

PH0501221

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 19 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 20 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

**\*\***

HISTORIC *Barbara Reynolds*  
AND/OR COMMON *The J. Paul Taylor Property*

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, TOWN *Mesilla* \_\_\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
STATE *New Mexico* VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT #2  
CODE 35 COUNTY *Doña Ana* CODE 013

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME *Mr. and Mrs. J. Paul Taylor*  
STREET & NUMBER *P. O. Box 133*  
CITY, TOWN *Mesilla* VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ STATE *New Mexico*  
*88046*

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *Doña Ana County Clerk's Office*  
STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, TOWN *Las Cruces* STATE *New Mexico*

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE *State Register of Cultural Properties*  
DATE *May 5, 1972*  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS *New Mexico State Planning Office, 505 Don Gaspar*  
CITY, TOWN *Santa Fe* STATE *New Mexico* 87503

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in the quiet southern New Mexico town of Mesilla, the J. Paul Taylor Property is a large, rambling one-story adobe structure on the west side of the historic Mesilla Plaza (National Register 10/66). Overshadowed on the north by the spires of the Roman Catholic Church of San Albino the brick-paved plaza, with its central bandstand, is enclosed by a series of closely-clustered brick and adobe buildings which include several excellent examples of New Mexico's Territorial architectural style. Originally constructed as two small store fronts on adjoining 60' x 300' lots with extensive residential quarters and outbuildings to the rear, the oldest portions of the Taylor property were constructed circa 1850 but the two parts were not combined until 1903 when they were refurbished significantly. Drawing on a long New Mexico architectural tradition which made defense from Indian attack the foremost consideration, the first structures erected on the Mesilla plaza had contiguous sidewalls and were placed on long, narrow solares de casas (house lots) to make maximum use of the limited plaza frontage available. The living areas, often separated from the store fronts by patios or placitas, were built in front of a jumble of stables, corrals, granaries and warehouses usually enclosed in the rear by a high adobe wall.

Since its first construction the facade of the Taylor property has been composed of two shops separated by a zaguan (covered passage) which leads to the living quarters in the rear. To the north, a silversmith, "El Platero," now occupies the site of a mercantile enterprise operated during the 1850's by Mariano Yrissari and, after the Civil War, by Mariano Barela both prominent native New Mexico traders. The front wall of this portion of the building which extends above the zaguan is covered with adobe plaster over the original adobe bricks and is topped by a triangular parapet with a brick coping. The triangle, a characteristic feature of the so-called Greek Revival style whose most prominent aspects were adapted in New Mexico to create "Territorial Style," is repeated in the pedimented lintels which cap the two doorways and two oversize windows. All the doors and windows have deep reveals to accommodate them to the thick adobe walls and were obviously installed during a time in which glass and planed lumber for sash were in short supply.

In contrast, "Las Viejas," the antique shop south of the zaguan, with its cast iron front and metal bracketed cornice, is a product of another era. Its pitched roof, covered with corrugated iron, has a short flagpole centered over the cornice. Extremely high plate glass windows, which almost cover the building's facade, frame a recessed entrance composed of double doors made of glass panes over wood panels. This store, formerly the notions and dry goods department of the Reynolds and Griggs Co., was joined to the company's feed and grocery divisions which occupied an adjoining building to the south by a large, arched opening, now closed by a partition. The second building is not presently part of the Taylor property. The outstanding feature of the store's interior is a U-shaped balcony reached by a divided staircase opposite the entrance which is embellished by turned wooden balusters and newels.

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES *1853 & 1859* [with handwritten notes] BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of several historic buildings facing the famous plaza in Mesilla, New Mexico, the J. Paul Taylor Property is an excellent example of a combined store and residence, a type of structure once common in 19th century New Mexico towns and villages. Established after the U.S. takeover of New Mexico in 1846, the Mesilla plaza was constructed in the traditional enclosed defensive form but is unusual in New Mexico because its boundaries were never designated by official governmental decree. Although the plaza is now a popular tourist attraction and the town has almost been absorbed by the growth of nearby Las Cruces, southern New Mexico's largest city, Mesilla was once the political center of a vast area in southern New Mexico and Arizona with important commercial ties extending into west Texas, Sonora and Chihuahua. From 1853-1882 Mesilla was county seat of Doña Ana County and was also the principal distribution point for both the many mining camps in the region and the chain of U.S. military installations established in the lower Rio Grande Valley to curtail Apache depredations.

During the Civil War the area was a hotbed of secessionist activities and for a brief period during 1861-62 Mesilla served as the capital of the Confederate Territory of Arizona. Although the late 1860's and 1870's were good years for Mesilla, when the Santa Fe railroad was constructed through southern New Mexico to El Paso in 1881, the town was bypassed in favor of Las Cruces and entered a period of economic decline from which it has never recovered. Today, the Taylor property, a combination of two adjoining establishments which served several 19th century merchants and their families, remains as a landmark of the era when Mesilla was one of the most important towns in the Southwest.

First official settlement of the area around "La Mesilla," as the town was originally known, followed the occupation of New Mexico by U.S. Army troops under Brigadier-General Stephen Watts Kearny in the summer of 1846. To accommodate those New Mexicans who preferred to retain Mexican citizenship, a land grant was made by the Republic of Mexico on the west bank of the Rio Grande which had been accepted as the boundary between the two nations by the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The grant was partitioned by a commissioner appointed by the Mexican government, first Padre Ramón Ortiz who was soon replaced by a former citizen of Santa Fe, Guadalupe Miranda, after Ortiz succeeded in irritating officials of both countries. In many cases the commissioner's actions simply confirmed preemptions already made by settlers in the new community. In any event, the area soon became part of the United States as a result of the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, but the

(See Continuation Sheet Page 2)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Territorial Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives,  
 Santa Fe, New Mexico.  
 Audited Reports of County Commercial Licenses 1847-1899, Doña Ana  
 County.  
 Territorial Censuses 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1885.  
 (See Continuation Sheet Page 4)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1/2 acre.  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 1 3	3 3 0	9 2 1 5	3 5 7 2	0 5 1 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING		EASTING	NORTHING			
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Baxter, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

July 8, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*James W. Mark*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

7-12-77

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles Johnson*

DATE

1-20-78

DATE

1-17-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The main entrance to the Taylor residence is immediately behind the Barela store, on the right, at the end of the zaguan which terminates in a small 30' x 30' patio landscaped with vines, shrubs and flowers. Arranged in tandem along the structure's north wall, and overlooking the patio, are the livingroom, music room, a bedroom and the dining room. All four were refurbished in 1903-4 by William Charles Reynolds soon after he acquired the Barela property and combined it with the one previously owned by his father, Joseph Reynolds, and his father's partner, James Edgar Griggs. At that time the original vigas (ceiling beams) in these rooms were covered with the present tongue and groove boards, hardwood floors were put down, new outside fenestration was installed in the north wall and a portion of the adjoining patio to the south was enclosed to form a hallway which provided more convenient access to all the rooms. The original flat roof was converted to a pitched roof and covered with corrugated iron.

Beginning at the northwest corner of the patio and running just south of the dining room is a second zaguan which separates the front of the house from four bedrooms arranged in a rough square west of the patio. The two southernmost of these and a small, self-contained apartment, which joins them to the west, are the only remaining rooms from the Griggs and Reynolds property. Still in place in these two bedrooms are the original ceilings composed of cottonwood vigas under latillas (small saplings) which in turn are covered by a layer of tules (reeds) and then by the earthen roof. Since acquiring the property in 1953 the Taylors have found it necessary to repair the ceilings in the other two bedrooms and the dining room across the zaguan by plastering between the beams, because of excessive deterioration of the latillas. The west end of the zaguan is enclosed by a particularly fine example of a Territorial entry, double glass and wood doors surrounded by a transom and sidelights. Continuing along the north wall west of the dining room are the kitchen, a servant's bedroom and a windowless wine room now used as a study. The latter also has the original viga and latilla ceiling.

Following the Reynolds rehabilitation in the first years of this century few permanent alterations were made to the property until it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. J. Paul Taylor in 1953. Fr. Juan Grange, the parish priest of San Albino Church, who acquired the complex from William Charles Reynolds in 1913 by foreclosing a mortgage, used the residential area as a rectory and taught catechism to the parish children in the Barela store. Although Fr. Grange enjoyed woodworking as a diversion from his parochial duties, few examples of his hobby are to be found in the house except for some small pieces of furniture now owned by the Taylors. However, a magnificently crafted high altar, Grange's masterwork, remains in San Albino's Church. Following his death in 1937 the property was inherited by

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his housekeeper Mrs. Perla Aladib who was forced by economic necessity to divide the house into five apartments.

In 1953, when the Taylors bought the first of four portions of the property from Mrs. Aladib, it was obvious that certain modifications were necessary to adapt the old residence to the needs of their large family. Mrs. Aladib's partitions which had divided the apartments were removed and the rooms restored to their original purposes. The packed earth kitchen floor was covered for the first time and new plumbing was put into the rear of the house. The original stable west of the study, which had deteriorated badly, was remodeled into a second rental unit using material from a contemporary structure razed in nearby Las Cruces. The carriage house and wagon sheds which formed the northwest corner of the complex were re-roofed and used for storage. In 1972 an L-shaped section of the old barnyard south of the wine room and kitchen was enclosed to make a large family room and a small oratorio (private chapel). This area is floored with red tile from Saltillo similar in appearance to material at one time produced in Mesilla.

#8

property rights of the grantees were recognized by the U.S. government. The Mesilla Civil Colony Land Grant was approved by the Court of Private Land Claims in 1899 for 21,628 acres and patent issued by Congress in 1909.

Among the early settlers was Pedro Péres whose title to a solar de casa, now the south portion of the Taylor Property, was confirmed in 1854 by Miranda who continued to act as commissioner of the grant after the Gadsden Purchase. Although the chain of title to the north portion is less clear, by 1857 it was in the possession of Mariano Yrissari, a prominent trader and sheep rancher from near Albuquerque. In the same year Péres and his wife Ysidra García sold his house and lot to two Anglo traders, Charles A. Hoppin, originally from Rhode Island, and German-born Nathan B. Appel. Despite his New England birth Hoppin was a strong supporter of the Confederate cause and in 1861 served as Clerk of Probate Court when the Confederate government in Arizona held its only court session at Mesilla. His partner was later prominent at Tubac and Tucson in southern Arizona and was elected representative of Pima County in the first Arizona Territorial Legislature. Although Hoppin and Appel continued to do business in Mesilla they sold their plaza location in 1859 to a former competitor, Alexander Duval.

In the early 1860's the Civil War brought a period of turmoil and uncertainty to Mesilla, by then a town of 2,500 people. 300 Confederate troops commanded by Colonel John R. Baylor marched up the Rio Grande from Fort Bliss, Texas in July, 1861 and entered Mesilla amid "vivas and hurras" from the populace. For the next year the town remained under secessionist

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In an important expansion of his Mesilla business William Charles Reynolds purchased the adjoining Barela property in 1903, thus uniting the two segments of the present Taylor property. Reynolds began a significant rehabilitation of the former Barela residence but unfortunately Mesilla had already lost much of its economic preeminence to Las Cruces which had also become the county seat. It is not known if he was forced to borrow funds to complete the remodeling but evidently he was faced with heavy obligations including a mortgage on the combined property held by the local parish priest Fr. Juan Grange of San Albino's Roman Catholic Church. In 1913 Fr. Grange foreclosed and thereafter used the residence as a rectory until his death in 1937 when the property passed to his housekeeper, Mrs. Perla Aladib by terms of the priest's will.

With her mother, Mrs. Valentina McCunniff, Mrs. Aladib had first come to Mesilla about 1910 from the Chihuahua community of Janos, two refugees from the first convulsions of the Mexican revolution. Destitute, they were taken in by Fr. Grange and soon entered his employ with first the mother and then the daughter managing the priests menage. Mrs. Aladib also maintained a small shop in one part of the former Griggs & Reynolds store and, after inheriting the property, divided the living quarters into apartments to increase her income. In 1953 Mr. and Mrs. Taylor made the first of four purchases from Mrs. Aladib and began their careful restoration program which has returned the property to a close approximation of its early appearance and usage.

#9

- Mesilla Times 1860-1862, Microfilm edition, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Abstract of Title - J. Paul Taylor, Mesilla, New Mexico.
- Altshuler, Constance Wynn, (ed.). Latest from Arizona - The Hesperian Letters, 1859-1861. Tucson, 1969.
- Anderson, George B. History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People. 2 vols. Los Angeles, 1907.
- Baldwin, P.M. "A Short History of the Mesilla Valley," New Mexico Historical Review. Vol. 13, No. 4, July, 1938.
- Bowden, J. J. Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Chihuahua Acquisition. El Paso, 1971.
- Griggs, George. History of Mesilla Valley or the Gadsden Purchase. Mesilla, 1930.
- Hall, Martin Hardwick. "The Mesilla Times," Arizona and the West. Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter, 1963.
- Tittman, Edward D. "Confederate Courts in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, October, 1928.
- Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. The Leading Facts of New Mexico History. Vol. III, Cedar Rapids, 1917.

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control until the complete evacuation of New Mexico was necessitated by the destruction of Confederate supplies and materiel at Glorieta Pass east of Santa Fe in March 1862, a battle which resulted in an important Union victory. Shortly before the conflict began Yrissari, who had been conducting a lucrative commissary business with the U.S. Army forts around Mesilla, sold his plaza headquarters to María Rafaela García Barela, wife of Anastacio Barela who was also engaged in freighting and merchandising.

Yrissari continued his trade with the Federal forces, however, and in 1861, during the brief period of Confederate supremacy, had a large number of military coats and jackets valued at \$12,000 confiscated by Southern authorities. Barela, like Yrissari, was a former resident of the village of Los Ranchos north of Albuquerque who in 1860 was serving as probate judge of Doña Ana County. He also held office in the Confederate regime and was captain of a company of volunteer militia raised in 1861 for service against the Apaches. After Barela's death in the mid-1860's his business interests were carried on by his son Mariano who for many years also held the prestigious position of sheriff and collector of Doña Ana County. The younger Barela maintained a store in his mother's building on the plaza, a property which she continued to own until 1903.

In 1863, after the Confederate departure and the restoration of a degree of tranquility to the Mesilla area, the Duval house and store was purchased by a new partnership known as Griggs and Reynolds. Former civilian employees of the U.S. Army, James Edgar Griggs and Joseph Reynolds, had gained considerable knowledge of the military supply business by working as clerks at Fort Fillmore south of Mesilla and Fort Craig, 100 miles north. Married to sisters from a prominent Mexican family, Eugenia and Guadalupe Ascarate, the partners succeeded in building a flourishing mercantile business in southern New Mexico with stores at La Mesa, Las Cruces and Silver City in addition to their establishment in Mesilla. Following Griggs' death in a buggy accident in 1877 Joseph Reynolds continued the enterprise which was in turn taken over by his son William Charles Reynolds.

The bitter feelings engendered by the Civil War persisted for years in Mesilla frequently surfacing in the rough and tumble election campaigns characteristic of that era. In 1871 a bloody riot broke out on the Mesilla plaza in front of the Griggs and Reynolds store following a confrontation between processions of marching Democrats and Republicans. Nine were killed and forty or fifty wounded in the melee which was only brought to a halt by the arrival of Federal troops from nearby Fort Selden. It is said that it was Griggs who supplied the messenger, Rafael Camuñez, with a particularly swift Kentucky race horse to carry word of the disturbance to the fort. Mariano Barela who was then engaged in one of his many campaigns for the office of sheriff was also instrumental in restoring order.

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