

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 27 1976
DATE ENTERED NOV 16 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC *nlk* Turley Mill and Distillery Site

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 11 miles north of Taos, 2 miles west of Valdez, New Mexico
on State Road 230.

CITY, TOWN

Taos

VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Taos

CODE

055

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. and Mrs. Joe A. Sanchez / Kit Carson Memorial Foundation, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Taos

— VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Taos County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Taos

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

October 31, 1975

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

New Mexico State Planning Office, 200 W. De Vargas

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The site of Simeon Turley's mill and distillery in the rocky Arroyo Hondo (deep ravine) eleven miles north of Taos, New Mexico was the headquarters of an important Anglo 19th-century business and manufacturing enterprise during the period of Mexican rule over New Mexico. Today, little remains of this commercial complex except a series of foundations, two to four feet high, of indigenous rock in which an occasional section of the original 4' thick adobe walls can be seen. The peaceful location in the shadow of the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains, at the junction of the Taos Trappers' Trail and the Rio Hondo, belies the buzz of activity which characterized the place in its heyday at the time of U.S. occupation of New Mexico in 1846. Besides the daily routine of the mills and distillery there was continual traffic of heavily laden mule trains on their way south to Taos and Santa Fe or north to the Colorado trading posts.

This prosperity abruptly came to an end on January 20, 1847 when the revolutionists from Taos stormed Turley's establishment, attacking and burning the two-story mill and distillery. The adobe walls have since almost disintegrated by erosion and removal of bricks by local residents. Approximately 100 yards downstream from the foundations, portions of the mill dam remain in situ although the middle section was washed away long ago. Constructed in the narrow canyon of the Hondo, the dam, although only 30 feet across, had been adequate to assure the water supply necessary to power the mill.

Contemporary accounts by American and English travelers in the 1830's and 40's indicate that the main building which housed the mill, distillery and granaries faced on a plaza which was partially enclosed by stables and dwellings with the open sections blocked by fences and a large gate. Corrals to hold Turley's various kinds of livestock extended south from the complex towards the river. On the north there was a small vegetable garden. James Webb, well known trader on the Santa Fe Trail remarked in his diary that Turley's establishment had "one or two rooms floored with plank," among the first in New Mexico although the source of the lumber is not recorded.

George F. Ruxton, a young English writer who traveled through the area a few days before the 1847 revolt has left the best description:

On the other bank of the stream was situated a mill and distillery belonging to an American by the name of Turley, who had quite a thriving establishment. Sheep and goats, and innumerable hogs, ran about the corral; his barns were filled with grain of all kinds, his mill with flour, and his cellars with whisky "in galore." Every thing about the place betokened prosperity. Rosy children, uniting the fair complexions of the Anglo-Saxon with the dark tint of the Mexican, gamboled before the door. The Mexicans and Indians at work in the yard were stout, well-fed fellows, looking happy and contented; as well they might, for no one in the country paid so well, and fed so well, as Turley, who bore the reputation, far and near, of being as generous and kind-hearted as he

(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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Simeon Turley's mill and distillery, constructed in the early 1830's on the west slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the rocky canyon of the Rio Hondo, was an important landmark of northern New Mexico's fur trapping era. Situated on the well-worn trail which ran from the beaver country to the north and west to the village of Don Fernando de Taos, Turley's generous hospitality caused his establishment to be a favorite stopping place for the American "Mountain Men" who made Taos their headquarters. The big two-story stone and adobe mill joined by extensive corrals and out-buildings, mentioned in the journals of contemporary travelers, was the center of operations for frontier capitalist Turley, best known today as purveyor of the famed "Taos Lightning," the fiery product of his still. All this was destroyed in January, 1847 when Mexican nationalists and Pueblo of Taos Indians staged a brief but bloody revolt in the Taos area.

Simeon Turley was born in Madison County, Kentucky in 1806, the eighth or ninth child of Benjamin and Nancy Ann Noland Turley. After the War of 1812 the family moved to Boone's Lick, Missouri, a cash-short frontier community whose residents made everything from soap to whiskey and where trading by barter was regarded as a fine art. Boone's Lick was the home of William Becknell who in 1821 had left Missouri with a small load of merchandise and made his way over Raton Pass where he encountered troops of the new Republic of Mexico. Instead of arresting him for illegal entry, the standard procedure under Spanish authorities, he was instead escorted to Santa Fe where he sold his goods for hard silver pesos thus opening the Santa Fe Trail. Back in Boone's Lick, this bit of commercial good fortune attracted wide attention and it was not long before most of the families there, including the Turleys, were represented in the growing number of caravans heading for Santa Fe and Taos.

Following in the footsteps of his older brothers, Simeon Turley left for New Mexico in 1830, establishing himself at Arroyo Hondo where he built a grist mill and distillery, after a brief period of storekeeping in nearby Taos. Enthusiastic about his new home, Turley applied for Mexican naturalization and was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church as "Francisco Toles" whose home was "Quintoque." His conversion did not, however, alter his relationship with his mistress Maria Rosita Vigil y Romero whom he never married although she bore him seven children and was clearly recognized as his claimant later when Turley's estate was settled.

Unlike most of his restless American friends around Taos, Turley seemed happy to stay at home and look after his business on the Hondo possibly

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garrard, Lewis H. Wah-To-Yah and the Taos Trail. Oklahoma City, 1932.
 Jenkins, Myra Ellen and Albert H. Schroeder. A Brief History of New Mexico. Albuquerque, 1974.
 Jenkins, Myra Ellen. "Taos Pueblo and its Neighbors, 1540-1847." New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XLI, No. 2, April, 1966.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	13	444330	4043790	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	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 O. Baxter, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

May 17, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

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

Thomas W. [Signature]

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5-20-76

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

ATTEST:

Clayton Cole

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/16/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5-12-78

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was reported to be rich. In times of scarcity no Mexican ever besought his assistance and went away empty-handed. His granaries were always open to the hungry, and his purse to the poor.

Despite the excellent location and thriving business which Turley had established, none of his heirs or later owners attempted to rebuild the mill and distillery which have slowly deteriorated since his death, although the foundations of the complex are still visible.

#8

because he was afflicted with a crippled knee. To satisfy the growing demand for his wares across La Veta Pass in present Colorado he hired French-Canadian mountain man Charles Autobees to act as the firm's traveling salesman. Autobees loaded pack mules with flour and whiskey destined for the new trading posts along the Arkansas and the two branches of the Platte and returned to the Rio Hondo with furs, buffalo robes and, sometimes St. Louis bank drafts which he had received in exchange. These commodities were used as a back haul by east bound wagons of American traders returning to Missouri. In partnership with his brother Jesse, Turley also imported American made yard goods for sale at Taos and Santa Fe.

During 1841, in letters to Missouri, Turley complained of business conditions in general and also of competition of the rival firm of Rowland and Workman who were sharply cutting flour and whiskey prices to sell their inventory prior to leaving for California. After their departure in 1843, however, Turley's affairs greatly improved largely because of strict enforcement of U.S. regulations forbidding importation of whiskey into Indian country which forced the border traders to turn to Turley, whose still was located on Mexican soil. He opened a store at the new trade fort of Pueblo at the junction of the Arkansas and Fountain Creek in present Colorado which was used as a collection point for the furs and robes gathered by Autobees. Thus, it became unnecessary to haul these commodities to Arroyo Hondo; instead they were loaded on Turley's new wagon at Pueblo for delivery direct to Missouri warehouses and the wagon brought back merchandise for the store. In the late 1840's Simeon Turley's prospects had never been brighter but they were soon dimmed by events impending on the national scene.

Following President Polk's declaration of a state of war with Mexico in 1846, Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny at the head of the Army of the West left Fort Leavenworth, Missouri in June of that year to secure New Mexico and California for the United States. On August 18, he marched into the Santa Fe plaza where New Mexico was officially surrendered to the United States without a shot having been fired. After establishing a new civil

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#8 administration headed by Charles Bent of Taos as governor, and believing New Mexico to be pacified, Kearny with the bulk of the army left Santa Fe in September for California leaving Col. Sterling Price with a regiment of Missouri Volunteers to look after military matters. Although the majority of the Mexican and Pueblo Indian population accepted the change in government, some citizens with strong nationalist feelings, were unreconciled to the new regime. Offended by the boorish behavior of Price's small force of undisciplined recruits and encouraged by rumors of Mexican forces advancing from the south, a coterie of influential citizens in Santa Fe, including some former officers and the native clergy, began planning a revolt for Christmas Eve. The plotters were betrayed, however, and forced to flee. Governor Bent issued a lengthy statement urging the populace to "turn a deaf ear to false doctrines" and, believing the danger passed, left for his home in Taos despite the warnings of friends, since the Taos area was a center of nationalist sentiment.

The ranks of the dissidents were joined by the Indians of the Pueblo of Taos, embittered over past attempts of the Anglo and French-Canadian merchants to secure grants encroaching on their lands and fears aroused by the insurrectos that the new government would seize their tribal holdings. When Bent arrived on January 18, a delegation of angry Indians demanded the release of two of their number jailed for theft. Ignoring the temper of the Indians, Bent continued homeward for a reunion with his family. That night a mob of Mexicans and Indians broke into the jail releasing the prisoners and killing Sheriff Stephen Lee, Prefect Cornelio Vigil and other Anglo-American sympathizers. At daylight the rioters converged on the governor's residence and when Bent came out to meet them he was killed and scalped.

Among those who escaped the fury of the rebels was Autobeas, just returned from delivering whiskey in Santa Fe, who rode the eleven miles from Taos to warn Turley and his men that the mob was approaching the Arroyo Honda before he hurried on to Bent's Fort. Because his relationships with the native population had always been cordial, it was with reluctance that Turley, heeding the advice of the ten Anglos with him, closed the gate in the outer stockade, boarded the windows and piled logs to barricade the entrances to the buildings. Soon five hundred Mexicans and Pueblo Indians appeared at the gate demanding that Turley surrender his men and property in return for his life. Turley refused and the battle began. Although heavily outnumbered, the Americans held a strong position and were able to exact a heavy toll from the attackers through the first day. During the night, however, the besiegers gained access to the stables and corrals, killing large numbers of hogs and sheep and setting fire to the mill where most of the defenders were barricaded. Unable to control the blaze and finding their ammunition almost gone, the eight surviving Americans decided to attempt an escape under cover

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of darkness. Four were killed but the others were able to get clear of the battleground. Tom Tobin made his way to Santa Fe; Antoine Le Blanc to the Colorado Greenhorn settlement and John Albert, after an arduous solitary journey on foot, arrived in Pueblo; the fourth was Turley.

At daylight the next morning Turley, hindered by his crippled knee, was not far from his burning headquarters which was being sacked by the mob. He soon encountered a Mexican "friend" from whom he attempted to buy a horse. The Mexican refused, but promising help returned instead to the mill where he betrayed Turley's hiding place to the looters. It was not long before Turley was seized and murdered.

The Taos Rebellion was short-lived. Colonel Price's Missouri Volunteers joined by a Mountain Man militia company recruited by Ceran St. Vrain marched north from Santa Fe to chastise the rebels. Engagements were fought at Santa Cruz de la Cañada, at Embudo and finally, at the Pueblo of Taos which ended the revolt less than three weeks after it began.

The Kit Carson Memorial Foundation, Inc., an organization devoted to historical preservation and restoration in the Taos area, has purchased three acres north of the Rio Hondo including part of the mill ruins and is negotiating to acquire an additional 25 acres to preserve the integrity of the site. The Foundation plans to excavate the ruins and stabilize the remaining walls. In an adjacent area on the opposite side of the river and out of sight of the ruins, an adobe fur trading fort museum will be built containing exhibits which will be constructed to interpret the activities of Simeon Turley and the "Mountain Men" of the Taos Valley.

9

Lavender, David. Bent's Fort. New York, 1954.

LeCompte, Janet. The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West. Glendale, 1969. Le Roy R. Hafen, ed., Vols. IV and VII.

Porter, Clyde and Mae Reed Coll. Ruxton of the Rockies, Le Roy R. Hafen, ed. Norman, 1950.

Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. The History of the Military Occupation of New Mexico from 1846-1851. Danville, 1909.

Webb, James J. Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade 1844-1847. Ralph P. Beiber, ed. Glendale, 1931.

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Turley Mill and Distillery Site
Requested Supplementary Information

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Since its destruction in 1847 the remains of the mill and adjoining outbuildings have deteriorated extensively. Little remains to indicate the extent of this once prosperous industrial establishment. The low stone walls depicted in the photographs accompanying the nomination form were the lower portions of corrals and pens adjacent to the mill. Also visible are small portions of the mill's outer wall but because of 130 years of erosion these can hardly be distinguished from the native soil. No remnants of building materials or other artifacts are to be found on the site's surface although excavation might yield items of significance. The adjoining 25 acres were not included in the nomination since negotiations for their acquisition were not completed when the form was submitted and because they are not an integral part of the site.

#8

The site has historical merit as the location of the important mid-19th century Anglo business enterprise in New Mexico before U.S. Occupation and as the scene of the battle during the Taos Revolt of 1847 in which it was destroyed.