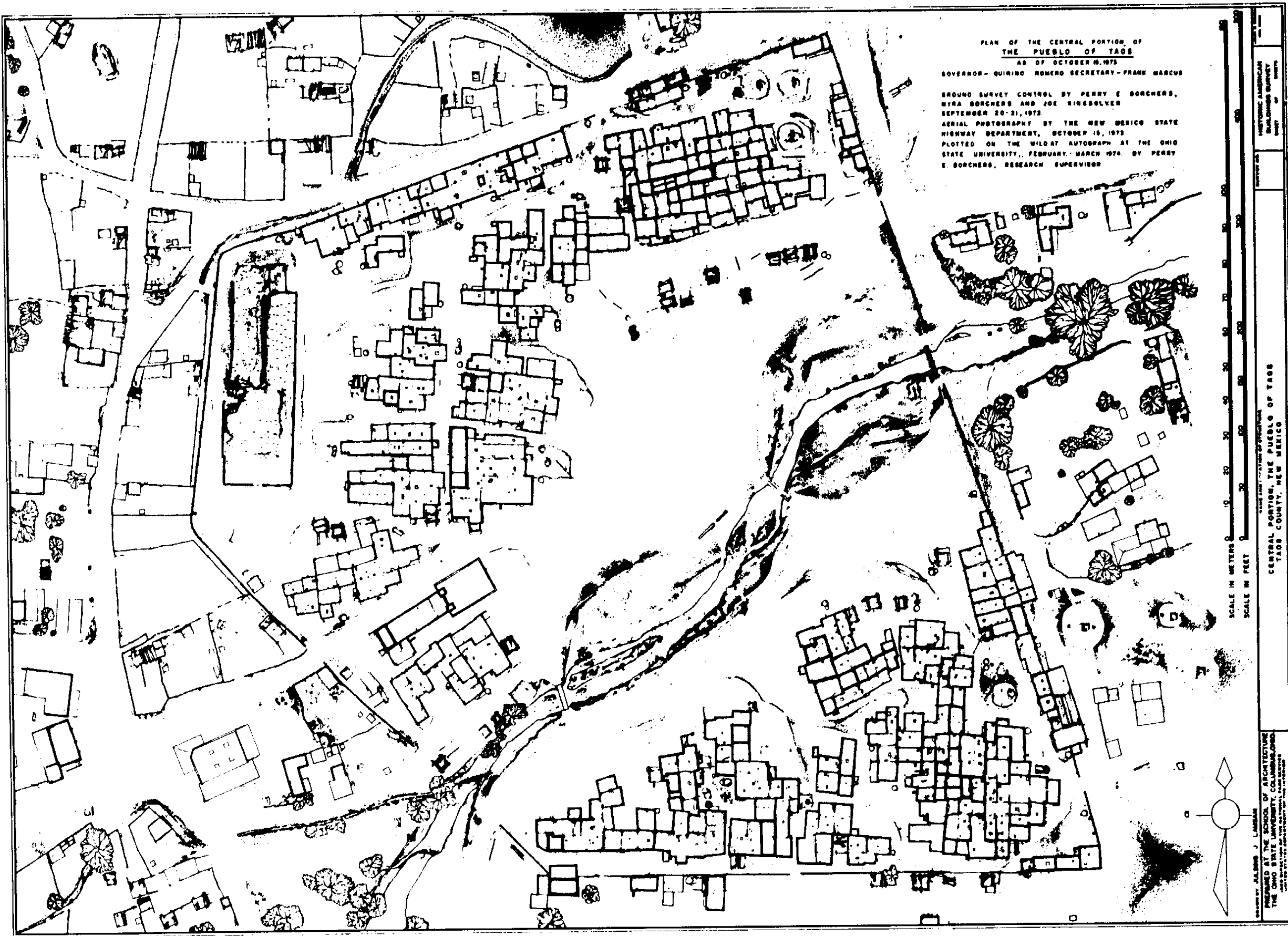
The culture of the Pueblo Indians extended through a wide geographical area of northern Mexico and the southwest United States. It can still be found in a certain number of communities in the States of Chihuahua (Mexico) and Arizona and New Mexico (United States). Taos is the best preserved of the pueblos north of the borders defined by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848).

Located in the valley of a small tributary of the Rio Grande, Taos comprises a group of habitations and ceremonial centres (6 kivas) have been conserved, which are representative of a culture largely derived from the traditions of the prehistoric Anasazi Indian tribes, who settled around the present borders of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. Their culture went into an irreversible decline, and in the later 13th century major sites like Mesa Verde and Chaco (included on the World Heritage List in 1978 and 1987 respectively) were abandoned, perhaps because of major climatic changes.

The proliferation of small pueblos in the valley of the Rio Grande and its tributaries, when considered along with the disappearance of the Anasazi tribes, was one of the major characteristics of the settlement of the North American continent. Modest rural communities, characterized by common social and religious structures, traditional agricultural practices perfected during the "classical" period, and a systematic use of irrigation, were built. Taos is thought to have appeared before 1400.

In the modern historical period the two major characteristics of the Pueblo civilization were mutually contradictory: unchanging traditions deeply rooted in the culture and an ever-constant ability to absorb other cultures. Their faculty for acculturation gradually began to appear following the first Spanish expedition of the Governor of New Galicia, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, in 1540-1542. Beginning in 1613, the inhabitants of Taos resisted the system of *encomiendas* which allowed certain Spaniards to exact a tribute in kind from the village. In 1634 the missionary Fray Alonso de Benavides complained to the Pope of their "rebellious" attitude.

The entire 18th century was a time of wars in which Taos played an important part in resisting the colonizers. However, the breeds of cattle and types of grain introduced by the conquerors were readily adopted into their agricultural system. Attempts to convert the Pueblos to Christianity were ill-received (during the major Pueblo revolt of 1680 the first church



was burned down) but unconsciously the religious mentality of the people changed. A similar dichotomy between an irredentist attitude in principle and an assimilation in fact marked the two subsequent historical stages: from 1821 to 1848, under Mexican administration, and from 1848 to the present, under the US administration. In 1970 the people of Taos obtained the restitution of lands usurped by the Government, which included the sacred site of the Blue Lake. At the same time, their ritual ceremonies include both a Christmas procession and the Hispano-Mexican dance of the Matachines.

Today, the village appears at first sight to conform with the description given in 1776 by Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez. However, although the earthen enclosure which he likened to one of the Biblical cities survives, numerous modifications can be observed.

To the west, the missionaries' convent and church lie in ruins. A new church was built at a different location of the west side of the north plaza in the 19th century. The multi-tiered adobe dwellings still retain their original form and outline, but details have changed. Doors, which traditionally were mostly used to interconnect rooms, are now common as exterior access to the ground floors and to the roof tops on upper stories. Windows, which traditionally were small and incorporated into walls very sparsely, are now common features. The proliferation of doors and windows through time at Taos reflects the acculturation of European traits and the relaxing of needs for defensive structures. In addition to ovens located outdoors, fireplaces have been built inside the living quarters.

